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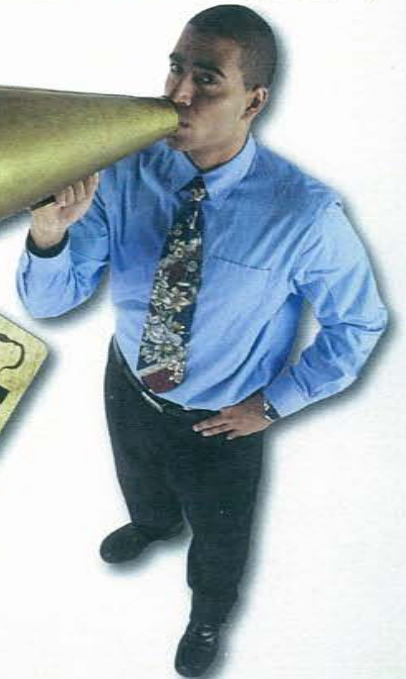


35876 2011 Second Printing

# MERIT BADGE SERIES



# COMMUNICATION



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

## HOW TO USE THIS PAMPHLET

The secret to successfully earning a merit badge is for you to use both the pamphlet and the suggestions of your counselor.

Your counselor can be as important to you as a coach is to an athlete. Use all of the resources your counselor can make available to you. This may be the best chance you will have to learn about this particular subject. Make it count.

If you or your counselor feels that any information in this pamphlet is incorrect, please let us know. Please state your source of information.

Merit badge pamphlets are reprinted annually and requirements updated regularly. Your suggestions for improvement are welcome.

Send comments along with a brief statement about yourself to Youth Development, S209 • Boy Scouts of America • 1325 West Walnut Hill Lane • P.O. Box 152079 • Irving, TX 75015-2079.

## WHO PAYS FOR THIS PAMPHLET?

This merit badge pamphlet is one in a series of more than 100 covering all kinds of hobby and career subjects. It is made available for you to buy as a service of the national and local councils, Boy Scouts of America. The costs of the development, writing, and editing of the merit badge pamphlets are paid for by the Boy Scouts of America in order to bring you the best book at a reasonable price.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA  
MERIT BADGE SERIES

# COMMUNICATION

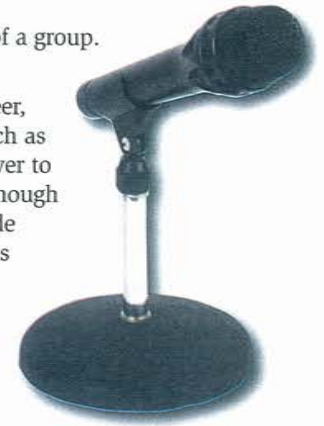


BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

# Requirements

1. Do ONE of the following:
  - a. For one day, keep a log in which you describe your communication activities. Keep track of the time and different ways you spend communicating, such as talking person-to-person, listening to teachers or the radio, watching television, reading books and other print media, and using any electronic communication device. Discuss with your counselor what your log reveals about the importance of communication in your life. Think of ways to improve your communication skills.
  - b. For three days, keep a journal of your listening experiences. Identify one example of each of the following, and discuss with your counselor when you have listened to:
    - (1) Obtain information
    - (2) A persuasive attempt
    - (3) Appreciate or enjoy something
    - (4) Understand someone's feelings
  - c. In a small-group setting, meet with other Scouts or with friends. Have them share personal stories about significant events in their lives that affected them in some way. Take note of how each Scout participates in the group discussion and how effectively he communicates his story. Report what you have learned to your counselor about the differences you observed in effective communication.

- d. List as many ways as you can think of to communicate with others (face-to-face, by telephone, letter, e-mail, text messages, and so on). For each type of communication, discuss with your counselor an instance when that method might not be appropriate or effective.
2. Do ONE of the following:
    - a. Think of a creative way to describe yourself using, for example, a collage, short story or autobiography, drawing or series of photographs, or a song or skit. Using the aid you created, make a presentation to your counselor about yourself.
    - b. Choose a concept, product, or service in which you have great confidence. Build a sales plan based on its good points. Try to persuade the counselor to agree with, use, or buy your concept, product, or service. After your sales talk, discuss with your counselor how persuasive you were.
  3. Write a five-minute speech. Give it at a meeting of a group.
  4. Interview someone you know fairly well, like, or respect because of his or her position, talent, career, or life experiences. Listen actively to learn as much as you can about the person. Then prepare and deliver to your counselor an introduction of the person as though this person were to be a guest speaker, and include reasons why the audience would want to hear this person speak. Show how you would call to invite this person to speak.
  5. Attend a public meeting (city council, school board, debate) approved by your counselor where several points of view are given on a single issue. Practice active listening skills and take careful notes of each point of view. Prepare an objective report that includes all points of view that were expressed, and share this with your counselor.



6. With your counselor's approval, develop a plan to teach a skill or inform someone about something. Prepare teaching aids for your plan. Carry out your plan. With your counselor, determine whether the person has learned what you intended.
7. Do ONE of the following:
  - a. Write to the editor of a magazine or your local newspaper to express your opinion or share information on any subject you choose. Send your message by fax, e-mail, or regular mail.
  - b. Create a web page or blog of special interest to you (for instance, your troop or crew, a hobby, or a sport). Include at least three articles or entries and one photograph or illustration, and one link to some other web page or blog that would be helpful to someone who visits the web page or blog you have created. *It is not necessary to post your web page or blog to the Internet, but if you decide to do so, you must first share it with your parents and counselor and get their permission.*
  - c. Use desktop publishing to produce a newsletter, brochure, flier, or other printed material for your

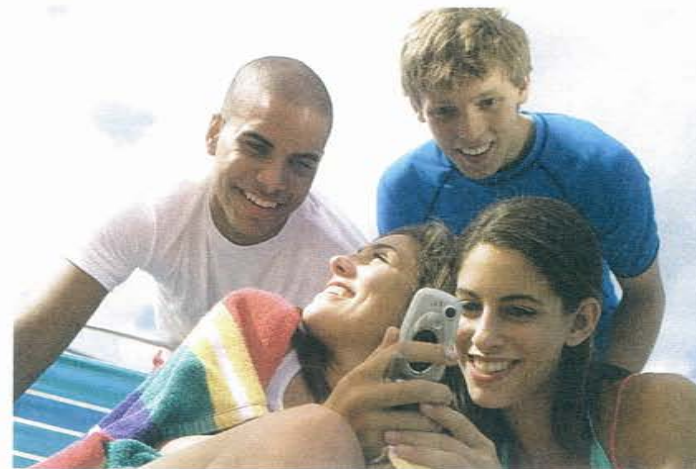


troop or crew, class at school, or other group. Include at least one article and one photograph or illustration.

