

Why a Board of Review?

A Board of Review is required for all rank advancements except Scout. Many parents are recruited to participate in them without really understanding the purpose. According to the Boy Scout Handbook, Boards of Review are made up of adults associated with the troop who want to learn more about the scout and understand what scouting is doing for him. The intent of a Board of Review is not to re-examine the scout since he has already been tested on the skills and activities required for the rank, but instead

- to be certain the Scout has completed the requirements for the rank;
- to evaluate the Scouting experience within the unit; and
- to encourage the Scout to progress with both leadership and rank advancement.

The Board of Review provides "quality assurance" on advancement activities in the unit and whether they are helpful to the Scout. The board should attempt to determine the Scout's attitude and his acceptance of Scouting ideals and scout spirit, which is defined as living the Scout Oath and Scout Law in everyday life. In summary, it is an opportunity to review the Scout's attitudes and accomplishments and his future direction in applying the Scouting experience to his everyday life.

Who serves on a Board of Review?

For all ranks other than Eagle, the Board of Review will consist of three troop committee members. The BOR Coordinator typically acts as the chairperson of the Board of Review. Sometimes experienced parents or committee members may fulfill this role, particularly if more than one BOR is run simultaneously. Relatives or guardians may not serve as members of a Scout's Board of Review. The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters should not participate in a Board of Review, though there are rare exceptions such as on campouts if a BOR must be completed.

For the rank of Eagle, the Board of Review consists of three to six members drawn from Scouting and the community. One member of the District Advancement Committee must be a member of the Board of Review for Eagle and always serves as chairperson. At least one member of the troop committee participates, often the Troop Committee Chair, BOR Coordinator, or Advancement Coordinator. A Board of Review for Eagle may contain members of the community who are not registered Scout Leaders and the Scout may request an individual to be a member of his Board of Review, such as his school principal or church pastor or family friend. Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmasters from the Scout's unit, relatives, and guardians may not serve on an Eagle BOR.

How does it work?

Several events must occur prior to the BOR commencing:

- 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.

Once the BOR begins, the Scout and members of the board should introduce themselves. The chairman of the Board of Review should then ask the Scout to come to attention, and recite the Scout Oath and Law. Younger scouts may be nervous and require some coaching.

Because many boys are ill at ease when talking to adults, a few ice breaker questions about school or other such subjects are appropriate to put the scout at ease and allow the board to get to know him. The board members then ask questions appropriate to the rank for which the scout is being examined. The questions should be open-ended, offering an opportunity for the Scout to speak about his opinions, experiences, activities, and accomplishments. If an answer is brief, the members may follow up to elicit a more complete answer. The board of review members should refer to the Boy Scout Handbook, as needed, during the review.

The general theme of the board may be observed in the following sample questions:

- What do you like most in troop outdoor activities?
- What new things did you do/learn on your latest campout/service project/ troop meeting?
- What did you learn/feel in giving service to others?
- Why is being a Boy Scout important to you?
- What are your goals in Scouting?
- How will fulfilling requirement number _____ help you?

These types of questions will help the boy to see the value and practical application of his efforts.

The time for a Board of Review should be from 10 to 20 minutes, with the shorter time for the lower ranks. When all members have had an opportunity to ask their questions, the Scout is excused from the room. The board members then consider whether the Scout is ready for the next rank; the board's decision must be unanimous. Though it does not occur often, sometimes the board will decide the scout should come back at a subsequent time. Board members should not be afraid to make such a decision if a Scout is clearly not ready.

Once the decision is made, the Scout is invited back into the room, and the Chairperson informs the Scout of the board's decision. If the Scout is approved for the next rank, he should be congratulated and encouraged to continue advancing. If there are issues which prevent the Scout from advancing to the next rank, the board must explain why and the Scout will be told what must be done to correct any deficiencies. The Chairperson should follow up and discuss the issues with the Assistant Scoutmaster and/or Scoutmaster who conducted the Scoutmaster conference regarding the deficiencies. The Advancement Coordinator should also be informed so notes can be added to the advancement record.

Both the Scout's book and the troop advancement report must be signed by the BOR members. The Scout must then take those to the Advancement Coordinator to ensure the information is recorded.

What questions should be asked at a Board of Review?

