

Boy Scout Advancement Boards of Review

December 1, 2000

Contents

Aims of Scouting
Four Steps of Advancement
Purpose of a Board of Review
Composition of a Board of Review
Mechanics of a Board of Review
The Nature of the Questions
What Every Scout Should Know
Tenderfoot
Second Class
First Class
Star
Life
Eagle Scout Palm

Aims of Scouting

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

Four Steps of Advancement

A Boy Scout advances from Tenderfoot to Eagle by doing things with his patrol and troop, with his leaders, and on his own. It's easy for him to advance if the following four opportunities are provided to 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 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.* His patrol leader, Scoutmaster, assistant Scoutmaster, a troop committee member, or a member of his troop may test a Scout on rank requirements. The Scoutmaster maintains a list of those qualified to give tests and pass candidates. The Scout's merit badge counselor teaches and tests on the requirements for merit badges.
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, members of the troop committee conduct the review. The Eagle Scout board of review is conducted in accordance with local council procedures.

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.

Purpose of a Board of Review

A periodic review of the progress of a Scout is vital in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Scouting program in the unit. The unit committee can judge how well the Scout being reviewed is benefiting from the program. The unit leader can measure the effectiveness of his or her leadership. The Scout can sense that he is, or is not, advancing properly and can be encouraged to make the most of his Scouting experience.

Not only is it important to review those Scouts who have learned and been tested for a rank, but also to review those Scout who have shown no progress in their advancement over the past few months.

The members of a board of review should have the following objectives in mind when they conduct the review:

- To make sure the Scout has done what he is supposed to do for the rank.
- To see how good an experience the Scout is having in the unit.
- To encourage the Scout to progress further.

The board of review is not an examination; the board does not retest the candidate. The Scout has already been tested on the skills and activities required for the rank. The board should attempt to determine the Scout's attitude and his acceptance of Scouting's ideals. Scout spirit is defined as living the Scout Oath and Scout Law in a Scout's everyday life. The board should make sure that good standards have been met in all phases of the Scout's life. A discussion of the Scout Oath and the Scout Law is in keeping with the purpose of the review, to make sure that the candidate recognizes and understands the value of Scouting in his home, unit, school, and community.

The board should ensure that all the requirements have been "signed off" in the Scout's handbook and that the candidate's leadership service and merit badge records are consistent with the requirements for the rank.

Composition of a Board of Review

For all ranks and Eagle palms (except Eagle), the board of review consists of three to six members of the troop committee. The unit advancement chair usually serves as the chairperson of the board of review. Unit leaders (Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, etc.), relatives, or guardians may not serve as members of a Scout's board of review.

Mechanics of a Board of Review

The review should be conducted at a convenient time and place, such as a meeting, summer camp, or the home of a member of the troop committee.

Because many boys are ill at ease when talking to adults, it is important that the board be held in a relaxed atmosphere. A certain amount of formality and meaningful questioning should be used during the review. It should be the desire of the board to encourage the Scout to talk so that the review can be a learning experience for the candidate and the members of the board.

The Scout should be neat in his appearance and his uniform should be as correct as possible, with the badges worn properly.

The review is not an examination. The Scout has learned his skill and has been examined. This is a review. The Scout should be asked where he learned his skill, who taught him, and the value he gained from passing this requirement. The Scout reviews what he did for his rank. From this review, it can be determined whether he did what he was supposed to do. The review also reveals what kind of experience the Scout is having in his troop. With this knowledge, the troop leaders can shape the program to meet the needs and interests of the Scouts.

The chairman of the board of review should ask the Scout to stand at attention and recite one or more of the following:

The Scout Law

The Scout Oath

The Scout Motto

The Scout Slogan

The Outdoor Code

For the lower ranks, one or two (usually the Scout Law and Scout Oath) should be sufficient. For higher ranks, more may be expected. Re-tries are appropriate, especially for younger Scouts, or if the Scout appears nervous.