8. Plan a troop or crew court of honor, campfire program, or an interfaith worship service. Have the patrol leaders' council approve it, then write the script and prepare the program. Serve as master of ceremonies.
9. Find out about three career opportunities in communication. Pick one and find out the education, training, and experience required for this profession. Discuss this with your counselor, and explain why this profession might interest you.

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## Communication: A Key to Opening Doors

Communication is important to your life. Being able to communicate effectively is key to achieving success. It is the way you get people to understand your values, interests, talents, abilities, needs, and wants. It is how you show your knowledge about things.

Good communication means more than just expressing yourself. It also involves listening carefully to others, knowing



when to speak up, and knowing when to keep your thoughts to yourself. If you can communicate well, you will be better at just about everything you do, from Scouting to schoolwork and being a good friend.

As you grow older, your ability to communicate grows with you. When you were an infant, you used crying to communicate simple messages such as “I’m hungry!” or “My diaper needs changing!” At about six weeks of age, you learned to communicate by smiling. This was how you said: “I’m happy” or “I’m comfortable with you.” At around 6 months, you started talking. A mixture of sounds and words tumbled out of your mouth. Every day, you got a little better at it. By the time you started school, you had advanced from “Da-da!” to “Can you come over to play?”

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When you are old enough to get a job, good communication skills will make you a valued and productive worker.

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Here are some other common symbols. What do they mean? The answers are upside down.



1



2



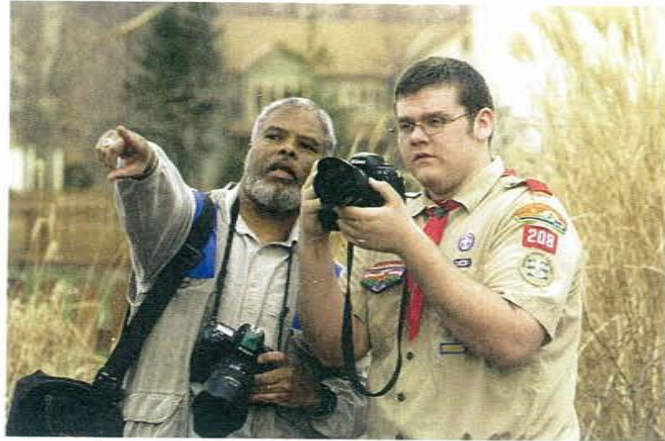
3



4

- 1. Peace
- 2. Canada
- 3. No smoking
- 4. Men's room

Today, you are able to communicate complex thoughts about things like sports, math, and movie plots. You may have learned a special group of words related to a favorite hobby or sport. You may have even learned to communicate in a second language.



### Different Forms of Communication

As you work on your Communication merit badge, you may wonder, "What is communication?" Simply put, communication is the act of sharing information with others. Most forms of communication are *symbolic*. A *symbol* is something that means or stands for something else. For example, the American flag is a symbol of America.

### Language

Language is the most common way that we use symbols to communicate. Most languages use an alphabet to *symbolize* (stand for) sounds in the spoken language. We combine these "letters" to form words. Some words symbolize things you can hold or touch. "Apple," for example, stands for a fruit we love to eat. Other words, such as "love," "intelligence," and "freedom," stand for things you cannot hold or touch.

We combine words to form sentences. Sentences state facts, opinions, questions, or commands, such as, "The apple looks delicious" and "May I have one?"

### Speaking Without Words

Not all communication uses words. There are many ways we communicate *nonverbally*, or "without words." Nonverbal communication can still use symbols, however. For example, if a Scout is in a public place and he sees a picture of a woman on a bathroom door, he will know not to go through that door, even if there are no words on it.

Some types of communication use words and nonverbal symbols. The eight-sided red sign printed with the word *STOP* in white letters tells drivers to stop their car. You would probably know the sign's meaning even if the word was not there. That is because the color red, which signifies *danger*, and the eight-sided shape (called an octagon) are used on no other road sign in the United States. In this case, three different symbols—a word, a color, and a shape—all help communicate the same important meaning.



### Talking With Your Body

Another nonverbal way to communicate is through "body language." *Body language* is communication through body movements or gestures. It can be as simple as a smile, frown, or nod of the head.

Shaking hands when you meet someone is a nonverbal way to communicate goodwill. For people in the military, a *salute*—raising the right hand, held flat, to the forehead over the right eyebrow—shows respect. Legend has it that the practice had its origin in the Middle Ages, when knights raised the visors of their helmets to greet each other.

Body language, like spoken languages, can have different meanings in different countries. This could lead to misunderstandings. In some countries, nodding the head up and down means "no," while it means "yes" in the United States. The peace sign gesture (holding up the middle and index fingers in a "V") may be polite in this country but considered rude or insulting in other cultures.





American Sign Language, or ASL, helps people communicate whole sentences with hand movements and finger spelling rather than by voice.

Body language can even communicate whole sentences. For example, many people who are deaf, and their friends and families, use a special language called American Sign Language, or ASL. This language uses hand movements and “finger spelling” to communicate thoughts.

People may sometimes “speak” body language without knowing it. If you grew up in the United States, you might lower your eyes and look at the floor when you are feeling shy. You might raise an eyebrow to show doubt or confusion. Squinting your eyes can signal anger. In other cultures, these movements may have different meanings.

### Other Ways of Communicating Without Words

Words and body language are not the only ways to communicate. Dressing nicely to go to a place of worship tells others, “I respect this religious tradition.” Sitting in the front of the classroom, rather than in the back, says, “I want to learn and do well in this class.”

The way you wear your hair can communicate, too. In the 1960s, many young men wore their hair long as a way to protest “the establishment,” a term that meant “the usual way of doing things.” However, by the 1970s long hair on boys and young men was common and had lost its special meaning.



### Mass Communication and Digital Technologies

Communication that is meant for a large audience is sometimes called *mass communication*. This used to mean communicating through radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, films, and theater. Today, many people communicate using digital (computer-related) technologies.

Some of these are mass communication tools. Others help individuals or small groups communicate.

Digital tools include websites, social networking sites, blogs, instant messaging, and text messaging using cellular phones and other handheld devices. We will look more closely at digital communication in a later chapter.

### Why Study Communication?

If we learn to communicate naturally, why do we study communication? The answer is that we all can improve our communication skills if we practice them. That means learning to be a better listener and a more confident public speaker.

