



## How to Begin a Merit Badge, And What's a Blue Card?

Scouts are responsible for their own advancement and earning of Merit Badges. They select the badges they want to work on from 136 merit badge options. Scouts work at their own pace and are not compared to other scouts. Scouts are assisted by a Merit Badge Counselor (MBC) that helps them begin, discusses their plan, answers questions, reviews their final work, and sometimes assists with any obstacles in the process.

### *How do I start?*

**SELECT A MERIT BADGE:** Scouts can visit a BSA Scout Shop and actually look through the existing Merit Badge Books or they can go to <https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/> and scroll through the Merit Badge images, click and read the requirements and decide which Merit Badge they want to work on next.

**ASK YOUR SCOUTMASTER:** The scout must have approval from their Scoutmaster to being a merit badge. The Scoutmaster will help the scout determine who is suitable to be their Merit Badge Counselor. The Scoutmaster will also offer a potential buddy if another scout has expressed interest in earning the same badge. Scouts cannot work on a merit badge alone – they need another scout or parent to accompany them to every meeting.

**OBTAIN YOUR BLUE CARD:** Once approved, the scout then asks the Advancement Chair to provide them with a Blue Card to begin the Merit Badge. The Scoutmaster signs the Blue Card and approves the scout to begin working on the badge.

**CALL A MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR:** The scout should reach out to the MB counselor, determine if they need to meet to review any of the requirements before starting, and gain an understanding of how the MBC and scout will work together. Scouts should also ask upfront how the counselor would like to see “the work” the scout has done to earn the badge. Knowing this upfront will help the scout determine and maintain their work/notes or whatever is needed for final approval.

**WORK ON THE BADGE:** The scout then completes the requirements on their own. They should be saving their work, pictures, and whatever will be necessary to show the MBC they have completed the work; the scout will answer questions regarding the requirements for completion. The counselor will test the scout and determine if they have completed everything for the badge. The MBC signs the scout's Blue Card and completes the information for validation.

**TURN IN YOUR BLUE CARD:** Once the Blue Card is complete, the scout shows it to the Scoutmaster and turns it in, to the Advancement Chair. The Advancement Chair will ensure it has been verified and logged by the Scoutmaster or an Assistant Scoutmaster, and the AC will order the badge.

**GET RECOGNIZED/RECEIVE YOUR BADGE:** Scouts are awarded Merit Badges three times per year during Troop 222's Court of Honor Ceremonies. The Advancement Chair will also give the scout back their portion of the Blue Card. Scouts MUST SAVE THEIR BLUE CARDS. Blue Cards are their proof of completion and are needed for their FINAL EAGLE Board of Review. We give our scouts a notebook for safely storing their Blue Cards.