The board members are invited to ask questions of the Scout (see the sections appropriate to each rank). The questions should be open-ended, offering an opportunity for the Scout to speak about his opinions, experiences, activities, and accomplishments. Avoid questions that only require a simple one or two word answer. If an answer is too brief, follow up with a "Why?" or "How?" to expand the answer. The questions need not be restricted to Scouting topics; questions regarding home, church, school, work, athletics, etc. are all appropriate. The chairperson should be made aware of any sensitive subjects; these should be communicated to the board before the review begins (e.g., if a Scout is experiencing family difficulties due to a divorce, it would be prudent to avoid family issues.)

A board of review should take approximately 15 minutes, with more time as necessary to provide the greatest possible opportunity for the Scout to advance. At the conclusion of the review, the board should know whether a boy is qualified for the rank or Palm. The Scout is asked to leave the room while the board members discuss his achievements. The decision of the board of review is arrived at through discussion and must be unanimous. If members are satisfied that the Scout is ready to advance, he is called in, congratulated, notified as to when he will receive his recognition, and encouraged to continue his advancement.

If the board decides that the Scout is not ready to advance, the candidate should be informed and told what he has not done satisfactorily. Most Scouts accept responsibility for not completing the requirements properly. The board should specify what must be done to correct the candidate's weaknesses and schedule another board of review for him.

After the board of review is completed, the Scoutmaster is informed of all of the decisions that were made by the board of review.

After a Scout satisfactorily completes a board of review, he cannot be recognized until that action is reported to the council service center on a Unit Advancement Report. A monthly report keeps unit records current and is a good practice. The unit should also keep a record for easy reference by the Scoutmaster and use by other boards of review.

The Nature of the Questions

Following are typical board of review questions for each rank. The questions for the lower ranks are simpler and generally deal with factual information about the Scout's participation in his unit, and his approach to applying the skills he has learned toward earning the next rank. The questions for the higher ranks are less specific, and generally seek to aid understanding of how Scouting is becoming an integral part of the Scout's life. Remember: it is not the point of a board of review to retest the Scout.

If a Scout appears nervous or anxious about the board of review, it might be appropriate to ask one or two questions for a lower rank, to help establish some rapport. In general, within a rank, the questions are arranged from easier to more difficult.

For each rank, there is a question about advancing to the next rank. The purpose of this question is to encourage advancement, but it should not be asked in a way that pressures the Scout. If the board of review is for the Life rank, and the Scout is at or near his 17th birthday, a serious discussion about his plans for Eagle may be in order. At the very least, be certain that the Scout realizes any time constraints.

More questions are provided than can typically be accommodated in the time suggested. The board should select the questions that are appropriate for the particular Scout and his experiences.

These questions are intended to only serve as a guide. Units should add to, or remove from, these lists as they feel appropriate.

What Every Scout Should Know

Every Scout should understand the meaning of "Scout Spirit". They may have all kinds of answers, many of which are quite good. The real answer is, to live by the Scout Oath and Law. It is appropriate to ask at any rank about the meaning of Scout Spirit, how he demonstrates Scout Spirit in the troop, at home, at school, etc.

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.

Scout Law:

As Scout is ...
Trustworthy
Loyal
Helpful
Friendly
Courteous
Kind
Obedient
Cheerful
Thrifty
Brave
Clean
Reverent

Scout Motto:

Be Prepared.

Scout Slogan:

Do a good turn daily.

Outdoor Code:

As an American, I will do my best to --
Be clean in my outdoor manners,
Be careful with fire,
Be considerate in the outdoors, and
Be conservation-minded.

Tenderfoot Rank

This is the Scout's first experience with a board of review. The process may require some explanation on the part of the board of review.

The first few questions in the board of review should be simple. The board of review should try to gain a sense of how the Scout is fitting in to the troop, and the Scout's level of enjoyment of the troop and patrol activities.

Encourage advancement to 2nd Class. Point out that the Scout may have already completed many of the requirements for 2nd Class.

