

Fingerprinting

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 May 20, 2026.
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. Give a short history of fingerprinting. Tell the difference between civil and criminal identification.

Scouting America resources: How Did Detectives Solve the Case of the Bloody Fingerprints? (video) · History of Fingerprinting (video)
ScoutSmarts: Requirement 1 explained

A short history of fingerprinting

Civil and criminal identification

Type	What it is and how it is used
Civil identification	
Criminal identification	

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. Do the following:

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 2 explained

(a) Explain the difference between the automated fingerprint identification systems (AFIS) now used by law enforcement agencies and the biometric fingerprint systems used to control access to computers and places like buildings and airports.

Scouting America resources: AFIS - Automated Fingerprint Identification System (video)

Two kinds of fingerprint systems

System	Who uses it and what it does
Automated fingerprint identification systems (AFIS)	
Biometric fingerprint systems for access	

The main difference between them

(b) Discuss how our society uses identification systems based on tokens, passwords, and biometrics.

Scouting America resources: What Is Multifactor Authentication (video) · Token Authentication (video) Biometric Authentication Technology (video) · Science of Innovation—Biometrics (video)

How our society uses identification systems

Based on	Examples I found	How our society uses it
Tokens		
Passwords		
Biometrics		

Requirement 2 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

3. Do the following:

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 3 explained

(a) Name the surfaces of the body where friction or papillary ridges are found.

Scouting America resources: Fingerprint Ridge Patterns (video)

Surfaces of the body where friction ridges are found

(b) Name the two basic principles supporting the science of fingerprints and give a brief explanation of each principle.

Scouting America resources: Principles of Fingerprint Science (video) · Why Are Your Fingerprints Unique? (video)

The two basic principles

Principle	Brief explanation

(c) Explain what it takes to positively identify a person using fingerprints.

Scouting America resources: Fingerprint Evidence (video)

What it takes to positively identify a person

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

4. Take a clear set of prints using ONE of the following methods:

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 4 explained

☐ **(a)** Make both rolled and plain impressions. Make these on an 8-by-8-inch fingerprint identification card, available from your local police department or your counselor.

Scouting America resources: How to Roll Fingerprints (video)

Date _____ Where I got the card _____

☐ Rolled impressions

☐ Plain impressions

☐ **(b)** Using clear adhesive tape, a pencil, and plain paper, record your own fingerprints or those of another person.

Scouting America resources: Developing Latent Fingerprints With Black Powder (video)

Date _____ Whose prints I recorded _____

Tape the prints here or attach the paper

Requirement 4 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

5. Show your counselor you can identify the three basic types of fingerprint patterns and their subcategories. Using your own hand, identify the types of patterns you see.

Scouting America resources: Fingerprint Patterns: Arch, Loop, and Whorl (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 5 explained

The three basic pattern types

Pattern type	Its subcategories

Patterns I see on my own hands

Finger	Right hand	Left hand
Thumb		
Index		
Middle		
Ring		
Little		

Date I showed my counselor _____

Requirement 5 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

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6. Identify three career opportunities that would use skills and knowledge in the areas of biometrics and/or fingerprinting. Pick one and research the training, education, certification requirements, experience, and expenses associated with entering the field. Research the prospects for employment, starting salary, advancement opportunities, and career goals associated with this career. Discuss what you learned with your counselor and whether you might be interested in this career.

Scouting America resources: Latent Fingerprinting Examiner (video)

Three careers in biometrics or fingerprinting

Career	What the job involves

The one I picked

What I found out about it

Topic	My notes
Training	
Education	
Certification requirements	
Experience	
Expenses	
Prospects for employment	
Starting salary	
Advancement opportunities	
Career goals	

Whether I might be interested in this career, and why

Requirement 6 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: Fingerprinting merit badge page (requirements and resources) · Fingerprinting merit badge pamphlet (free PDF) All merit badges · **ScoutSmarts:** Fingerprinting Merit Badge Guide

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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