

Astronomy Merit Badge

Frequently Asked Questions

Scouts BSA



Cernan Earth and Space Center

2000 5th Ave

River Grove, IL 60171

Saturday, March 28, 2026

Doors Open: 4:30 PM

Registration Opens: 5:00 PM

Doors Close Promptly: 5:30 PM

Estimated Pick-Up: 9:30 PM

BASIC INFORMATION

WHAT WILL SCOUTS DO AT THE BADGE WORKSHOP?

Scouts will work toward earning the Astronomy Merit Badge. Participants rotate through structured sessions including a planetarium program, guided astronomy instruction, telescope observing (weather permitting), and requirement-focused discussions aligned with the 2025–2026 requirements.

DO I HAVE TO ATTEND WITH MY SCOUT?

No. Parents and guardians may drop off Scouts by 5:00 PM and return for pick-up at approximately 9:30 PM. If weather is inclement making telescope viewing impossible, parents can pick up at 8:30 PM. Attendees will be notified at time of drop-off if earlier pick up time is advised.

BADGE INFORMATION

WHAT BADGE IS OFFERED?

The Astronomy Merit Badge (Scouts BSA).

WILL SCOUTS BE ABLE TO COMPLETE ALL THE MERIT BADGE REQUIREMENTS AT THE PROGRAM?

Scouts can complete most requirements during the workshop. However, certain observation-based requirements must be completed prior to arrival, or after the workshop if its not possible to complete them prior. The badge will only be awarded once all requirements are complete.

REQUIRED PRE-REQUISITES (HOMEWORK)

The following requirements must be completed before attending:

- **4c** – Sketch the Big Dipper/Cassiopeia (hours apart)
- **6a** – Sketch the face of the Moon with labeled seas and craters
- **6b** – Sketch the Moon's phase and position over four nights

These involve outdoor observation over time and cannot be fully completed during the workshop.

RECOMMENDED TO COMPLETE BEFORE THE EVENT

4a: Identify 10 constellations

4b: Identify 8 bright stars

5a: Five visible planets and phases

5b: 12 month planet visibility chart

5c: Planet motion

5d: Observe a planet

Scouts who complete these prior to arrival may complete the full merit badge at the event (assuming all other requirements are met).

Scouts who do not complete them will receive a **partial completion** and may finish remaining requirements with an approved Astronomy Merit Badge Counselor after the event.

REQUIREMENTS COVERED ONSITE

(2025–2026 Astronomy Merit Badge)

During the workshop, the following requirements will be addressed:

Requirement 1

Safety, hazards, first aid, and safe solar observing

Requirement 2

Light pollution and its impact

Requirement 3

Telescopes, instruments, care, and storage

Requirement 4

4c – Orientation explanation

4d – Milky Way explanation

(Note: 4a and 4b are recommended to be completed prior)

Requirement 5

5a – Visible planets

5c – Planetary motion

5d – Planet observation (weather permitting or simulation)

Requirement 6

6c – Moon's orbit

6d – Sun/Earth/Moon positions and eclipses

(Note: 6a and 6b must be completed prior)

Requirement 7

Sun composition, sunspots, and star colors

Requirement 8a

Planetarium visit participation (reflection required)

Requirement 9

Career or hobby exploration discussion

Weather-dependent activities may be replaced with approved instructional alternatives if necessary.

Completion is subject to counselor approval and active participation.

ADVANCEMENT DOCUMENTATION

This workshop will use blue cards or an equivalent. It is the responsibility of the badge seeker to turn signed documentation of completed requirements into their unit's advancement chair for electronic input into scout book. The unit is responsible for providing the awarded physical badge.

WHAT IF A SCOUT RECEIVES A PARTIAL?

Scouts receiving a partial completion may complete remaining requirements with an approved Astronomy Merit Badge Counselor after the workshop. Contact Ingrid Ross at ingridaskimross@gmail.com for more information.

FOOD INFORMATION

The event cost includes pizza and beverages. Please indicate any allergies in the notes/comments section during registration.

DRESS CODE & WEATHER

Scouts will spend time outdoors for telescope observing (weather permitting). Participants may be outside for over an hour and should dress warmly in layers, including coat, hat, gloves, and closed-toe shoes.

OTHER INFORMATION

The Cernan Earth and Space Center gift shop will be open. Scouts wishing to purchase items should bring additional spending money.

CAN CUB SCOUTS ATTEND?

This workshop is designed specifically for Scouts BSA working on the Astronomy Merit Badge.