

Climbing

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 September 19, 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.
Links marked "ScoutSmarts" open the matching part of Cole's guide. This workbook is unofficial and not endorsed by Scouting America.

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1. Do the following:

(a) Explain to your counselor the most likely hazards you may encounter while participating in climbing and rappelling activities and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards.
Scouting America resources: Risk Management in Rock Climbing (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 1a explained

Climbing and rappelling hazards

Hazard	How I anticipate and help prevent it	How I mitigate and respond

(b) Show that you know first aid for and how to prevent injuries or illnesses that could occur during climbing activities, including heat and cold reactions, dehydration, stopped breathing, sprains, abrasions, fractures, rope burns, blisters, snakebite, concussions, and insect bites or stings.
Scouting America resources: Treatment of Rope Burns (website) · Head, Neck, and Spine Injuries (video)
First Aid for Concussions (video) · Fracture and Dislocation (video)
How To Treat A Blister Correctly (First, Look At Your Blister Roof) (video)
What Is Dehydration? Causes, Signs and Symptoms, Diagnosis and Treatment. (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 1b explained

First aid and prevention

Condition	How to prevent it	First aid
heat and cold reactions		
dehydration		
stopped breathing		
sprains		
abrasions		

First aid and prevention (continued)

Condition	How to prevent it	First aid
fractures		
rope burns		
blisters		
snakebite		
concussions		
insect bites or stings		

(c) Identify the conditions that must exist before performing CPR on a person.

Scouting America resources: What To Do Before Starting Hands-Only CPR (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 1c explained

Conditions that must exist before performing CPR

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. Learn the Leave No Trace Seven Principles and the Outdoor Code and explain what they mean.

Scouting America resources: Leave No Trace (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 2 explained

Leave No Trace Seven Principles

Principle	What it means

The Outdoor Code and what it means

Requirement 2 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

3. Present yourself properly dressed for belaying, climbing, and rappelling. Explain why you are wearing each piece of gear and discuss qualities of easy movement, entanglement-free, and good weather protection and comfort.

Scouting America resources: Sport Climbing Gear Checklist (video) · How To Choose Climbing Shoes (video)
How To Pick Top 10 Sport Climbing Essentials (video) · Sport Climbing Gear Checklist (PDF)
What Gear Do You Need for Winter Climbing (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 3 explained

Date I presented myself _____ Where _____

What I wore for belaying, climbing, and rappelling

Clothing or gear	Why I'm wearing it

Qualities of good climbing clothing

Quality	What I discussed
Easy movement	
Entanglement-free	
Good weather protection and comfort	

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

4. Location. Do the following:

(a) Explain how the difficulty of climbs is classified, and apply classifications to the rock faces or walls where you will demonstrate your climbing skills.

Scouting America resources: Climbing Grades Explained (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 4a explained

How the difficulty of climbs is classified

Where I'll demonstrate my climbing skills

Rock face or wall	Route	Classification

(b) Explain the following: top-rope climbing, lead climbing, and bouldering.

Scouting America resources: Top Roping vs Lead Climbing vs Bouldering (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 4b explained

Types of climbing

Type	What it means
Top-rope climbing	
Lead climbing	
Bouldering	

(c) Evaluate the safety of a particular climbing area. Consider weather, visibility, the condition of the climbing surface, and any other environmental hazards.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 4c explained

Climbing area _____ Date _____

My safety evaluation

What I checked	What I found
Weather	
Visibility	
Condition of the climbing surface	
Other environmental hazards	

(d) Determine how to summon aid to the climbing area in case of an emergency. Discuss what medical training is needed for your group when climbing and rappelling in remote areas.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 4d explained

How to summon aid to this climbing area in an emergency

Medical training our group needs for climbing and rappelling in remote areas

Requirement 4 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

5. Verbal signals. Explain the importance of using verbal signals during every climb and rappel, and while bouldering. With the help of the counselor or another Scout, demonstrate the verbal signals used by each of the following:

Scouting America resources: Climber Communication (website) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 5 explained

Why verbal signals matter during every climb, rappel, and bouldering session

Date demonstrated _____ With the help of _____

(a) Climbers

Scouting America resources: Rock Climbing Commands (video)

Signals used by climbers

(b) Rappellers

Signals used by rappellers

(c) Belayers

Scouting America resources: Gym Top Rope Climbing: Verbal Commands (video)
SL Climb Series: Rock Climbers Communicate How? (video)

Signals used by belayers

(d) Boulderers and their spotters

Scouting America resources: ABCDs of Spotting (video)

Signals used by boulderers and their spotters

Requirement 5 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

6. Rope. Do the following:

(a) Describe the kinds of rope acceptable for use in climbing and rappelling.

Scouting America resources: The Essential Guide for Every Climber (Dynamic vs Static Ropes) (video)

Kinds of rope acceptable for climbing and rappelling

(b) Show how to examine a rope for signs of wear or damage.

