

Kayaking

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 31, 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. Do the following:

(a) Explain to your counselor the hazards you are most likely to encounter while participating in kayaking activities, including weather and water-related hazards, and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards.

Scouting America resources: Kayaking Tips—Cold Water and Winter Paddling (Wear, Gear, and Risks) (video)
Top 5 Kayak Safety Rules for Beginners (video)

Kayaking hazards (include weather and water hazards)

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

(b) Review prevention, symptoms, and first-aid treatment for the following injuries or illnesses that can occur while kayaking: blisters, cold-water shock and hypothermia, heat-related illnesses, dehydration, sunburn, sprains, and strains.

Scouting America resources: OSHA Heat Illness Prevention Campaign (video) · How To Treat a Sunburn (video) First Aid Kit for Kayaking—What's in It? (video) · Cold Water Shock—How To Deal With Cold Water Shock (video)

Injuries and illnesses while kayaking

Injury or illness	Prevention	Symptoms	First aid
blisters			
cold-water shock and hypothermia			
heat-related illnesses			
dehydration			
sunburn			
sprains			
strains			

(c) Review the Scouting America Safety Afloat policy. Explain to your counselor how this applies to kayaking.

Scouting America resources: Safety Afloat (website)

Safety Afloat, and how it applies to kayaking

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. Before doing requirements 3 through 8, successfully complete the Scouting America swimmer test. Note: See the Swimming merit badge pamphlet for details about the Scouting America swimmer test.

Scouting America resources: Swimming Merit Badge Pamphlet (PDF)

Swimmer test passed on _____ Witnessed by _____

Requirement 2 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

3. Do the following:

(a) Review the characteristics of life jackets most appropriate for kayaking and understand why one must always be worn while paddling. Then demonstrate how to select and fit a life jacket for kayaking.

Scouting America resources: How To Choose the Right Life Jacket (video)

Life jacket features best for kayaking

Why a life jacket must always be worn while paddling

Date _____ Life jacket type and size I picked _____

(b) Review the importance of safety equipment such as a signal device, extra paddle, sponge, bilge pump, flotation bags, and throw bag.

Scouting America resources: Essential Gear That All Paddlers Need To Carry On the Water (video)
Kayak Safety: How To Use a Kayak Bilge Pump (How To Get Water out of Your Kayak) (video)
Must Have Paddling Safety Gear | How To Kayak or Canoe (video)

Safety equipment

Equipment	Why it's important
signal device	
extra paddle	
sponge	
bilge pump	
flotation bags	
throw bag	

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

4. Do the following:

(a) Name and point out the major parts of a kayak.

Scouting America resources: Kayak Overview (video)

Major parts of a kayak

Part	Where it is or what it does

Date I pointed them out _____

(b) Review the differences in the design between recreational, whitewater, and sea or touring kayaks. Include how length, width, stability, and rocker are involved in the design of each type.

Scouting America resources: How To Choose the Right Kayak for All Types of Flatwater Paddlers (video)

Kayak designs compared

Kayak type	Length	Width	Stability	Rocker
Recreational				
Whitewater				
Sea or touring				

(c) Explain the care, maintenance, and storage of a kayak.

Scouting America resources: How To Clean and Maintain Your Kayak (video)

Topic	What I would explain
Care	
Maintenance	
Storage	

Requirement 4 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

5. Discuss the following:

(a) Correct methods for the use of a kayak paddle

Scouting America resources: How To Hold a Kayak Paddle (video) · Proper Technique for Paddling a Kayak (video)

Correct ways to use a kayak paddle

(b) Parts of a paddle

Scouting America resources: Kayak Paddles (website)

Parts of a paddle

Part	Where it is or what it does

(c) The care and maintenance of a paddle

Scouting America resources: Kayak Paddle Maintenance (website)

Caring for and maintaining a paddle

Requirement 5 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

6. Using a properly equipped kayak with an open cockpit, a sit-on-top, or an inflatable kayak, do the following:

- ☐ Open cockpit kayak
- ☐ Sit-on-top kayak
- ☐ Inflatable kayak

(a) Safely capsize and perform a wet exit.
Scouting America resources: Kayak Wet Exit—How To Get Out of Your Kayak (video)

Date _____ Where _____

(b) Reenter the kayak with assistance from a buddy boat.
Scouting America resources: How To Re-Enter a Sit Inside Kayak for Beginners (video)
Sea Kayak T-Rescue: Deep Water Rescue / How To Get Back in Your Kayak With Help (video)
Master the Sea Kayak Scoop Rescue for Injured Paddlers (video) · Heel Hook—Kayak Rescue (video)

Date _____ Buddy boat paddler _____

(c) Demonstrate a kayak-over-kayak rescue.
Scouting America resources: Sea Kayak T-Rescue: Deep Water Rescue / How To Get Back in Your Kayak With Help (video)

Date _____ Paddler I rescued _____

(d) Demonstrate the HELP position.
Scouting America resources: Help/Huddle Position (video)

Date _____

(e) Capsize the kayak, swim it and the paddle to shore, and empty water from the kayak with assistance if needed.
Scouting America resources: White Water Kayak—Swim to Shore (video)

Date _____ Helper, if any _____

Requirement 6 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

7. As a solo paddler, use a properly equipped kayak to demonstrate the following:

(a) Forward stroke
Scouting America resources: Kayak Forward Stroke (video)

Date _____ Notes on my form _____

(b) Backstroke
Scouting America resources: Kayak Reverse Stroke (video)

Date _____ Notes on my form _____

(c) Forward sweep
Scouting America resources: Kayak Sweep Strokes (video)

Date _____ Notes on my form _____

(d) Reverse sweep
Scouting America resources: Kayak Reverse Stroke (video)

Date _____ Notes on my form _____

(e) Draw stroke
Scouting America resources: Kayak Draw Stroke—In Water Recovery (video)

Date _____ Notes on my form _____

(f) Stern draw
Scouting America resources: Stern Draw (video)

Date _____ Notes on my form _____

Requirement 7 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

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8. As a solo paddler, use a properly equipped kayak to demonstrate the following:

(a) Paddle a straight line for 15 to 20 boat lengths using appropriate strokes while maintaining trim and balance of the kayak.

Scouting America resources: Paddling a Kayak in a Straight Line (video)

Date _____ Strokes I used _____

(b) Spin or pivot from a stationary position 180 degrees (half circle) to the right and left within two boat lengths.

Scouting America resources: Fast Sea Kayak Turn—Turning a Sea Kayak 180 Degrees Efficiently (video)

Date _____

☐ To the right
☐ To the left

(c) Move abeam to the right 10 feet and to the left 10 feet.

Scouting America resources: How To Turn a Kayak (video)

Date _____

☐ 10 feet to the right
☐ 10 feet to the left

(d) Stop the boat in one boat length.

Scouting America resources: Paddle Strokes, the Emergency Stopping Procedure (video)

Date _____ Strokes I used _____

(e) While maintaining forward motion, turn the kayak 90 degrees to the right and left.

Date _____

☐ To the right
☐ To the left

(f) Move the kayak backward three to four boat lengths using appropriate and effective reverse strokes.

Scouting America resources: Reverse Stroke (video)

Date _____ Strokes I used _____

(g) Paddle the kayak in a buoyed figure 8 course around markers three to four boat lengths apart.

Date _____ Where _____

Requirement 8 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: Kayaking merit badge page (requirements and resources) · Kayaking merit badge pamphlet (free PDF)
All merit badges

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