

American Cultures Merit Badge

Updated: 12/11/2025

Important information about how to prepare for the merit badge

Parents, please review the content of a merit badge prior to registering your Scout: some badges may be challenging for younger Scouts. Also, the class discussions are more interesting if Scouts review *all* the requirements for the badge before the program. The chances of your scout completing all the work for the badge increases dramatically when they are properly motivated and the badge content is age-appropriate.

Merit badges are not designed to be completed in a day and require independent work on the part of the Scout outside of the workshop.

It is the Scout's responsibility to answer the requirements. NOT THE PARENT

A Scout may use a parent's email account to submit requirement answers BUT:

It is NOT the parent's responsibility to scan in the Scout's work and send it to me

That is the Scout's responsibility

Parents are not to act as an agent of the Scout. All assignments must be completed by the Scout and if there are issues, the Scout must communicate those to me.

Before attending, please make sure your Scoutmaster knows the Scout is taking this virtual merit badge class and indicates the Initial Unit Leader Signature in the merit badge in Scoutbook. [Click on the Scout in Scoutbook, click on their advancement, the merit badge and Initial Unit Leader Signature, enter a date.] (The Scoutmaster may alternately sign the front of a blue card for the badge. Blue cards are available here:

<https://support.grandcanyonbsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/mb-app-blue-card-fillable.pdf> send the signed card to: bill.nelson@scouting.org)

IMPORTANT: For full credit for the badge, evidence of the requirements, as explained below, must be sent to: bill.nelson@scouting.org

The merit badge class will be held in two sessions about 2-3 hours long. We will go over all of the requirements in the classes and give the Scouts a lot of assistance on getting the requirements completed but they will have to be completed outside of class.

Though not required, Scout workbooks are useful and we prefer that Scouts use the workbook during the program. A workbook can be found at:

https://scoutingevent.com/Download/010161677/OR/Family_Life_Workbook.pdf

About blue cards: We will utilize Scoutbook.com and record requirement completion online. Blue cards can be printed by parents and unit leaders in Scoutbook by clicking on the Scout, the Scout's advancement, the merit badge, and print blue cards.

Requirements

- TYPE OR WRITE LEGIBLY AND WHERE NOT ASKED FOR A LIST, IN COMPLETE SENTENCES.
- PUT YOUR NAME IN EMAILS TO ME AND IN ALL ATTACHMENTS
- READ THE REQUIREMENTS CAREFULLY, YOU MUST ANSWER THE REQUIREMENTS AND PROVIDE WHAT IS BEING ASKED FOR.
- COPY A PARENT OR GUARDIAN ON ALL CORRESPONDENCE

REQUIREMENTS

We will cover the all requirements in class however the Scout will need to complete them on your own. The requirements are easy enough that Scouts can get started prior to the first class. You need to send the completed requirements to: bill.nelson@scouting.org for credit when completed. (ALWAYS COPY A PARENT OR GUARDIAN)

Scouts must work on requirements as an individual.

First read the merit badge pamphlet. The requirements for this badge are a lot easier to finish if you read through the merit badge pamphlet first. The pamphlet for this badge is available free at this link:

https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/Merit_Badge_ReqandRes/Pamphlets/American%20Cultures.pdf

REQUIREMENTS (Do them all prior to class if possible):

NOTE: Choose THREE groups that have different racial, cultural, national, or ethnic backgrounds, one of which comes from your own background. Use these groups to meet requirements 1, 2, and 3. (Tell me which three groups you chose.)

1. Do TWO of the following, choosing a different group for each: (Use the workbook or a Word document in answering this requirement. Be prepared to discuss in class as well.)

(a) Go to a festival, celebration, or other event identified with one of the groups. Report on what you see and learn.

(b) Go to a place of worship, school, or other institution identified with one of the groups. Report on what you see and learn.

- (c) Talk with a person from one of the groups about the heritage and traditions of the group. Report on what you learn.
- (d) Learn a song, dance, poem, or story that is traditional to one group, and teach it to a group of your friends.
- (e) Go to a library or museum to see a program or exhibit featuring one group's traditions. Report on what you see and learn.

2. Imagine that one of the groups had always lived alone in a city or country to which no other groups ever came. Tell what you think the city or country might be like today. Now tell what you think it might be like if the three groups you chose lived there at the same time.

(Use the workbook or a Word document in answering this requirement. Be prepared to discuss in class as well.)

3. Tell about some differences between the religious and social customs of the three groups. Tell about some ideas or ways of doing things that are similar in the three groups.
(Use the workbook or a Word document in answering this requirement. Be prepared to discuss in class as well.)

4. Tell about a contribution made to our country by three different people, each from a different racial, ethnic, or religious background.

(Use the workbook or a Word document in answering this requirement. Be prepared to discuss in class as well.)

5. Give a talk to your Scout unit or class at school on how people from different groups have gotten along together. **AND** Lead a discussion on what can be done to help various groups understand one another better.

(In the workbook or a Word document: Tell me how this talk and discussion went. If possible, record the talk and send me a link to the recording. If not possible, send me a note from someone who saw you give it.) (Be prepared to discuss this in class as well.)