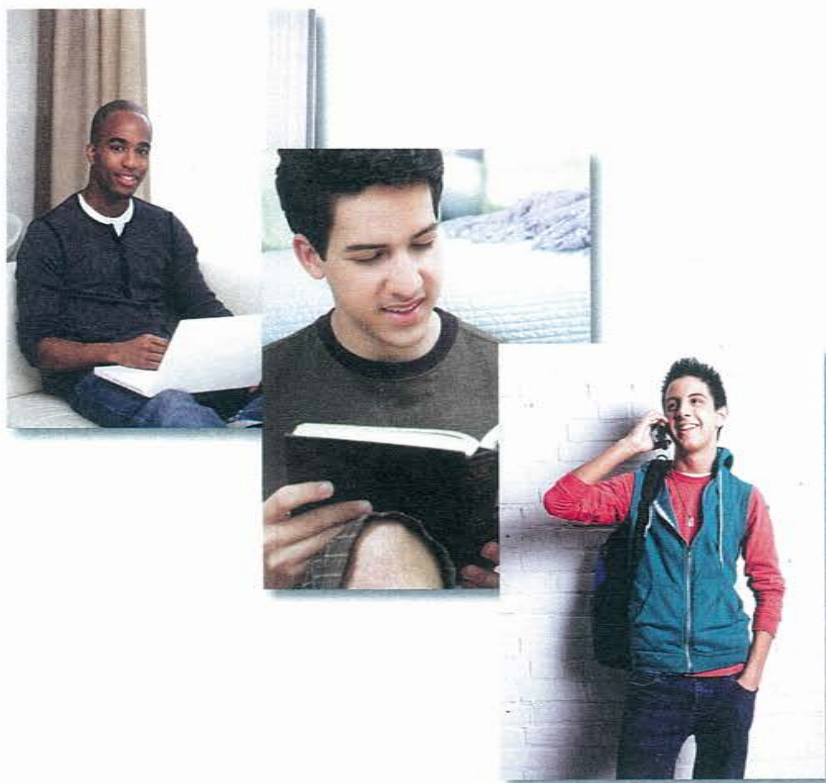
Earning this merit badge will make you more aware of communication in your life. You will learn how to interact better with others and improve your communication skills. You can use these skills when you need to inform, persuade, or get the attention of people.



According to the National Communication Association, “Communication is a learned skill. Most people are born with the physical ability to talk, but we learn over time to speak well and communicate effectively.” In other words, we do not communicate naturally. We learn how to communicate from others—by watching them, listening to them, and doing what we see others do. We learn from our parents and teachers how to communicate better.

### Keeping a Communication Log

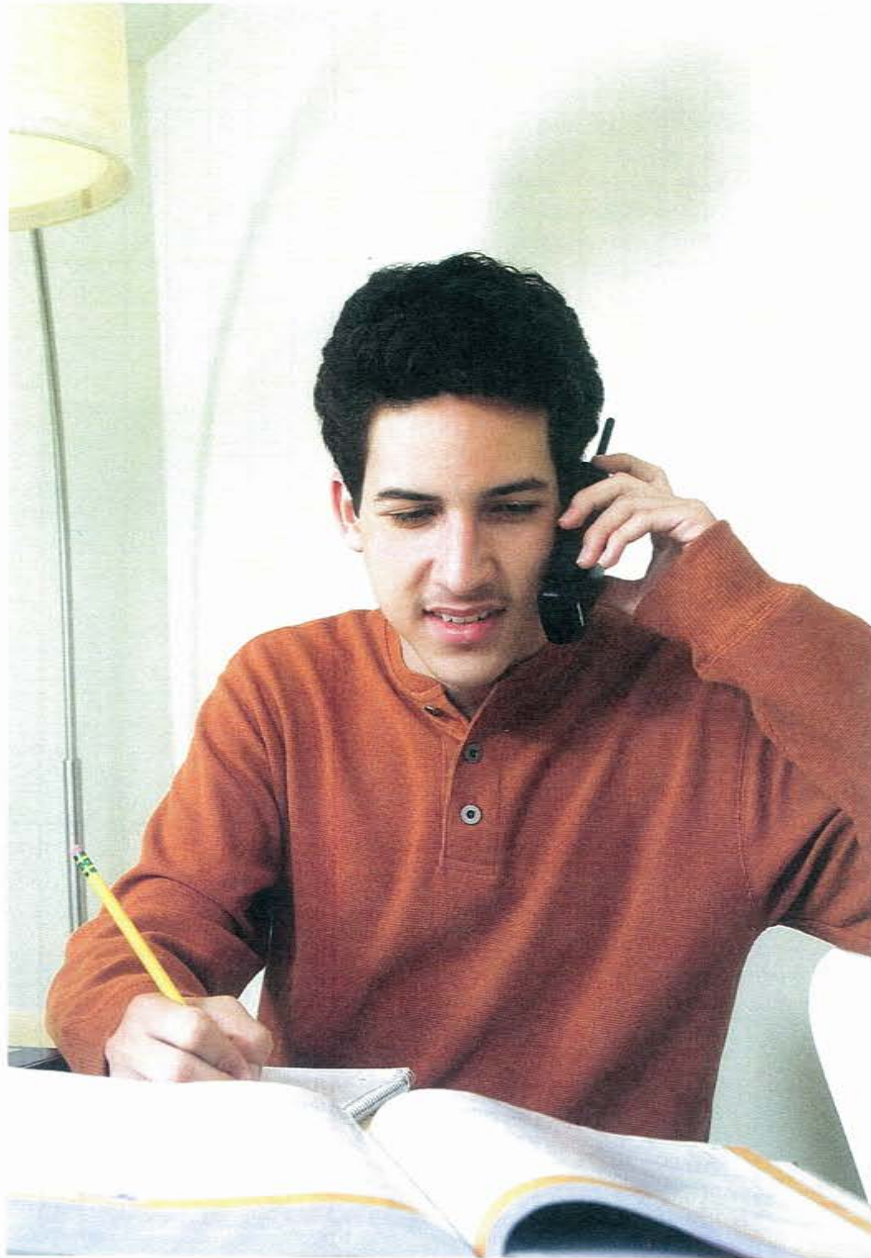
By observing how you communicate and how much time you spend communicating, you can learn about your own strengths and weaknesses as a communicator. Requirement 1a asks you to keep a detailed communication log for one day. Doing so will help you see your communication style more clearly. You will know how much time you spend online, or watch TV, listen to the radio, and read. You will learn how much time you spend on the phone and in face-to-face interactions, and how often you use e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or write letters to friends and relatives.



