

THE ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

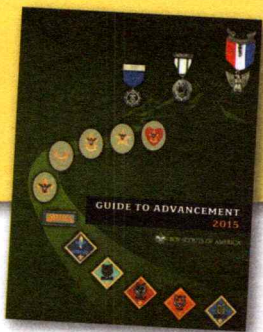
The advancement program includes two elements: ranks and merit badges. Boy Scouting has seven ranks—Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle—and more than 135 merit badges.

The ranks are designed to teach the skills you need to be a good Scout:

- The **Scout** rank starts you off on the right foot by covering topics such as the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, and the patrol method. You should complete this rank as soon as you join a troop.
- The ranks of **Tenderfoot**, **Second Class**, and **First Class** cover important skills related to camping, cooking, hiking, navigation, outdoor ethics, first aid, fitness, citizenship, leadership, nature, tools, and aquatics. It's a good idea to complete these ranks within your first 12 to 18 months as a Scout.
- The ranks of **Star**, **Life**, and **Eagle** emphasize leadership, service, and earning merit badges. (To become an Eagle Scout, you must have earned at least 21 merit badges.) You can work on these ranks until you turn 18.

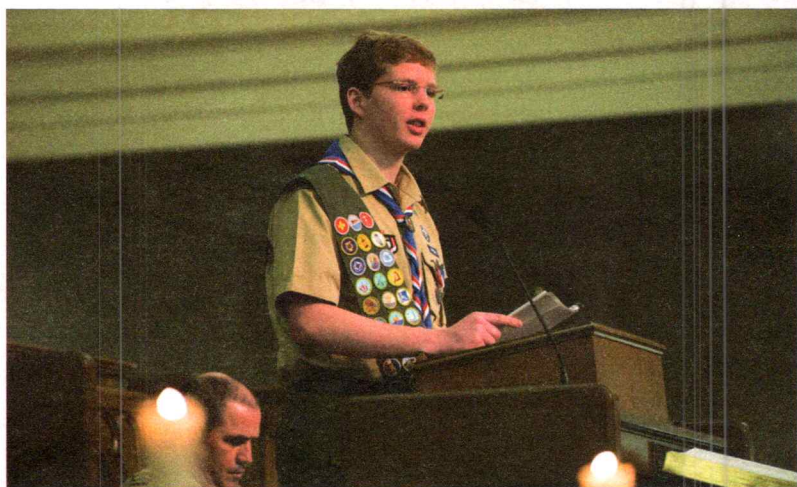
By the time you become a First Class Scout, you should be ready for anything Scouting can throw at you. By the time you become an Eagle Scout, you should be ready for anything *life* can throw at you.

The official resource for the details of the BSA's advancement program is the *Guide to Advancement*, No. 33088. Troop leaders and district and council advancement committees can refer to this document for the answers to every advancement question.



THE FOUR STEPS OF BOY SCOUT ADVANCEMENT

You advance in rank by doing things with your patrol and troop, with your leaders, and on your own. Much of your progress will be a natural outgrowth of the things you're doing in Scouting, such as going on campouts and helping with service projects. Don't be surprised if a leader tells you you've completed a requirement you didn't even know you were working on!



Only about 5 percent of all Scouts reach the rank of Eagle Scout. However, every Scout has the potential to get there.

Turning activities into advancement involves four steps:

- 1. You learn.** At troop meetings and on outings, you learn and practice skills that are required for advancement. For merit badges, you work with a merit badge counselor who helps you learn the required skills.
- 2. You are tested.** Once you feel that you have mastered a skill, a leader tests you and passes you on the requirement. This could be a youth leader, an adult leader, or a merit badge counselor. (This won't be your parent unless your parent is also a troop leader or merit badge counselor.)
- 3. You are reviewed.** When you have completed all the requirements for a rank (except the Scout rank), you meet with a board of review made up of troop committee members. The board makes sure you've completed all the requirements and also talks with you about your Scouting experience.
- 4. You are recognized.** As soon as possible, you are recognized for your achievement at a troop meeting where you receive your badge. (You'll later be recognized again at a special ceremony called a **court of honor**.)

