

Online Merit Badge Syllabus Citizenship in the Nation

Introduction:

What does our country mean to us? Citizenship in the Nation provides Scouts with an opportunity to reflect on this question and learn more about our past. While doing so they will also be engaging with the question of who we are as a country. In the process the program fosters active citizenship by encouraging Scouts to become active citizens and to engage with their country and its democracy. Our Online Merit Badge program allows Scouts to take this step towards becoming more active Citizens in a manner consistent with public safety during this pandemic.

Program:

Day one:

Scouts will be welcomed to the class and we will start off with a discussion of the Rights, Obligations and Duties of a US citizen. (Requirement 1)

We will then assign Scouts to complete on their own. This allows Scouts to engage with the projects individually and produce their own best individual work.

The first such task will be to choose a national monument and learn more about it. This allows Scouts to exercise their individual intellectual curiosity to find a national monument which interests them and encourages them to further engage with our nation's past. Scouts will then prepare to report back to the class the next day and tell us what they learned. This will include an explanation of why the monument is important to this nation's citizens. (Requirement 2D)

As part of our exploration of Citizenship in this country, Scouts will be tasked with engaging with current events on a daily basis. This will allow Scouts to develop a greater understanding of our nations as it goes forward in these uncertain times and work towards the goal of creating the informed citizens which our democracy relies on. Scouts will have the choice of either watching the evening news for the rest of the week or reading the front page of a major daily paper for the rest of the week. To show the relevance of national issues to Scouts and to encourage them to engage with our national discourse Scouts will be additionally tasked with choosing an issue and explaining how it affects them and their family. This encourages critical thinking on national issues and active citizenship. (Requirement 3)

Day 2

Scouts will complete their research into a national monument by sharing what they learned and explaining the importance of their monument to the class. We are going to learn a lot from these presentations! (2D)

We will then start our series of discussions of our nation's core documents with a discussion of the declaration of Independence. This will provide an opportunity for students to engage with our country's founding documents to have a better understanding of our past and founding ideals. By using the socratic method we will

Online Merit Badge Syllabus Citizenship in the Nation

engage with the question of how our lives today may be different without this crucial document. (Requirement 4a)

Now that we have spent some time engaging with the concept of active citizenship and democratic participation scouts will be given an opportunity to do so. First we will review the names of our Senators from the State of California and the members of congress from the Scouts congressional district. Then Scouts will choose a national issue of importance to them and write a letter to one of the Senators about it allowing them an opportunity to engage without nation's political process and demonstrate active citizenship on an issue of importance to them. The letter will have a minimum length of 300 words.

Day 3:

We will continue to engage with the core documents of our country with discussions on the Preamble, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the later amendments to our constitution. These documents form the core of what our nation is. Scouts will have an opportunity to learn about them and engage with them for a better understanding of how they continue to guide our everyday lives. (4B-4E)

Scouts will then have an opportunity for more individual research. They will choose a speech of historical importance and research the author, and the importance of the speech. They will then analyze the importance of the speech at the time and how it still applies to Americans today. Scouts will then have an opportunity to choose a sentence or two from the speech which has significant meaning to them and explain why. This will allow Scouts an opportunity to express something which they find important in our national fabric. (Requirement 6)

Day 4:

Scouts will share the results of their research into an important speech. We will have a great opportunity to see what our group has chosen to listen to the different perspectives of our group!

Day 5

We will continue to learn about the United States government by reviewing the Six functions of government listed in the preamble. We will engage in a discussion about how these functions are relevant to our families and our local communities. (Requirement 5)

Our Republic functions on a system of checks and balances which provides a strong defense against tyranny for our country. Scouts will learn about this system and how it functions. They will also learn about how everyday Citizens such as ourselves are involved with all three branches. (Requirement 7)

Online Merit Badge Syllabus Citizenship in the Nation

As part of our exploration of citizenship we will take a virtual fieldtrip to a historical site. In honor of the men and woman who fight and die to keep our nation safe and free we will be taking a virtual trip to the hornet. (<https://uss-hornet.org/digitaltour>) Scouts will be given instructions for their own individual visit were they will learn about the history of this storied Aircraft Carrier. They will prepare to report their findings on the final day.
(2a)

Day six

We will have a discussion about what Scouts learned from their week watching the news. We will respectfully engage in a discussion of national issues that came up during the week. Scouts will also present an issue of personal importance and explain how it affects them and their family. This will be another great opportunity to learn from the diversity of backgrounds and perspectives in our group.

We will finish with Scouts sharing out what they learned from their trips to the Hornet. This will give us a final opportunity (In this class) to engage with our nation's history.

Of course, there will be time at the end to wrap up any loose ends.