

Greetings Scoutmasters,

My name is James Kile and I am the STEM Director for the 2019 season. One of my goals for the summer is to increase the number of kids earning the Environmental Science pre reqs when they come to camp. In the past, these pre reqs are a major reason why kids have not earned the badge when they come to camp and a major reason why many of you need to talk to the STEM Director on Saturday morning. This document includes an explanation of how the pre reqs should look when completed in order to qualify as having done the requirement. This will allow you to work with your scouts before arriving at camp in order to make sure their work is up to par. There are two pre reqs for Environmental Science (3E and 4) and please keep the following information about them in mind:

3E1 OR 3E2--- This is the 100-word essay and scouts only need to complete one of the two options. While the requirements are very similar sounding, the required information for each one is different. In the past, scouts have tried to pass off copy and pasted information from online as their own work. If an essay is found to have been plagiarized, the scout will not receive credit for their work. Should a scout wish to cite their sources they are happy to do so, but parenthetical citations and/or footnotes do NOT count towards the word count.

3E1: Make sure the species is actually endangered and in the state you live in. Box Turtles in the U.S. are NOT endangered. This is a common animal scouts try and write about. Use this website to help select a species to write about (this is the one we will be referencing when we review the essays) <https://www.fws.gov/endangered/> This requirement specifies that the following information must be included in the report: "what its natural habitat is, why it is endangered, what is being done to preserve it, and how many individual organisms are left in the wild." If any of that information is missing from the essay, it will be handed back as incomplete. Scouts may have to do additional research past just one website in order to find the information. We will not accept essays that say "I could not find this information" or "There is no information available for this". Including all of the required information should easily be over 100 words; however, if it is not, some additional information scouts could include can be to describe and the animal's appearance, what it eats, how it reproduces, or any interesting facts about the animal. Scouts' names and whatever title they put on their essay do NOT count towards the word count. In addition to the essay for 3E1, scouts must also turn in a drawing of the animal they wrote about, not a picture from online. The quality of their picture won't be judged but we need to be able to tell what it is when we look at it. Please keep in mind, the requirement ends by saying "Present your report to your patrol or troop." In order to accommodate for this, the STEM staff will gladly review whatever essays are brought to us at camp, but we will not sign off on the requirement until we receive a note signed by you or another adult leader that they have shared their report with.

3E2: This is the simpler of the two options. The requirement asks scouts to "do research on one species that was endangered or threatened but which has now recovered. Find out how the organism recovered, and what its new status is". If any of that information is missing from the essay, it will be handed back as incomplete. Scouts may have to do additional research past just one website in order to find the information. We will not accept essays that say "I could not find this information" or "There is no information available for this". Including all of the required information should easily be over 100 words; however, if it is not, some additional information scouts could include can be to describe and the animal's appearance, what it eats, how it reproduces, or any interesting facts about the animal. Scouts' names and whatever title they put on their essay do NOT count towards the word count. Use this website to help select a species to write about (this is the one we will be referencing when we review the essays)
<https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp0/reports/delisting-report>

4A or 4B: This is the observations of outdoor study areas and scouts only need to complete one of the two options. Attached is an example of how either requirement should be filled out. Please keep in mind the following about each option:

4A: This is the harder of the two options. This requirement needs a 4 square yard area (6ft by 6ft square) in two different locations to observe. Scouts must count the number of different SPECIES that are in the area. In the past, scouts have tried turning in pre reqs that just say "trees, squirrels, grass". Those kinds of answers don't count since they are not naming the exact species. Also, "lots, a few, etc." are not acceptable measures for how much of each species there are. The report should be about 5-10 sentences long and use the information from their observations.

4B: This option does not specify a certain size area to be observed so scouts are free to choose wherever they like as long as they can complete the requirement well enough. The journal entries should be detailed enough that they are more than just "squirrel, rock, tree, rain". We would like to be able to see their thoughts and see that scouts were critically thinking about the ecosystem during their observations. The report should be about 5-10 sentences long.

I apologize for how long and tedious this explanation is, but this should allow us to address all the common problems and clarify the expectations for the pre reqs so we can have more scouts getting Environmental Science this summer at camp. If you have any questions or need clarification on anything, please feel free to email me at stem@ransburgbsa.org .

Yours in Scouting,
-James Kile