The questions for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class are relatively simple and usually address information about the Scout's participation in his unit, how he applies the skills he has learned, his progress towards the next rank, and whether he enjoys and benefits from his association in Troop 410. The questions for Star, Life, and Eagle focus more on how Scouting influences or aids the boy's broader life and experience. If the Board of Review is for a Life rank and the Scout near his 17th birthday, it is appropriate to point out that he doesn't have much time to complete his Eagle.

These questions are intended to serve as a guide. Individual board members may ask others as long as they fall within the overall purpose of the board.

Fundamental Scout knowledge

Every Scout should know the meaning of "Scout Spirit". They may have all kinds of answers, many of which are acceptable, but the real answer is to live by the Scout Oath and Law. At any rank the Scout should be asked about the meaning of Scout Spirit and how he demonstrates Scout Spirit in the Troop and in everyday life.

All Scouts must know the Scout Oath:

On my honor I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my country
and to obey the Scout Law;
To help other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong,
mentally awake, and morally straight.

And the Scout Law:

A Scout is:
Trustworthy,
Loyal,
Helpful,
Friendly,
Courteous,
Kind,
Obedient,
Cheerful,
Thrifty,
Brave,
Clean,
Reverent.

Tenderfoot Rank

This is the Scout's first Board of Review. They will generally be a little nervous and the process may require some explanation on the part of the Board of Review Chairperson. Try to set the scout's mind at ease with some simple questions about themselves, such as what patrol they are in and what campouts they've attended recently. The Board of Review should try to gain a sense of how the Scout is fitting in to the Troop and whether they enjoy the Troop activities.

Always encourage advancement to Second Class, but also stress the importance of adequately learning scout skills since they will need these basic abilities throughout their scouting career. Point out that the Scout may have already completed many of the requirements for 2nd Class. The approximate time for this Board of Review should be 10-15 minutes.

Sample Questions:

1. When did you join our Troop?
2. How many Troop meetings have you attended in the last month?
3. Tell us about your last Troop campout. Did you enjoy it and why or why not?
4. How would the first aid skills you must know for Tenderfoot help on a campout?
5. Would you know how to treat a minor cut if another Scout got one?
6. Where did you learn how to fold the American flag? Tell us about a flag ceremony in which you participated.
7. If you were on a hike and got lost, what would you do?
8. What is the "Buddy System" that we use in Scouting? When do we use it?
9. Did you show any change in your ability with the physical fitness requirements (push-ups, pull-ups, etc.) when you were retested after 30 days?
10. What does it mean to a Tenderfoot Scout to "Be Prepared"?
11. Do you feel that you have done your best to complete the requirements for Tenderfoot? Why?
12. What "good turn" have you done today?
13. Please give us an example of how you obey the Scout Law?
14. What do you like best about our Troop?
15. What does it mean for a Scout to be "Loyal"?
16. Do you plan to go to summer camp?
17. What troop activities were your favorites?
18. What could be improved within the Troop?

Second Class Rank

This is the Scout's second Board of Review. They should be more at ease with the process, unless it has been some time since the Board of Review for Tenderfoot. Questions should focus on the use of the Scout skills learned for this rank, without retesting these skills, and the Board members should try to understand how this Scout is integrating within the troop.

Encourage work on the remaining requirements for First Class, but again stress the importance of learning the skills. The approximate time for this Board of Review should be 10-15 minutes.

Sample Questions:

1. Tell us about a service project in which you participated.
2. Where did you go on your last Troop campout? Did you have a good time? Why or why not?
3. On which outing did you assist in preparing and cleaning up a meal? What was the menu?
4. What is in your personal first aid kit?
5. What have you learned about handling cutting tools (axes, saws, etc.)?
6. Do you carry a map and compass on campouts? How might they be useful?
7. Have you ever done more than one "good turn" in a day?
8. What do you consider when selecting a campsite?
9. Have you earned any merit badges?
If "Yes": Which ones? Why did you choose them? Who was your counselor?
If "No": Encourage getting started, and suggest one or two of the basic ones (e.g., first aid).
10. Did you attend summer camp with our Troop last summer?
If "Yes": What was your best (worst) experience at summer camp?
If "No": Why not?
11. Do you plan to attend summer camp with our Troop next summer?
If "Yes": What are you looking forward to doing at summer camp?
If "No": Why not?
12. What suggestions do you have for improving our Troop?
13. How do you help out at home, church, school?
14. How is it possible to live the Scout Oath and Law in your daily life?
15. What does it mean to say, "A Scout is Trustworthy"?
16. When do you expect to complete the requirements for 1st Class?

