

Boy Scout Advancement

The Boy Scout advancement program is subtle. It places a series of challenges in front of a Scout in a manner that is fun and educational. As Scouts meet these challenges, they achieve the aims of Boy Scouting.

One of the greatest needs of young men is confidence. There are three kinds of confidence that young men need: in themselves, in peers, and in leaders. Educators and counselors agree that the best way to build confidence is through measurement. Self-confidence is developed by measuring up to a challenge or a standard. Peer confidence develops when the same measuring system is used for everyone -- when all must meet the same challenge to receive equal recognition. Confidence in leaders comes about when there is consistency in measuring -- when leaders use a single standard of fairness.

No council, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add to or subtract from any advancement requirement. A Boy Scout badge recognizes what a young man is able to do; it is not a reward for what he has done. Standards for joining a Boy Scout troop and for advancement are listed in the latest printing of the Boy Scout Handbook and in the current Boy Scout Requirements book. Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters should be thoroughly familiar with the requirements for each rank.

The advancement program is designed to provide the Boy Scout with a chance to achieve the aims of Scouting: citizenship, growth in moral strength and character, and mental and physical development. As a Scout advances he is measured and grows in confidence and self-reliance.

When a badge and certificate are awarded to a Boy Scout to recognize that he has achieved a rank, they represent that a young man has:

- Been an active participant in his troop and patrol.
- Demonstrated living the Scout Oath (Promise) and Law in his daily life.
- Met the other requirements and/or earned the merit badges for the rank.
- Participated in a Scoutmaster conference.
- Satisfactorily appeared before a board of review.

In the advanced ranks (Star, Life, and Eagle), the badge represents that the young man has also:

- Served in a position of responsibility in the troop.
- Performed service to others.

Four Steps of Advancement. A Boy Scout advances from Tenderfoot to Eagle by doing things with his patrol and his troop, with his leaders, and on his own. It's easy for him to advance, if the following four opportunities are provided for him.

1. The Boy Scout learns. A Scout learns by doing. As he learns, he grows in ability to do his part as a member of the patrol and the troop. As he develops

- knowledge and skill, he is asked to teach others; and in this way he begins to develop leadership.
2. The Boy Scout is tested. A Scout may be tested on rank requirements by his patrol leader, Scoutmaster, assistant Scoutmaster, a troop committee member, or a member of his troop. Troop 410 general favors Scouts testing Scouts for the Tenderfoot through First Class with supervision by the Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters. The Scoutmaster Conference provides quality control on advancement.
 3. The Boy Scout is reviewed. After a Scout has completed all requirements for a rank, he has a board of review. For Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle Palms, the review is conducted by members of the troop committee.
 4. The Boy Scout is recognized. When the board of review has certified a boy's advancement, he deserves to receive recognition as soon as possible. This should be done at a ceremony at the next troop meeting. The certificate for his new rank may be presented later at a formal court of honor.

Troop Advancement Goals. The Scoutmaster must be in charge of advancement in the troop. It is necessary that the Scoutmaster understand the purpose of the advancement program and the importance it has in the development of the Scouts in the troop. The troop's program must provide advancement opportunities. By participating in the troop program, the Scout will meet requirements for rank advancement.

It is important that the troop committee and the Scoutmaster set an advancement goal for the year. A basic goal should be for each Scout to advance a rank during the year. New Scouts should earn their First Class rank during their first year in the troop. By doing so, these new Scouts become net contributors to the troop and are able to care for themselves and others. Troops should conduct boards of review for Scouts who are not advancing.

Presentation of rank badges up to First Class should not await the courts of honor; badges should be presented at the next meeting after they have been earned. Scouts are recognized again at a formal court of honor.

Scoutmaster Conferences. One of the most enjoyable experiences of being a Scoutmaster is the opportunity for a Scout and his leader to sit down and visit together. A good conference should be unhurried. It helps the Scout evaluate his accomplishments and to set new goals with his Scoutmaster. This can be accomplished at a troop meeting, camping trip, or in the Scout's home.

Goal setting by the Scout makes it possible for the Scoutmaster to help the Scout with his weaknesses and encourage him to use his strengths. The Scout (joining) conference is probably one of the most important associations a Scout will have in his Scouting career. It is at this conference that the Scoutmaster illustrates to him the adult-youth relationship that is unique to Scouting.

All through the ranks, it is rewarding for the Scoutmaster to observe the Scout grow in responsibility and maturity. It is through this association and example that a young man grows and matures, and the Scoutmaster conference accomplishes that aim. (See Scoutmaster Handbook, chapter 8.)

A few more mechanics.

- When Scouts complete requirements, they are signed off by First Class and above scouts. In some instances, this may be accomplished by the Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmasters. The examining Scout should sign off only if they observe the activity or the Scout can provide a detailed explanation of how and when the activity was completed after they joined the Troop. The examiner must adhere to the requirements in the Scout Handbook. For instance, “demonstrate” means demonstrate, not tell about it.
- Requirements completed at summer camp during coursework should be signed off by the advancement coordinator, Scoutmaster or Committee member who has the summer camp records.
- The Scout Handbook should be presented to the advancement coordinator regularly to update the troop database.
- A Scout’s records must be in line with the troop database before either a Scoutmaster Conference or Board of Review can occur.
- The scout must check with the Troop 410 Advancement Coordinator and ensure his scout book is in agreement with the Troop records. The Scout may then participate in his Scoutmaster Conference, which may involve retesting the scout on skills to make sure they are ready to move forward. Once that is completed, the scout should take the Troop advancement printout and his book to the BOR.
- The Scout must be in Class A uniform. From April to November, that includes Scout pants, shirt, socks, and belt. During the rest of the year, blue jeans are acceptable pants.
- The chairman of the Board of Review must ensure that all the requirements have been "signed off" in the Scout's handbook and match the advancement report.
- Finally, the chairman should ensure that leadership and merit badge records are consistent with the requirements for the rank.