### Sample Communication Log

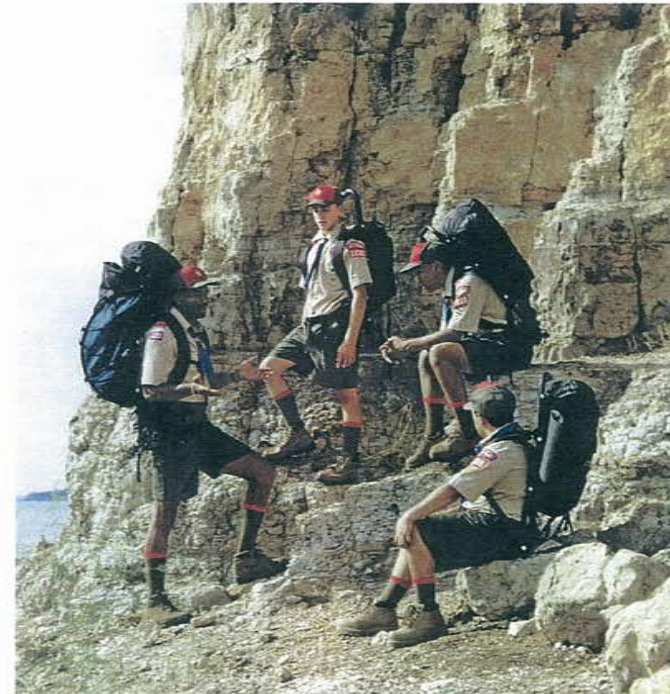
Date: Tues., 3/18

Ways to Communicate	Face-to-Face	Listening to Teacher/Public Speech	Small Group	TV/Print Media/Radio	E-Mail/Text Message	Correspondence	Telephone
Time 6 to 7 a.m.	III			II			
7 to 8 a.m.	<del>IIII</del> III		IIII	I			
8 to 9 a.m.	<del>IIII</del> I	I	II	III			
9 to 10 a.m.	<del>IIII</del>	I	III	IIII			
10 to 11 a.m.	<del>IIII</del> II	I	I	I			
11 a.m. to noon	<del>IIII</del> I	I	I	III			
Noon to 1 p.m.	<del>IIII</del> III		IIII	II			
1 to 2 p.m.	IIII	I	II	I			
2 to 3 p.m.	III	I	I	II	III	III	
3 to 4 p.m.	<del>IIII</del> III		I	III	<del>IIII</del>	<del>IIII</del>	=
4 to 5 p.m.	<del>IIII</del> II		I	I	II	II	=
5 to 6 p.m.	IIII			II	<del>IIII</del>	<del>IIII</del>	=
6 to 7 p.m.	III			<del>IIII</del>	II	II	III
7 to 8 p.m.	<del>IIII</del>			I	<del>IIII</del>	<del>IIII</del>	-
8 to 9 p.m.	II			I	III	III	-
9 to 10 p.m.	III			III	III	III	-
10 to 11 p.m.	I						
11 p.m. to midnight							



## Good Listener, Good Leader

Have you ever met someone new and then promptly forgotten his or her name? This can be very embarrassing. Listening is one of the most important skills you can learn. Scientists say that we learn 85 percent of what we know by listening. However, listening is more than just hearing. Listening is *receiving*. When you focus on the speaker and what is being said, you learn more, remember more, and retain the information longer.



## How to Remember Names

People like it when you call them by name. This shows respect. It often makes people glad they have met you. Here is a neat trick to help you remember a person's name. Let's say you meet a man named Bob Brown. First, say his name aloud. "It's nice to meet you, Bob Brown." Repeat his name to yourself a couple of times. Next, "hang" the name in a mental picture. To do that, look at Bob and picture him in a scene based on his name. For example, imagine that he is in a rowboat with the letters "BOB" on the side. The rowboat is bobbing up and down in a sea of chocolate (brown) milk. The next time you see Bob Brown, this picture will come to mind, and you will remember his name.

Notice how *active listening* includes repeating what you have heard. Active listening helps the speaker and the listener understand, and perhaps resolve, a problem or conflict. We will discuss active listening in the next section.

Practice listening to the speaker with respect. If you work hard not to interrupt even when you really want to make a point, the speaker will respect you more. Being a good listener is important in building and keeping friendships. If you take the time to listen to your friends when they need you, they probably will do the same for you.

There are many different reasons for listening. When you listen to your teacher in school or to your Scoutmaster at a troop meeting, you are listening to gain information. You may have listened to someone who is trying to persuade you about something. Perhaps you have listened to sounds in nature or music that helped you relax. Some people fall asleep faster when they are in a tent near a babbling brook. For others, it helps to hear the big-city background sounds of taxis honking and sirens wailing.



## Tips for Better Listening

**Pay attention.** It is natural for your mind to wander when someone is talking to you. Often, we think about what we are going to say next, rather than listening to what the speaker is saying. However, a good listener ignores that impulse.

**Be responsive.** A good listener lets the speaker know that his message is getting across. Instead of being distracted, look directly and often at the speaker's eyes, nod your head, and make short responses like, "Yes, I get it," or "That's interesting."

**Restate what you heard.** Another great listening skill is to state what you think the speaker just said, using your own words. Ask questions if necessary. This helps you make sure you understood what was said. "We'll meet at 3 o'clock at the snack bar in the bowling alley, right? Or did you say at the snack bar next door to the bowling alley?"

### Keep a Listening Journal

Requirement 1b asks you to keep a journal of your listening experiences to make you more aware of this key skill. Make a note of when you listen to gain information and when someone is trying to persuade you about something. Identify when you listen to appreciate or enjoy something, and when you listen to understand someone's feelings.

### Remembering the Important Things

We cannot remember everything; we must decide what is important to remember. Some scientists have discovered that just after we hear something, we will remember less than half of it. By the next day, we might recall only up to a third of the message.

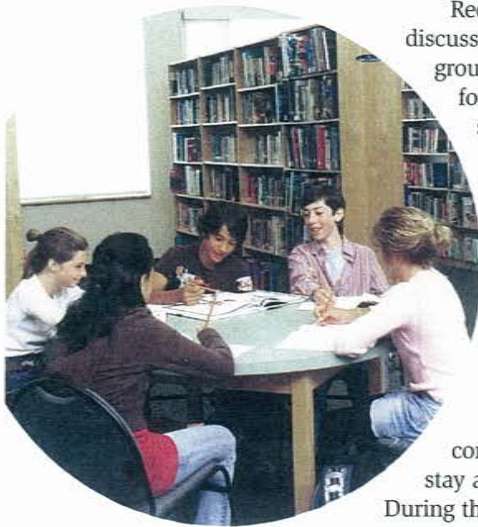
Earlier, we explained how to create a mental picture to help you recall someone's name. Another great memory tool is to write down what you need to remember. As soon as you can after you hear something, or even while you are listening, write down the things you need to remember. Be sure to look at your notes later. If necessary, rewrite your remarks more clearly and add details to help you understand your notes.

