

American Labor

Merit Badge Workbook



Merit badges are earned by doing: reading the pamphlet, practicing the skills, and showing your counselor what you have learned.
This workbook gives you a place to organize your notes and track your progress along the way.
Merit badge counselors may not require the use of this or any similar workbook.
You still must satisfy your counselor that you can demonstrate each skill and have learned the information.
Use the space under each requirement to note what you have done and what you want to talk about, not to write out full answers.
When a requirement says discuss, show, tell, explain, or demonstrate, that is what you must do.
No one may add to or subtract from the official requirements found on scouting.org (Guide to Advancement 7.0.4.8).
Scouting America last updated this badge's requirements page on December 15, 2025.
Requirements change from time to time. Double-check scouting.org before you start.

Scout's name: _____ Unit: _____ Date started: _____

Counselor's name: _____ Phone no.: _____ Email: _____

Links marked "Scouting America resources" are the ones Scouting America shares on its official badge page.
This workbook is unofficial and not endorsed by Scouting America.

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1. Using resources available to you, learn about working people and work-related concerns. List and briefly describe or give examples of at least EIGHT concerns of American workers. These may include, but are not limited to, working conditions, workplace safety, hours, wages, seniority, job security, equal-opportunity employment and discrimination, guest workers, automation and technologies that replace workers, unemployment, layoffs, outsourcing, and employee benefits such as health care, child care, profit sharing, continuing education, and retirement benefits.

Scouting America resources: Job Insecurity Is Having a Significant Impact on a Majority of U.S. Workers' (54%) Stress Levels, (website)
The Biggest Worries and Concerns of Workers (website) · AI Reshapes the Future of Work: Who's Safe, Who's Not? (video)
Why Childcare Has Become So Unaffordable (video) · Burnout (website)
Robots Replace Humans—So, What Jobs Are Left for Us?(video)
Job Alert: New Study Highlights Increased Safety, Mental Health Concerns Among Workers (video)

Eight concerns of American workers

Concern	Brief description or example

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. With your counselor's and parent or guardian's approval and permission, visit the office or attend a meeting of a local union, a central labor council, or an employee organization, or contact one of these organizations via the internet. Then do the following:

Organization | Date | Visit, meeting, or online

(a) Find out what the organization does.

Scouting America resources: What Is a Labor Union? How Do Unions Work? Find Out Now (video)

What the organization does

(b) Share the list of issues and concerns you made for requirement 1. Ask the people you communicate with which issues are of greatest interest or concern to them and why.

Issues of greatest interest or concern to them

Issue	Why it matters to them

(c) Draw a diagram showing how the organization is structured, from the local to the national level, if applicable.

Scouting America resources: Labor Union Hierarchy: A guide to an effective Union structure (website)

How the organization is structured, local to national (draw here or attach)

Requirement 2 completed on | counselor initials

3. Explain to your counselor what labor unions are, what they do, and what services they provide to members. In your discussion, show that you understand the concepts of labor, management, collective bargaining, negotiation, union shops, open shops, grievance procedures, mediation, arbitration, work stoppages, strikes, and lockouts.

Scouting America resources: Trade Unions (video)

What labor unions are, what they do, and the services they provide to members

Concepts I can explain

Concept	What it means
Labor	
Management	
Collective bargaining	
Negotiation	
Union shops	
Open shops	
Grievance procedures	
Mediation	
Arbitration	
Work stoppages	
Strikes	
Lockouts	

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

4. Explain what is meant by the adversarial model of labor-management relations, compared with a cooperative-bargaining style.

Scouting America resources: Collective Bargaining: Meaning, Working, Objectives, Types and Examples (website) Adversarial Bargaining (website)

Style	What it means
Adversarial model	
Cooperative-bargaining style	

How they compare

Requirement 4 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

5. Do ONE of the following:

☐ **(a)** Develop a time line of significant events in the history of the American labor movement from the 1770s to the present.

Scouting America resources: Labor History Time Line (website) · The Labor Movement in the United States (video) The Rise of Labor Unions (video)

My labor movement time line, 1770s to the present

Year	Significant event

☐ **(b)** Prepare an exhibit, a scrapbook, or a computer presentation, such as a slide show, illustrating three major achievements of the American labor movement and how those achievements affect American workers.

Scouting America resources: Key Events in Labor History (website)

Exhibit, scrapbook, or presentation _____ Date shared _____

Three major achievements of the American labor movement

Achievement	How it affects American workers

☐ **(c)** With your counselor's and parent or guardian's approval and permission, watch a movie that addresses organized labor in the United States. Afterward, discuss the movie with your counselor and explain what you learned.

Scouting America resources: Labor Day Top 10—Movies About the Struggles of Workers Right (video)

Movie I watched _____ Date _____

What I learned

☐ **(d)** Read a biography (with your counselor's approval) of someone who has made a contribution to the American labor movement. Explain what contribution this person has made to the American labor movement.

Scouting America resources: Labor Leaders in America (website)

Biography I read _____ Who it is about _____

The contribution this person made to the American labor movement

Requirement 5 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

6. Explain the term globalization. Discuss with your counselor some effects of globalization on the workforce in the United States. Explain how this global workforce fits into the economic system of this country.

Scouting America resources: The Impact of Gloalization on Labor Markets (website) · What Is Globalization? (video) What Is Globalization? Understand Our Interconnected World (video)

What globalization means

Some effects of globalization on the U.S. workforce

How the global workforce fits into our economic system

Requirement 6 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

7. Choose a labor issue of widespread interest to American workers—an issue in the news currently or known to you from your work on this merit badge. Before your counselor, or in writing, argue both sides of the issue, first taking management's side, then presenting labor's or the employee's point of view. In your presentation, summarize the basic rights and responsibilities of employers and employees, including union members and nonunion members.

The labor issue I chose _____ In writing or in person _____

Both sides of the issue

Side	My arguments
Management's side	
Labor's or the employee's point of view	

More of my arguments (or attach)

Basic rights and responsibilities

Who	Rights	Responsibilities
Employers		
Employees who are union members		
Employees who are nonunion members		

Requirement 7 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

8. Discuss with your counselor the different goals that may motivate the owners of a business, its stockholders, its customers, its employees, the employees' representatives, the community, and public officials. Explain why agreements and compromises are made and how they affect each group in achieving its goals.

Scouting America resources: Stakeholder Theory (website)

Goals that may motivate each group

Group	Their goals
Owners of a business	
Stockholders	
Customers	
Employees	
Employees' representatives	

Goals that may motivate each group (continued)

Group	Their goals
The community	
Public officials	

Why agreements and compromises are made, and how they affect each group

Requirement 8 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

9. Learn about opportunities in the field of labor relations. Choose one career in which you are interested and discuss with your counselor the major responsibilities of that position and the qualifications, education, and training such a position requires.

Scouting America resources: Careers in Labor and Employment Relations (website) · What is Employee Relations? (video)

Careers in labor relations

Career	What the job involves

The one I picked: its responsibilities, qualifications, education, and training

Requirement 9 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

Counselor sign-off

Your counselor signs your blue card or approves the badge in Scoutbook, and your unit records it. This line is for your own records.

Counselor's signature _____ Date completed _____

Official Scouting America resources

Scouting America resources: American Labor merit badge page (requirements and resources)
American Labor merit badge pamphlet (free PDF) · All merit badges

Made by Cole at ScoutSmarts.com, an Eagle Scout who loves helping Scouts.
Spot an error or a requirement change? Tell me at scoutsmarts.com/contact.
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