Scouting America resources: Rope Inspection 101: One of the Most Important Safety Steps (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 6b explained

Date _____

What I look for when examining a rope

(c) Discuss ways to prevent a rope from being damaged.

Scouting America resources: Safety First: Preventing Rope Failures and Ensuring Longevity (website) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 6c explained

Ways to prevent rope damage

(d) Explain when and how a rope should be retired.

Scouting America resources: When To Retire a Climbing Rope (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 6d explained

When a rope should be retired

How to retire a rope

(e) Properly coil a rope.

Scouting America resources: How To Coil a Climbing Rope (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 6e explained

Date | Coiling method I used

Requirement 6 completed on | counselor initials

7. Knots. Demonstrate the ability to tie each of the following knots. Give at least one example of how each knot is used in belaying, climbing, or rappelling.

Climbing knots

Knot	Date tied	How it's used in belaying, climbing, or rappelling
Figure eight on a bight		
Figure eight follow-through		
Water knot		
Double fisherman's knot (grapevine knot)		
Prusik hitch applied to rope		

(a) Figure eight on a bight

Scouting America resources: How To Tie a Figure 8 Knot on a Bight (video)

(b) Figure eight follow-through

Scouting America resources: How To Tie a Figure 8 Knot for Climbing - Everything You Need To Know (video)

(c) Water knot

Scouting America resources: Rock Climbing: How To Tie a Water Knot (video)

(d) Double fisherman's knot (grapevine knot)

Scouting America resources: How To Tie a Double Fisherman's Knot (Grapevine Knot) (video)
Rock Climbing: How To Tie a Double Fisherman's Knot (video)

(e) Prusik hitch applied to rope

Scouting America resources: Rock Climbing: How To Tie a Prusik Knot (video)

Requirement 7 completed on | counselor initials

8. Harness, Helmet and Gloves. Explain the purpose of each of the following and demonstrate how to put them on correctly.

(a) Commercially made climbing harness

Scouting America resources: How to Choose a Climbing Harness (video) · How To Put On a Climbing Harness (video)

Purpose of a commercially made climbing harness

Date I put it on correctly

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(b) Climbing helmet

Scouting America resources: How To Choose Climbing Helmets (video)

Purpose of a climbing helmet

Date I put it on correctly

(c) Climbing or rappelling gloves

Scouting America resources: Things You Should Know Before Choosing Gloves for Climbing (website)

Purpose of climbing or rappelling gloves

Date I put them on correctly

Requirement 8 completed on counselor initials

9. Identify the elements of the CHECK system and describe the meaning of each one to your counselor.

Scouting America resources: Climbing Partner Checks—Check or Deck (video)

The CHECK system

Element	What it means

Requirement 9 completed on counselor initials

10. Belaying. Do the following:

(a) Explain the importance of belaying climbers and rappellers and when it is necessary.

Scouting America resources: How To Top-Rope Belay (video)

Why belaying climbers and rappellers matters, and when it's necessary

(b) Belay three different climbers on three different routes.

Climbers I belayed

Climber	Route	Date

(c) Serve as a backup belayer on three different climbs.

Scouting America resources: How To Back Up a Beginner's Belay (video)

Climbs where I was the backup belayer

Climb	Belayer I backed up	Date

(d) Belay three different rappellers on three different routes.

Rappellers I belayed

Rappeller	Route	Date

(e) Serve as a backup belayer on three different rappels.

Rappels where I was the backup belayer

Rappel	Belayer I backed up	Date

Requirement 10 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

11. Climbing. Do the following:

(a) Show the correct way to directly tie a belay rope to your harness.

Scouting America resources: How To Tie Into a Climbing Harness (With a Figure 8 Knot) (video)

Date _____ Knot I used _____

(b) Climb at least three different routes on a rock face or climbing wall, demonstrating good technique and using verbal signals with a belayer.

Routes I climbed

Rock face or wall and route	Belayer	Date

Requirement 11 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

12. Rappelling. Do the following:

Scouting America resources: Rock Climbing: How to Rappel (video)

(a) Show the correct way to directly tie a belay rope to your harness.

Date _____ Knot I used _____

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(b) Using a carabiner and a rappel device, attach a rappel rope to your harness.

Date _____ Rappel device I used _____

(c) Rappel down three different rock faces or three rappel routes on a climbing wall. Use verbal signals to communicate with a belayer, and demonstrate good rappelling technique.

My rappels

Rock face or rappel route	Belayer	Date

Requirement 12 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

13. Demonstrate ways to store rope, hardware, and other gear used for climbing, rappelling, and belaying.

Date demonstrated _____

How I store climbing gear

Gear	How to store it
Rope	
Hardware	
Other gear	

Requirement 13 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: Climbing merit badge page (requirements and resources) · Climbing merit badge pamphlet (free PDF) All merit badges · **ScoutSmarts:** Climbing Merit Badge Guide

Made by Cole at ScoutSmarts.com, an Eagle Scout who loves helping Scouts.
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