While you lead the discussion, remember that your task is to be part referee, part coach, and part observer. Do not take sides. Remind participants to make all comments to the group leader or to the whole group. Prevent conversations between individuals, or redirect them to the group.

## Leading Small-Group Discussions

Leading a small-group discussion is exciting. As a Scout, you may have a chance to lead a discussion in your patrol or troop. As a student, you may get to lead a discussion for a school project or sports team. Here are some other kinds of group discussions:

- Work groups (people working together on a task)
- Focus groups (people brought together to discuss a product or service)
- Brainstorming groups (people who gather to come up with new ideas about how to do something)



Requirement 1c asks you to lead a small-group discussion. Before the discussion begins, give the group clear guidelines about the topic and the format of the discussion. You might start by saying, "Today we are going to brainstorm ideas for Eagle Scout projects. I want each person to share new ideas and make suggestions for our current projects. We will sit in a circle, and each of us will have three minutes to share our own thoughts. After each speaker finishes, the group will have three minutes to ask questions. Then, the person at the speaker's right will have a turn to speak."

As group leader, you cannot join the conversation. Avoid talking too much. Instead, stay a little bit apart to watch, listen, and guide.

During the discussion:

- Keep the group members focused on discussing the correct topic. Don't let the group get distracted.
- Make each person feel that it is OK to talk about his own experiences or ideas.

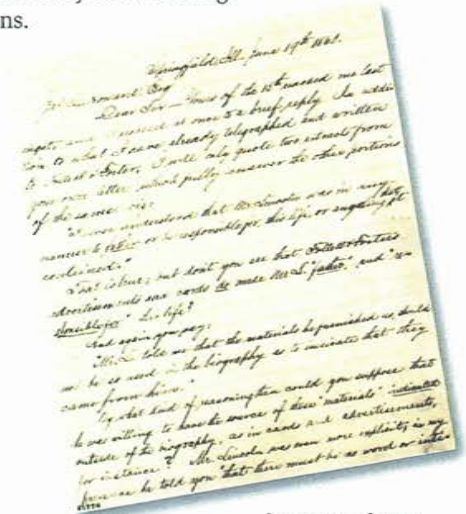
- Give shy people a chance to talk; encourage them with a smile and a kind word.
- Prevent any one person from taking over the conversation. Do this respectfully.
- Make sure the group gives each person a chance to speak and be heard without interruption.
- If necessary, help group members to compromise.
- Watch the time to make sure the group completes the discussion or task.

As each person speaks, observe how he communicates and how others respond to him. Look for nonverbal communication. Notice how a smile, shrug, or raised brow can reveal a person's feelings or thoughts. When each speaker finishes, thank him for participating. When the time is nearly up, close by summarizing the main points and the group's conclusions.

## Text Message or Formal Letter?

During the Civil War—before there were computers, telephones, or even motorized mail delivery—letters often took months to arrive. Union and Confederate soldiers wrote detailed and expressive letters and used beautiful penmanship. Their friends and relatives cherished these handwritten words. Many of those letters, which became family keepsakes and were passed down through generations, survive today.

Requirement 1d asks you to list as many methods of communication as you can, and identify to your counselor when each method should (and should not) be used. Today, we use many forms of communication: text messages, telephones, e-mails, faxes, regular mail, and express mail delivery around the globe by plane. There is no one right way to communicate. However, you can pick the best way to send a message, depending on who will get it and why you are sending it. Here are some simple guidelines to help you choose the right way to communicate.



Letters written by Union and Confederate soldiers show that the average foot soldier had, for the most part, a fairly impressive command of the English language.

## Penmanship: A Disappearing Art

In the past, people wrote letters by hand. Now we are more likely to send an e-mail or a text message. Few people today have neat handwriting that is also beautiful. Practice your handwriting so that anyone can read it. Using a computer, choose a font that you would like your handwriting to look like. Make sure your practice sheet includes all the letters in the alphabet and has lots of space between lines. Print out the page and practice writing the letters below each line.

### Formal Letters

Being able to write a formal letter in the proper format says a lot about your maturity and professionalism.

We use formal letters to communicate for school or business purposes, or to write recommendations. When you apply for an internship, a camp, or a job, you may have to write a formal letter asking admission or permission to attend or to state your interest. If you are chosen for an award or honored for your talents, write a formal letter thanking the organization. Letters to the editor of a newspaper or magazine, even those sent by e-mail, also require a formal tone.

June 12, 2009

Mr. Doug MacArthur  
Sports Director, WSEE-TV  
745 Peach Street  
Atlanta, GA 30302

Dear Mr. MacArthur:

I am writing to express my interest in applying for the summer internship program that your television station has posted this week.

I am a freshman communication major, concentrating on television writing and production. I have done quite a bit of work during my first year in college writing scripts for campus shows, working cameras and lights, and co-producing a sports program that is aired on our local cable station. I have assisted in organizing talent and guests, and coordinating sets.

I am seeking to complement these great experiences with work at your station, learning from your experienced sports anchors and reporters. I believe I would be an asset to your program from a technical side, and have a thorough knowledge of sports and local teams.

I will call in the next week to see if there is a mutual interest, and that my qualifications meet your station's needs for the program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  


Mark Peterson  
25 Forest Trail  
Marietta, GA 30302

Enc: application

Formal letters are always typed, spell-checked, and then proofread (to catch mistakes the computer missed). Begin with today's date in the top, left-hand corner, followed by the recipient's name, formal title, street address, city, state, and zip code. Add the recipient's e-mail address if you are sending the letter electronically. The formal greeting with a colon at the end (for example, "Dear Ms. Brown:" or "Dear Dr. Smith:") is next.

The body of the letter follows. End with a formal closing, such as "Sincerely," or "Best regards." Follow with your full name typed below it; leave enough space above for your signature. Add your own address information, phone number, and e-mail address. If you are enclosing something with the letter, such as an application or resume, put a note at the bottom of the letter like this: "Enc: resume" or "Enc: application and \$75 fee."

