

Orienteering

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. Show that you know first aid for the following types of injuries that could occur while orienteering: cuts, scratches, blisters, snakebite, insect stings, tick bites, heat and cold reactions (sunburn, heatstroke, heat exhaustion, hypothermia), dehydration. Explain to your counselor why you should be able to identify poisonous plants and poisonous animals that are found in your area.

Scouting America resources: 10 Ways to Handle Emergencies While Orienteering: Essential Tips for Adventure Safety (website) Tick Checks (video) · Heat Cramps, Heat Exhaustion, and Heat Stroke (website) · Poisonous Plants (video)
ScoutSmarts: Requirement 1 explained

First aid for orienteering injuries

Injury or condition	First aid
cuts	
scratches	
blisters	
snakebite	
insect stings	
tick bites	
sunburn	
heatstroke	
heat exhaustion	
hypothermia	
dehydration	

Why I should be able to identify poisonous plants and animals in my area

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. Explain what orienteering is.

Scouting America resources: Start Orienteering || A Newcomer's Guide (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 2 explained

What orienteering is

Requirement 2 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

3. Do the following:

(a) Explain how a compass works. Describe the features of an orienteering compass.

Scouting America resources: Basic Orienteering (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 3a explained

How a compass works

Features of an orienteering compass

Feature	What it does

(b) In the field, show how to take a compass bearing and follow it.

Scouting America resources: How to Use a Compass (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 3b explained

Date _____ Where _____ Bearing I followed _____

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

4. Do the following:

Scouting America resources: Topographic Maps (video)

(a) Explain how a topographic map shows terrain features. Point out and name five terrain features on a map and in the field.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 4a explained

How a topographic map shows terrain features

Five terrain features

Terrain feature	Where I found it on the map	Where I found it in the field

(b) Point out and name 10 symbols on a topographic map.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 4b explained

10 topographic map symbols

Symbol (draw it)	What it means	Symbol (draw it)	What it means

(c) Explain the meaning of declination. Tell why you must consider declination when using map and compass together.

Scouting America resources: Magnetic Declination (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 4c explained

What declination means

Why I must consider declination when using a map and compass together

(d) Show a topographic map with magnetic north-south lines.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 4d explained

Date I showed my counselor _____ Map I used _____

(e) Show how to measure distances on a map using an orienteering compass.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 4e explained

Date I showed my counselor _____ Map I used _____

(f) Show how to orient a map using a compass.

Date I showed my counselor _____ Where _____

Requirement 4 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

5. Set up a 100-meter pace course. Determine your walking and running pace for 100 meters. Tell why it is important to pace-count.

Scouting America resources: Establishing a Pace Count (video)

Where I set up my pace course _____ Date _____

My pace count for 100 meters

	Try 1	Try 2	Try 3	My pace count
Walking				
Running				

Why it is important to pace-count

Requirement 5 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

6. Do the following:

(a) Identify 20 international control description symbols. Tell the meaning of each symbol.

Scouting America resources: International Orienteering Symbols (PDF)

20 international control description symbols

Symbol (draw it)	What it means	Symbol (draw it)	What it means

20 international control description symbols (continued)

Symbol (draw it)	What it means	Symbol (draw it)	What it means

(b) Show a control description sheet and explain the information provided.

Scouting America resources: Control Descriptions (website)

Date I showed my counselor _____ Event or course the sheet is from _____

The information a control description sheet gives

(c) Explain the following terms and tell when you would use them: attack point, collecting feature, catching feature, aiming off, contouring, reading ahead, handrail, relocation, and rough versus fine orienteering.

Scouting America resources: Setting Up an Orienteering Course (website)

Orienteering terms

Term	What it means	When I would use it
attack point		
collecting feature		
catching feature		
aiming off		
contouring		
reading ahead		
handrail		
relocation		
rough versus fine orienteering		

Requirement 6 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

7. Do the following:

(a) Take part in three orienteering events. One of these must be a cross-country course. Note: While orienteering is primarily an individual sport, Scouting America Youth Protection procedures call for using the buddy system. Requirement 7(a) can be completed by pairs or groups of Scouts.

My three orienteering events

	Date	Event and place	Type of course	My buddy or group
Event 1				
Event 2				
Event 3				

☐ At least one was a cross-country course

(b) After each event, write a report with (1) a copy of the master map and control description sheet, (2) a copy of the route you took on the course, (3) a discussion of how you could improve your time between control points, and (4) a list of your major weaknesses on this course. Describe what you could do to improve.

☐ Event 1: copy of the master map and control description sheet

☐ Event 1: copy of the route I took

Event 1: how I could improve my time between control points

Event 1: my major weaknesses on this course, and what I could do to improve

☐ Event 2: copy of the master map and control description sheet

☐ Event 2: copy of the route I took

Event 2: how I could improve my time between control points

Event 2: my major weaknesses on this course, and what I could do to improve

☐ Event 3: copy of the master map and control description sheet

☐ Event 3: copy of the route I took

Event 3: how I could improve my time between control points

Event 3: my major weaknesses on this course, and what I could do to improve

Requirement 7 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

8. Do ONE of the following:

☐ **(a)** Set up a cross-country course that is at least 2,000 meters long with at least five control markers. Prepare the master map and control description sheet.

Where _____ Course length (meters) _____ Date _____

☐ Master map prepared
☐ Control description sheet prepared

My control markers

Control	Location or feature	Distance from the last control

☐ **(b)** Set up a score orienteering course with at least 12 control points and a time limit of at least 60 minutes. Set point values for each control. Prepare the master map and control description sheet.

Scouting America resources: How To Setup a Compass Course (video)

Where _____ Time limit (minutes) _____ Date _____

☐ Master map prepared
☐ Control description sheet prepared

My controls and point values

Control	Location or feature	Point value

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My controls and point values (continued)

Control	Location or feature	Point value

Requirement 8 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

9. Act as an official during an orienteering event. This may be during the running of the course you set up for requirement 8.

Event _____ Date _____ My job as an official _____

What I did as an official

Requirement 9 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

10. Teach orienteering techniques to your patrol, troop, or crew.

Who I taught (patrol, troop or crew) _____ Date _____ Where _____

The orienteering techniques I taught, and how it went

Requirement 10 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: Orienteering merit badge page (requirements and resources) · Orienteering merit badge pamphlet (free PDF) All merit badges · **ScoutSmarts:** Orienteering 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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