Sample Questions:

1. When did you join our troop?
2. How many troop meetings have you attended in the last two months?
3. What did you do at your last patrol meeting?
4. Tell us about your last troop campout. What did you do? Where did you go?
5. Did you cook a meal? Tell us about it?
6. What first aid skills have you learned for this rank? How would these skills help you on a campout?
7. Where did you learn how to fold the American flag? Tell us about your first experience with this skill.
8. Why is it important to be able to identify poison oak (poison ivy, sumac)?
9. Why is it important to know what to do if you are on a hike and got lost?
10. Why do we whip or fuse the ends of a rope?
11. When do we use the "Buddy System" in Scouting?
12. Why do you think there are physical fitness requirements (push-ups, pull-ups, etc.), and a retest after 30 days, for the Tenderfoot rank?
13. What does it mean to a Tenderfoot Scout to "Be Prepared"?
14. Do you believe you have done your best to complete the requirements for Tenderfoot? Why?
15. What "good turn" have you done today?
16. Please give us an example of how you obey the Scout Law at home (school, church)?
17. What do you like best about our troop?
18. What does it mean to say "a Scout is Kind"?
19. Do you have any special plans for this summer? The holidays?
20. When do you plan to complete the requirements for Second Class?

Second Class Rank

This is the Scout's second board of review. The process should be familiar, 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 re-testing these skills. The board of review should try to perceive how the Scout's patrol is functioning, and how this Scout is functioning within his patrol.

Encourage work on the remaining requirements for First Class; many may have already been completed.

Sample Questions:

1. How many troop meetings have you attended in the last 3 months?
2. What did your patrol do at its last meeting?
3. Tell us about your troop/patrol activities since you joined the troop.
4. Tell us about a service project in which you participated.
5. Where did you go on your last Troop campout? Did you have a good time? Why?
6. Did you prepare a meal? Tell us about it? How did you cook it?
7. Why is it important to be able to identify animals found in your community?
8. Tell us about the flag ceremony in which you participated.
9. What is in your personal first aid kit?
10. What sort of skills have you learned for "hurry" first aid? What other first aid skills have you learned for this rank?
11. What have you learned about safely handling woods tools (axe, saw, etc.)?
12. Have you gone on a hike with our troop? Tell us about it?
13. How are a map of the area and a compass useful on a hike?
14. Have you learned any swimming skills for this rank? Tell us about your experiences.
15. Have you ever done more than one "good turn" in a day? Ask for details.
16. 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 easier ones.
17. 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?
18. 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?
19. What suggestions do you have for improving our Troop?
20. How do you help out at home, church, and school?
21. What class in school is most challenging for you? Why?
22. How is it possible to live the Scout Oath and Law in your daily life?
23. What does it mean to say, "A Scout is Trustworthy"?
24. When do you plan to complete the requirements for First Class?

First Class Rank

By this point the Scout should be comfortable with the board of review process.

The Scout should be praised for his accomplishment in achieving First Class (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.

Sample Questions:

1. On average, how many troop meetings do you attend each month?
2. What parts of troop meetings do you like the most/least?
3. What is the Scout Slogan? What does it mean for 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. Were you in charge of planning and preparing a dinner for your last campout? What did you select? How did your patrol mates like your meal?
6. As a 1st Class Scout, what do you think the Star, Life, and Eagle Scouts will expect from you on a troop outing?
7. Does your family do any camping? What have you learned in Scouts that you have been able to share with your family to improve their camping experiences?
8. Why do you think that swimming is emphasized in Scouting? Tell us how you completed the swimming requirements for First Class.
9. Why is it important for you to know how to transport a person who has a sprained ankle?
10. Why should you know the signs of a heart attack?
11. Why should you know CPR?
12. What is a safe trip afloat? Why is that important?
13. Why is it important for you to be able to recognize local plant life?
14. Have you met with someone to discuss your rights and duties as a citizen? Who?
15. What does it mean to say, "A Scout is Courteous"?
16. Why are merit badges a part of Scouting?
17. Please explain "a Scout is reverent."
18. What is your favorite part of Scouting? Least favorite?
19. How does a Scout fulfill his "Duty to Country"?
20. How do you define "Scout Spirit"?
21. What is the Order of the Arrow? What is the primary function of OA?
22. Who was Lord Baden-Powell?
23. When do you think you might be ready for Star Scout? What is your plan?