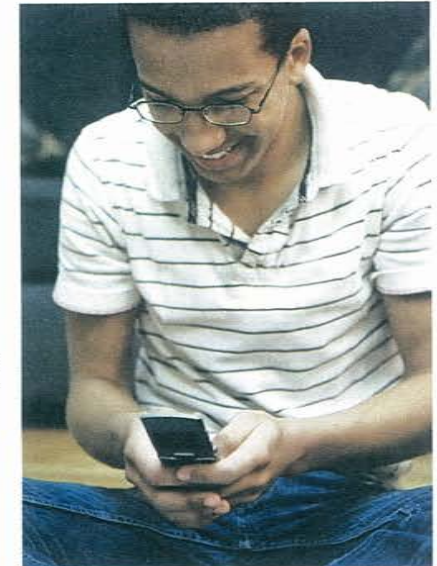
### Faxes

A *fax* (short for "facsimile") is a copy of a document that is transmitted over telephone lines or the Internet. The recipient can view it as a printout or as an image on a computer screen. Sending a fax is not as personal as making a phone call, but it lets you instantly send detailed or printed information, such as a map or a newspaper clipping. It is particularly helpful for business offices.

The main drawback of faxes is that not everyone has a fax machine or a computer that can send and receive faxes. In addition, faxing can be expensive if you have to send or receive messages at an office supply store or copy shop, and when the recipient has a long-distance number.

### Text Messaging

Sometimes called "texting," this form of communication involves sending short messages, usually by cell phone. Texting is good for quick communication, especially when phone calls might be disruptive or impractical. It is also useful for leaving a message when a person can't take your call. Remember that your cell phone provider may charge a fee for texting.



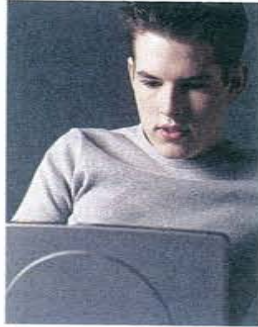
In a formal letter, "Enc." is short for "enclosure."

E-mail works well for most written communication. You may sometimes need to send a formal letter, such as when the person you are writing to does not have a computer, or when you are writing about something very personal or serious.

### E-mail

E-mail, short for “electronic mail,” has changed how many of us communicate. E-mail messages travel electronically. They can be just about any length and can have attachments such as photographs, videos, or documents. An e-mail usually reaches its destination almost instantly. You can send e-mail just about anywhere in the world and store e-mails as long as you want. You may also *forward* e-mails to others.

E-mail is so easy to use that many people write a note quickly and click “send” without reviewing their message. You should always review an e-mail before sending it. Make sure that it is easy to understand, contains good spelling and grammar, and is respectful. Even in an e-mail, misspelled words, poor grammar, or unclear sentences can make you look rude or not very smart—or both.



If you need to leave someone a voice mail message, speak slowly and clearly. Keep your message brief and to the point.

### Phone Calls

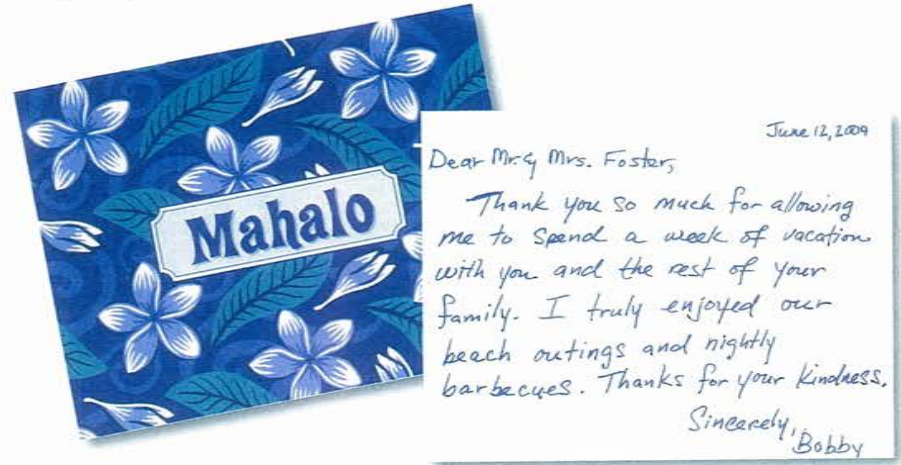
Phone calls—whether by landline or cell phone—are great for hearing the other person’s voice, casual chatting, making quick plans, or finishing some business for your Scout troop. Also, some people communicate better by talking than by writing. Phone calls do have drawbacks: People are not always available to take your calls, it is hard to exchange detailed information over the phone, and visual images or information that needs to be stored cannot be shared.

When making a phone call, have a pen and paper handy to write down details if necessary. When calling a friend and someone else answers, it is polite to say, “Hello, this is [your name here]. May I speak to...?” If you are calling someone whom you do not know well, introduce yourself using your full name; clearly state why you are calling.



### Thank-You Notes

If you receive a gift, whether it is in person, such as at your birthday party, or through the mail from faraway friends or relatives, you should write a thank-you note that specifically mentions the gift you received. Write it by hand and send it in the mail. This takes more effort than a phone call or an e-mail, and it shows more respect. Mail your note no more than one week after you receive the gift. Waiting two weeks or longer is not polite. Adults and elders, in particular, will remember receiving a thank-you note from you and will be impressed with your good manners.



Perhaps someone has been very generous or kind to you, inviting you to stay for a weeklong visit or come along on a family trip. In this case, it is even more important to send a thank-you note within a week. You should also think about sending a small gift along with the note. This is particularly important if you had home-cooked meals, went sightseeing, or did something else out of the ordinary, such as if you were driven to events or appointments. You do not have to spend a lot of money. Inexpensive food gifts are a good idea.



## The Five-Minute Speech

A short speech consists of an introduction, the main body, and a closing. Your goal for requirement 3 is to introduce yourself and hook your listeners, deliver information so that the audience understands it, and end in a memorable way. The trick is to know what you are going to say and to organize it well.

Your speech will be better if you choose a topic that you are personally familiar with and know about. A good way to start a speech is to tell a short *anecdote*, or little story, which audiences love to hear. Telling a personal story allows the audience to feel comfortable with you and helps you relax before you start your main presentation.

When you have finished a simple outline, write the main points and some additional minor points on numbered index cards. Do not write out your speech or try to memorize it word for word. That will result in a stiff-sounding presentation. You want your speech to flow naturally, as it would in conversation.



## Sample Outline

Let's say you decide to give a five-minute speech to your Scout patrol about Dutch oven cooking for campouts. To prepare, create a brief outline of the main points to cover. It might look like this.

### I. Introduction

Begin with a true story about the first time you cooked over a campfire. "The beef was burned and covered with ash. It was a disaster! I knew I had to improve my skills. That is when I decided to learn about Dutch oven cooking."

