



Journalism

Merit Badge Workbook



This workbook can help you but you still need to read the merit badge pamphlet.

This Workbook can help you organize your thoughts as you prepare to meet with your merit badge counselor

Merit Badge Counselors may not require the use of this or any similar workbooks.

You still must satisfy your counselor that you can demonstrate each skill and have learned the information. You should use the work space provided for each requirement to keep track of which requirements have been completed, and to make notes for discussing the item with your counselor, not for providing full and complete answers.

If a requirement says that you must take an action using words such as "discuss", "show", "tell", "explain", "demonstrate", "identify", etc, that is what you must do.

No one may add or subtract from the official requirements found in Scouts BSA Requirements (Pub. + 33216) and/or on Scouting.org. The requirements were last revised on January 1, 2024 • This workbook was updated in January 2024.

Scout's Name: _____ Unit _____ Date Started _____

Counselor's Name: _____ Phone No.: _____ Email: _____

Please submit errors, omissions, comments or suggestions about this **workbook** to: Workbooks@USScouts.Org

Comments or suggestions for changes to the **requirements** for the **merit badge** should be sent to: Merit.Badge@Scouting.Org

1. Explain what freedom of the press is and how the First Amendment guarantees that you can voice your opinion.

Freedom of the press

How the First Amendment guarantees that you can voice your opinion.

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In your discussion, tell how to distinguish between fact and opinion, and explain the terms *libel*, *slander*, *defamation*, *fair comment and criticism*, *public figure*, *privacy*, and *malice*.

Fact:

Opinion:

Libel:

Slander:

Defamation:

Fair comment and criticism:

Public figure:

Privacy:

Malice:

Discuss how these matters relate to ethics in journalism.

2. Do either A OR B:

a. **Newspaper, magazine, and online journalism** (with your parent or guardian's permission).

1. On the same day, read a local news source or newspaper, a national news source or newspaper, a news magazine (online or printed) and a social media news feed. From each source, clip, read, and compare a story about the same event. Tell your counselor how long each story is and how fair and accurate the stories are in presenting different points of view. Tell how each source handled the story differently.

Story

Local news source or newspaper	
How Long?	
How Fair & Accurate?	
Difference in handling?	
Purpose or audience?	

National news source or newspaper	
How Long?	
How Fair & Accurate?	
Difference in handling?	
Purpose or audience?	

News magazine (online or printed)	
How Long?	
How Fair & Accurate?	
Difference in handling?	
Purpose or audience?	

social media news feed	
How Long?	
How Fair & Accurate?	
Difference in handling?	
Purpose or audience?	

2. Visit the office of a newspaper, magazine, or internet news site. Ask for a tour of the various divisions (editorial, business, and printing). During your tour, talk to an executive from the business side about management's relations with reporters, editors, and photographers and what makes a "good" newspaper, magazine, or internet news site.

Management's relations with reporters, editors, and photographers

What makes a "good" newspaper magazine, or internet news site.

b. Radio and television journalism:

1. All on the same day, watch a local and national network newscast, listen to a radio newscast, and (with your parent or guardian's permission) view a national broadcast news source online. List the different news items and features presented, the different elements used, and the time in minutes and seconds and the online space devoted to each story. Compare the story lists and discuss whether the stories are fair and accurate. Explain why the different news outlets treated the stories differently and/or presented a different point of view.

Story

Local newscast:

News items & features:

Elements Used:

Time given:

Compare story lists:

How Fair & Accurate?

Difference in handling?

Purpose or audience?

Radio Newscast	
News items & features:	
Elements Used:	
Time given:	
Compare story lists:	
How Fair & Accurate?	
Difference in handling?	
Purpose or audience?	

Online news source	
News items & features:	
Elements Used:	
Space given:	
Compare story lists:	
How Fair & Accurate?	
Difference in handling?	
Purpose or audience?	

2. Visit a radio or television station. Ask for a tour of the various departments, concentrating on those related to news broadcasts. During your tour, talk to the station manager or other station management executive about station operations, particularly how management and the news staff work together, and what makes a "good" station.

How management and the news staff work together:

What makes a "good" station:

- If possible, go with a reporter to cover a news event.

3. Discuss the differences between a hard news story and a feature story.

A hard news story

A feature story.

Explain what is the "five W's and H."

W	
W	
W	
W	
W	
H	

Then do ONE of the following:

- a. Choose a current or an unusual event of interest to you, and write either a hard news article OR a feature article about the event. Gear the article for print OR audio OR video journalism. Share your article with your counselor.
- b. With your parent or guardian's permission and counselor's approval, interview someone in your community who is influential because of his or her leadership, talent, career, or life experiences. Then present to our counselor either a written or oral report telling what you learned about this person.
- c. With your parent or guardian's permission and counselor's approval, read an autobiography written by a journalist you want to learn more about. Write an article that tells what you learned about this person and the contributions this person has made to the field of journalism.
- d. Attend a Scouting event and write a 200-word article (feature or hard news) about the event. Use either the inverted pyramid style or the chronological style. Review the article with our counselor, then submit it to your community newspaper or BSA local council or district newsletter for consideration.

Journalism

Scout's Name: _____

4. Attend a public event and do ONE of the following: *Editor's Note: Use the back of this sheet or other paper for this work.*
- a. Write two newspaper articles about the event, one using the inverted pyramid style and one using the chronological style.
 - b. Using a radio or television broadcasting style write a news story, a feature story and a critical review of the event.
 - c. Take a series of photographs to help tell the story of the event in pictures. Include news photos and feature photos in your presentation. Write a brief synopsis of the event as well as captions for your photos.

5. Find out about three career opportunities in journalism.

1.	
2.	
3.	

Pick one and find out the education, training, and experience required for this profession.

Career:	
Education:	
Training:	
Experience:	

Discuss this with your counselor, and explain why this profession might interest you.

When working on merit badges, Scouts and Scouters should be aware of some vital information in the current edition of the *Guide to Advancement* (BSA publication 33088). Important excerpts from that publication can be downloaded from <http://usscouts.org/advance/docs/GTA-Excerpts-meritbadges.pdf>. You can download a complete copy of the *Guide to Advancement* from <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf>.