First Class Rank

By this point the Scout should be comfortable with the Board of Review process. The Scout should be praised for completing the First Class requirements, particularly if he joined Boy Scouts less than a year ago. In achieving the rank of First Class, the Scout should feel an additional sense of responsibility to the troop and to his patrol. The First Class rank will produce additional opportunities for the Scout (Order of the Arrow, leadership, etc.). Merit badges will begin to play a role in future advancement to the Star and Life ranks. Encourage merit badge work if it has not already begun. The approximate time for this Board of Review should be 20 minutes.

Sample Questions:

1. On average, how many Troop meetings do you attend each month?
2. What part of Troop meetings are most rewarding to you?
3. What does it mean to be a First Class Scout?
4. Tell us about your last campout with the Troop. Where did you go? How did you help with meal preparation? Did you have a good time? (If "No", why not?)
5. If you were in charge of planning and preparing a dinner for your next campout, what would you select?
6. As a First Class Scout, what do you think the older scouts and adult leaders will expect from you on an outing?
7. Why is it important for you to know how to transport a person who has a broken leg?
8. When and where did you do your swimming requirements?
9. Why is it important for you to be able to recognize local plant life?
10. What did you learn about using a compass while completing the orienteering requirement? Where did you do it?
11. What does it mean to say, "A Scout is Courteous"?
12. Why are merit badges a part of Scouting?
13. What is your favorite part of Scouting? Least favorite?
14. How does a Scout fulfill his "Duty to Country"?
15. What leadership roles have you held while with the troop? What position would you eventually like to hold?

Star Rank

With the Star rank, emphasis is placed upon service to others, merit badges, and leadership. Scout skills remain an important element for the Star Scout; however, the emphasis should be on teaching other Scouts these skills. Explore how the Star scout can assist with leading his patrol and troop. Attempt to understand how the Scouting philosophy is becoming part of the Scout's life. Often the Star rank is a place where Scouts "stall out". Encourage the Scout to remain active, and participate fully in his patrol and troop. If the Scout appears to be looking for additional opportunities, suggest leadership positions such as Den Chief or Troop Guide.

The approximate time for this Board of Review should be 20 minutes.

Sample Questions:

1. How many Troop campouts have you attended in the last three months?
2. Tell us about the last service project in which you participated.
3. How have the Scout skills that you have learned helped you in a non-Scouting activity?
4. How many merit badges have you earned? What was the most difficult (fun, challenging, expensive, etc.)?
5. Were any of the merit badges too easy?
6. Which is more important: Becoming a Star Scout, or learning the skills prescribed for a Star Scout?
7. Why do you think a Scoutmaster's Conference is required for advancement in rank?
8. What leadership positions have you held? What challenges did they present? What position would you like to hold?
9. How would you get a Scout to do an unpleasant task?
10. What if you had a friend in scouts who did something wrong and no one knew but you? How would you handle the situation?
11. What responsibility does a Star Scout have to the troop and younger scouts?
12. What responsibilities do you have at home?
13. What is our "Duty to God"?
14. What does it mean to say "A Scout is Loyal"?
15. How are the Scout Oath and Law part of your daily life?
16. When do you plan on achieving the Life rank?

Life Rank

The Life rank is the final rank before Eagle. The Life Scout should be fully participating in the Troop, with emphasis being placed on leadership in the unit, as well as teaching skills and leadership to the younger Scouts. Merit Badge work should be a regular part of the Scout's career. Scouting values and concepts should be an integral part of the Scout's daily life.

At this point, the Scout is starting to "give back to Scouting" through leadership, training of other Scouts, recruiting, keeping Scouts active in the program, etc. Explore suggestions for improving the program.

The approximate time for this Board of Review should be 20 minutes.