### II. Body

A. How to select a Dutch oven and why you need to season it before using it. This involves oiling it and baking it at a high temperature in an oven.

B. Tips for cooking with Dutch ovens.

C. How to clean and properly store a Dutch oven so it will last a lifetime.

D. One-pot wonders:  
Handouts of four recipes for a Dutch-oven meal that will make your entire patrol a bunch of happy campers.



### III. Conclusion

Nothing tastes better than a hearty meal at the end of a long day of hiking, cycling, or canoeing. Preparing and eating great home-cooked meals outdoors with your patrol is part of what makes the brotherhood of Scouting so memorable. So don't forget the wonders of one-pot cooking with a Dutch oven.

Practice your speech. Do it in front of a mirror, in the shower, while riding your bike, almost anywhere. You will find that the words flow much more naturally after you have gone over the speech a few times.

## Dealing With Stage Fright

Many people get nervous at the thought of speaking in public. That is natural. Here are some tips for staying calm so that you can enjoy giving your speech.

- Know your subject. Give your talk about a topic that you are genuinely interested in and know something about.
- Organize your thoughts. Instead of writing out your entire speech, write only the main points.
- Practice, practice, practice. Rehearse your speech alone or in front of others at least three times. Doing so will help you feel more at ease when you are presenting your speech.
- Be yourself. Do not try to copy a television host or politician. Speak as if you were talking to a good friend.
- Act confident. Even if you feel nervous, do not tell the audience. Smile and look individual audience members in the eye. Speak with a full voice. Do not rush through your words. Soon you will start to feel as confident as you act.
- Get experience. Seek out opportunities to speak in public instead of trying to avoid them. The more you do it, the more comfortable you will get.

Finally, ask your family or a few friends to listen to your speech and give you ideas for improvement. As you speak, remember to look at your audience and smile. Keep your notes handy in case you need to refer to them.

### Tips for Interviewing and Introducing a Guest Speaker



Let's say you have a neighbor who is a police detective. To fulfill requirement 4, you would like to interview her and prepare an introduction to deliver to your counselor, as though she were to be a guest speaker at your next troop meeting. You also need to show your counselor how you will invite your neighbor to speak at the meeting. Here is how you could approach the task.

Call your neighbor on the telephone. Have a small notebook and pen with you when you make the call. Tell the neighbor that you are a Boy Scout and ask her politely if you could interview her as part of your Communication merit badge requirements.

Explain that the requirements include interviewing and preparing to introduce a guest speaker.

If she agrees to help you, ask if this is a good time to talk. If she says yes, ask her about her background, and take notes. (If it is not a good time, ask when you might call again.)

Here are some questions that will help you prepare an introduction. Do not be afraid to ask the person politely to slow down or repeat a statement if you were not able to write down the information fast enough.

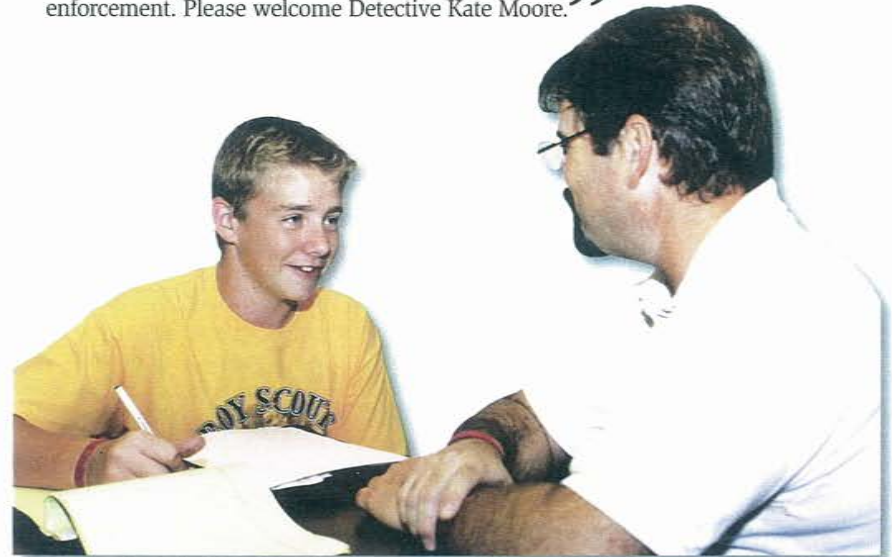
- What is your full name and professional title?
- How long have you been in your current position?
- What are your duties?
- What position did you have before this one?
- What do you like best about your career?
- What is the most difficult challenge you face in your position?
- Did you go to college or receive special training?
- What activities or interests do you enjoy when you are not working?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me about yourself?

Based on the person's answers, write a short introduction of the speaker. Stick to the most important and interesting facts. You do not have to tell everything you learned. Write a few key points on index cards that you can use as reminders. Keep your introduction short. Practice it several times.

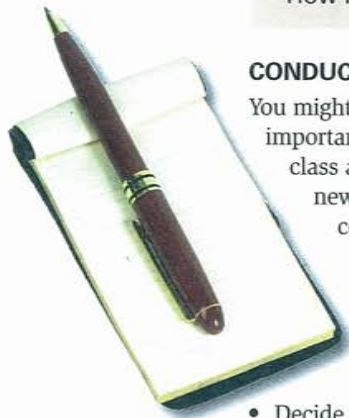
When you and your buddy meet with your counselor to show how you would introduce the speaker, bring your index cards. The cards will help you remember details that you would like to include about the person. Stand up, go to the front of the room, face the "audience," smile at your counselor confidently, and address the "audience." (Your counselor knows you, so keep this informal.) Then give a brief introduction of the speaker and sit down.

Here is an example.

“Thanks for coming today. Our special guest speaker is Detective Kate Moore, a 10-year veteran with the Minneapolis Police Department. Detective Moore has solved many puzzling crimes in our area. She has a bachelor's degree in law enforcement from Iowa State University. When she is not working, she teaches karate and coaches Little League Baseball. Detective Moore has graciously agreed to speak to us today about her position and other career opportunities in law enforcement. Please welcome Detective Kate Moore.”



Open-ended questions are a good way to get information from someone without seeming pushy. This kind of question gives the person flexibility in answering. For example, you might ask, "How is your business doing financially?" rather than, "Are you losing money?" Other examples of open-ended questions are, "What is the best thing about winning the marathon?" and "How has being an Eagle Scout helped you in life?"



### CONDUCTING A MORE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

You might have a chance to interview someone about an important subject. This could happen because you have a class assignment or are writing an article for your school newspaper. An in-depth interview is a good way to conduct research.