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 begin to slow in their advancement. 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 that meet his needs or interests.

Sample Questions:

1. How many Troop outings have you attended in the last three months?
2. Tell us about the service projects in which you participated.
3. What does it mean for a Star Scout to "Be Prepared" on a daily basis?
4. How have the Scout skills that you have learned helped you in a non-Scouting activity?
5. How many merit badges have you earned? What was the most difficult (fun, challenging, expensive, etc.)?
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 is the most important part of a Troop Court of Honor? Why?
9. What leadership positions have you held? What challenges did they present? What are your personal leadership goals and objectives?
10. How would you get a Scout to do an unpleasant task?
11. What extracurricular activities do you participate in at school?
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 is the Scout Oath and Law part of your daily life?
16. What is the Outdoor Code? Why is it important?
17. If the Scout is a member of the Order of the Arrow:
When did you complete your "Ordeal", "Brotherhood"?
What does membership in the OA signify?
18. Have you earned any special awards or accomplishments in your school, sports, church, etc.?
19. When do you plan on earning 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.

Sample Questions:

1. What has been your best/worst camping experience in Scouting?
2. How many patrol meetings has your patrol held in the last three months? How many of them have you attended?
3. Have any of the merit badges you have earned lead to hobbies or possible careers?
4. What are your hobbies?
5. Of the merit badges you have earned, which one do you think will be of greatest value to you as an adult? Why?
6. Why do you think that the three "Citizenship" merit badges are required for the Eagle Rank?
7. What is your current (most recent) leadership position within the Troop? How long have you held that position? What particular challenges does it present? What is Leadership?
8. Which leadership position is the most important one to the troop as a whole? Why?
9. Do you have any brothers or sisters who are in Scouts (any level)? What can you do to encourage them to continue with Scouts, and to move forward along the Scouting Trail?
10. How do you choose between a school activity, a Scout activity, and a family activity?
11. Why do you think that Star and Life Scouts are required to contribute so much time to service projects? What service projects are most rewarding to you? Why?
12. Why do you think that a board of review is required for rank advancement?
13. How has Scouting prepared you for the future?
14. What does it mean to say, "A Scout is Reverent"?
15. What does "Scout Spirit" mean to a Life Scout?
16. Why do you think that Scouting for Food is referred to as a "National Good Turn".
17. The Scout Oath refers to "Duty to Self"; what duty do we have to ourselves?
18. If the Scout is a member of OA:
 - What role does OA play in Scouting?
 - What honor do you hold in OA?
 - What is the difference between Scout "ranks" and OA "honors"?
19. Have you begun to think about an Eagle Service Project? What are you thinking about doing?
20. How long do you think it will take you to plan and complete your Eagle Scout Service Project?
21. What are the remaining merit badges you plan to earn for Eagle? Do any of them have any "time" requirements?

Eagle Scout 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.

Sample Questions:

1. As an Eagle, have the Scout Oath and Law gained new meaning for you? How?
2. Why is it important to develop and identify leadership? How do you do this?
3. What is your role as a leader in this troop?
4. Since earning your Eagle (last Palm), what merit badges have you earned?
5. Since earning your Eagle (last Palm), in what service projects have you participated?
6. How do you plan to continue your involvement with Scouting?
7. 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?
8. If a Life Scout were having difficulty selecting an Eagle Service Project, what would you suggest to him?
9. What is the primary role of the Scoutmaster?
10. How have you begun to "... give back to Scouting more than Scouting has given to you".
11. In what year was the first World Jamboree held? [Answer: 1920]