Sample Questions:

1. What has been your worst camping experience in Scouting?
2. How many troop meetings have you attended in the past two months?
3. Have any of the merit badges you have earned lead to hobbies or possible careers?
4. Of the merit badges you have earned, which one has been of greatest value to you in your everyday life? Why?
5. Why do you think that the three "Citizenship" merit badges are required for Eagle?
6. What is your current (most recent) leadership position within the Troop? How long have you held that position? What particular challenges does it present?
7. What can you do to encourage your friends and younger scouts to continue with the Troop and to move forward along the Scouting Trail?
8. How do you choose between a school activity, a Scout activity, and a family activity?
9. Why do you think that Star and Life Scouts are required to contribute time to service projects? What service projects are most rewarding to you? Why?
10. Why do you think that a Board of Review is required for rank advancement?
11. How has Scouting prepared you for the future?
12. What does it mean to say, "A Scout is Reverent"?
13. What does "Scout Spirit" mean to a Life Scout?
14. The Scout Oath refers to "Duty to Self"; what duty do we have to ourselves?
15. Have you started to think about an Eagle Service Project? What are you thinking about doing? When?

Eagle Rank

The Review for the Eagle Rank differs in some degree from the other Boards of Review in which the Scout has participated. The mechanics are similar, except that a Board of Review for Eagle is more in depth, and might last more than an hour. The Eagle Scout Rank Application, Life Statement, Letters of Recommendation (minimum of 3), and Eagle Project Notebook will be present and reviewed by the board and are important in conducting the review by providing an overall background and context for the Scout's accomplishments.

Skill mastery is not an issue at this point; rather, the goal is to understand the candidate's overall Scouting experience and how scouting principles and goals are central to his life. Service or "giving back" to scouting is also very important. Explore how this Eagle Scout will continue with service to Scouting, his home, church, and community.

Sample Questions:

1. What would you suggest adding to the Scout Law (a thirteenth point)? Why?
2. What one point could be removed from the Scout Law? Why?
3. Can you give me an example of someone who is a hero to you? (A real person, not a character in a book or movie.)
4. Why do you think that the Family Life merit badge was added to the list of required merit badges?
5. What camping experience have you had, that you wish every Scout could have?
6. Have you been to High Adventure base or a National (International) Jamboree? What was your most memorable experience there?
7. What is the role of the Senior Patrol Leader at a troop meeting (campout, summer camp)?
8. If you could change one thing to improve Scouting, what would you change?
9. What do you believe our society expects from an Eagle Scout?
10. The charge to the Eagle requires that you give back to Scouting more than Scouting has given to you. How do you propose to do that?
11. As an Eagle Scout, what can you personally do to improve your unit?
12. What will you be doing in your unit, after receiving your Eagle Rank?
13. Tell us how you selected your Eagle Service Project.
14. From your Eagle Service Project, what did you learn about managing or leading people? What are the qualities of a good leader?
15. What part of your Eagle Service Project was the most challenging? Why?
16. If you were to manage another project similar to your Eagle Service Project, what would you do differently to make the project better or easier?
17. What are your future plans (high school, college, trade school, military, career, etc.)?
18. Tell us about your family (parents, siblings, etc.). How do you help out at home?
19. What do you think is the single biggest issue facing Scouting in the future?
20. How do your friends outside of Scouting react when they learn that you are a Boy Scout? How do you think they will react when they learn that you have become an Eagle Scout?
21. How do you know when a Scout is "active" in his unit?
22. How does an Eagle Scout continue to show Scout Spirit?

Eagle Palms

Eagle Palms are awarded for continued leadership and skills development (merit badges) after the Eagle Rank has been earned. The purpose of this Board of Review is to ensure that the Eagle Scout remains active within the unit, contributes to the leadership of the unit, and assists with the growth of the other Scouts within the unit.

The approximate time for this Board of Review should be 15 minutes.

Sample Questions:

1. As an Eagle, have the Scout Oath and Law gained new meaning for you? How?
2. Why is it important to developing and identify leadership? How do you do this?
3. Since earning your Eagle, what merit badges have you earned?
4. Since earning your Eagle (last Palm), in what service projects have you participated?
5. How do you plan to continue your involvement with Scouting?
6. What would you say to a Life Scout who is only minimally active within his unit, and who does not seem motivated to continue along the Scouting Trail?
7. If a Life Scout was having difficulty selecting an Eagle Service Project, what would you suggest to him?
8. What is the primary role of the Scoutmaster?
9. How have you begun to "... give back to Scouting more than Scouting has given to you".