Watch broadcast journalists interview people on TV. Notice how they show that they are paying attention to the person they are interviewing. See how they phrase questions to get good responses. Here are some pointers.

- Decide what information you need and whom to interview to get it.
- Research the topic of the interview. Learn as much as possible about it before you start asking questions.
- Take notes. If you want to record the conversation using audio or video, ask for permission first. Even if you do record the interview, take notes. Recorders do not always work.
- If you want to record the interview, practice in advance with the equipment you plan to use. Make sure the batteries are charged or new, or that the interview site has a place to plug in your equipment. How close to the recorder should the speaker be to make a good recording?
- Prepare your questions in advance.
- Use a closed-ended question to get a specific answer. For example, "How many weeks did you work on your Eagle service project?" will get a more precise answer than, "How hard was it to do your Eagle service project?"

- If you contact the person by phone, ask if this is a good time to talk. If it is not a good time, ask when you should call back. Start by asking the person to spell his or her name and tell you his or her title. Speak clearly and slowly so the person can understand your questions.
- If you do not understand a response, ask the same question in another way. You could also state the response in your own words and ask if you got it right. Use follow-up questions to dig more deeply into a topic.
- Save your hardest questions for last. By then, your subject should be more comfortable with you and more willing to answer difficult questions.
- If you run out of time and you still have more questions, ask the person for permission to call back.
- Read your notes (and replay your recording, if you made one) as soon as you can after the interview. While the conversation is still fresh in your mind, rewrite or type your notes for easier reading.

Your task is not to write down everything every person says. Wait until you hear someone give an opinion about an issue or debate a main point of the meeting. Then start writing. Everyone has a unique way of taking quick notes. You probably do this in class or in e-mails and text messages. For instance, you might use "EZ" for the word "easy," or a downward arrow for the word "down." "Without" may become "w/o," and "department" can become "dept." Develop your own shorthand style.

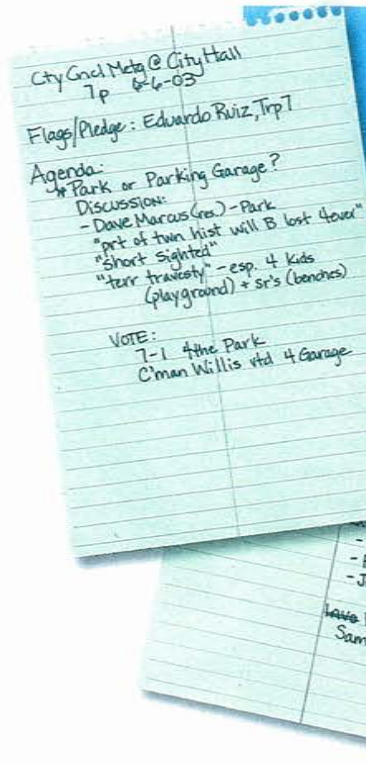
### Reporting an Event Objectively

With your counselor's and your parent's approval, attend a public meeting for requirement 5. You can find a list of public meetings in the local newspaper or on a local website. Take a notebook and a couple of pens or pencils to the meeting.

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Remember to  
get your parent's  
permission to do  
a web search.

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Here is a sample taken from a report. Note that this writer restated some things in his own words. The statements from the citizen were put inside quotation marks to show that those were the speaker's actual words.

Dave Marcus, a longtime resident of Petersburg, argued that replacing the city park with a parking garage would mean that part of our town's history would be lost forever. He called the proposal to demolish the park "shortsighted and a terrible mistake," particularly for children, who would lose their playground, and for senior citizens, who would miss sitting on park benches with friends.

When you arrive, pick up a meeting agenda (a list of topics to be covered) if one is available. Usually, agendas are at or near the

main entrance of the meeting room. Sit near the front so you can hear the speakers, but be ready to turn around and face people in the audience who may stand up to speak.

During the meeting, think of yourself as a witness or observer. Try not to judge what people are saying or form an opinion about the topic of the discussion. Don't be swayed toward one side or the other. Just listen attentively and quietly and record what individuals say about the topic. Bring home the agenda at the end of the meeting.

As soon as you can after you get home, when the meeting is still fresh on your mind and you can easily remember what people said, write a report of the meeting. Reread the agenda to help you recall what happened. Make the report as unbiased and factual as possible. Focus on topics that were debated or discussed.

For example, imagine that you attended a city council meeting. The city council discussed six proposals, but only one of them—whether to turn a city park into a much-needed parking garage—became a topic of debate. Give a short summary of each proposal, but focus on the parking garage issue, which caused a discussion.

Report what people on all sides of the issue said and what, if any, action the council took. Stick to the facts and record a variety of viewpoints. Do not state your own opinion in the report. Did the council make a decision, or did it agree to postpone making a decision? Did the parties compromise on one or more issues? Did anyone agree to take further action? Be sure to report the outcome.

Be sure to record the council's actions on each agenda item, even if some items were boring. You can keep those sections of your report short. For example, if the city council voted to approve funds to fix eight potholes on Hightower Road, that is all you need to say on the topic. Keep your report to one or two pages, and summarize the main issues and points of view covered at the meeting.



Avoid including details of everything you saw and heard.



## Teaching Skills and Using Teaching Aids

For requirement 6, you will develop a plan to teach a skill or inform someone about a subject. Start by making an outline. Use a process similar to the one you used to prepare your short speech. As you form the outline, think about how you could break down the subject into step-by-step instructions. Pick a subject or skill that is (1) something you know well, and (2) something that a friend, relative, or troop member might like to learn. Also, decide whom you will teach. For example, if you know a lot about knots, you could choose to teach a friend how to tie a few basic knots.

First, choose four basic knots that are useful in different situations. Think about how you learned to tie each one. For each knot, write an outline that lists the steps for how to tie the knot. List the best uses for each one.

Next, find pictures of how to tie each knot. Look in your *Boy Scout Handbook*, other Scouting resources, library books, and search the Internet (with your parent's permission). You might want to enlarge these diagrams on a photocopier or computer printer to make them easier for a beginner to follow. Get two pieces of rope that are long enough for knot tying—one for yourself and one for the friend you will teach. Use the ropes and the pictures as teaching aids to help your friend learn how to tie the knots.

Before the teaching session, practice how you will show your friend this skill. Since this is a hands-on skill, consider whether it would be better if the two of you sat side-by-side or across from each other. Which way will make the instruction go more smoothly?

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How you teach the skill will depend on whom you plan to teach. For example, how would you teach a Cub Scout? How would your plan change if you were teaching a boater or rock climber?

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