

Photography

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 July 22, 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. Safety. Do the following:

(a) Explain to your counselor the most likely hazards you may encounter while working with photography and what you should do to anticipate, mitigate, prevent, and respond to these hazards. Explain how you would prepare for exposure to environmental situations such as weather, sun, and water.

Scouting America resources: Is Photography a Dangerous Career? (website) · Health and Safety in a Photography Studio (website)
9 Safety Tips for Landscape and Nature Photographers (website)

Photography hazards

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

Preparing for the environment

Situation	How I would prepare
weather	
sun	
water	

(b) View the Personal Safety Awareness "Digital Safety" video (with your parent or guardian's permission).

Scouting America resources: Digital Safety (video)

Date I watched it _____ Parent or guardian who gave permission _____

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. Explain how the following elements and terms can affect the quality of a picture:

Scouting America resources: Easy to Understand Guide to Camera Settings for Beginners (website)
Common Camera Settings for Beginners (website)

(a) Light—natural light (ambient/existing), low light (such as at night), and artificial light (such as from a flash)

Scouting America resources: Golden Hour Magic: Perfect Light for Stunning Photos (video)
Artificial Lighting for Photography (So Much Easier Than You Think!) (video)
Why Most Natural Light Photography is Flat (and How to Fix It) (video)

Light

Kind of light	How it can affect the quality of a picture
natural light (ambient/existing)	
low light (such as at night)	
artificial light (such as from a flash)	

(b) Exposure—aperture (f-stops), shutter speed, ISO

Scouting America resources: ISO, Shutter Speed, and Aperture Explained | Exposure Basics for Beginners (video)
Photography Basics in 10 Minutes (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 2b explained

Exposure

Setting	How it can affect the quality of a picture
aperture (f-stops)	
shutter speed	
ISO	

(c) Depth of field

Scouting America resources: Depth of Field in 30 Seconds (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 2c explained

How depth of field can affect the quality of a picture

(d) Composition—rule of thirds, leading lines, framing, depth

Scouting America resources: Basic Photography | Composition: The Only Rules You Need to Know (video)
Photography Composition: Master Leading Lines for Stunning Shots! (video) · Master the Rule of Thirds for Better Photos (video)
ScoutSmarts: Requirement 2d explained

Composition

Technique	How it can affect the quality of a picture
rule of thirds	
leading lines	
framing	
depth	

(e) Angle of view

Scouting America resources: Angle of View and Framing (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 2e explained

How angle of view can affect the quality of a picture

(f) Stop action and blur motion

Scouting America resources: How to Shoot Motion Blur Photography Like a Pro (video)
Photography Tips: How to Do Stop Action Photography (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 2f explained

Stop action and blur motion

Technique	How it can affect the quality of a picture
stop action	
blur motion	

(g) Decisive moment (action or expression captured by the photographer)

Scouting America resources: Decisive Moment (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 2g explained

How the decisive moment can affect the quality of a picture

Requirement 2 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

3. Explain the basic parts and operation of a camera. Explain how an exposure is made when you take a picture.

Scouting America resources: Photography Basics in 10 Minutes (video) · Parts of a Camera (video) · How Digital Cameras Work (video)
ScoutSmarts: Requirement 3 explained

Basic parts of a camera

Part	What it does

How an exposure is made when I take a picture

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

4. Do TWO of the following, then share your work with your counselor.

☐ **(a)** Photograph one subject from two different angles or perspectives.

Scouting America resources: Pro Photo Secrets: Avoid Shadows & Master Poses (video)

Subject | Angle or perspective 1 | Angle or perspective 2

☐ **(b)** Photograph one subject from two different light sources—artificial and natural.

Subject | Artificial light I used | Natural light I used

☐ **(c)** Photograph one subject with two different depth of fields.

Subject | Depth of field 1 | Depth of field 2

☐ **(d)** Photograph one subject with two different compositional techniques.

Subject | Technique 1 | Technique 2

Requirement 4 completed on | counselor initials

5. Photograph THREE of the following, then share your work with your counselor.

Date I shared them with my counselor

☐ **(a)** Close-up of a person

What I photographed | Date taken | Where

☐ **(b)** Two to three people interacting

What I photographed | Date taken | Where

☐ **(c)** Action shot

What I photographed | Date taken | Where

☐ **(d)** Animal shot

What I photographed | Date taken | Where

☐ **(e)** Nature shot

What I photographed | Date taken | Where

☐ **(f)** Picture of a person—candid, posed, or camera-aware

What I photographed | Date taken | Where

Requirement 5 completed on | counselor initials

6. Describe how software allows you to enhance your photograph after it is taken. Select a photo you have taken, then do ONE of the following, and share what you have done with your counselor:

Scouting America resources: PHOTO EDITING FOR BEGINNERS - 9 Simple Steps to Improve Your Photos (video)

How software lets me enhance a photo after it is taken

Photo I selected | Software I used

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☐ **(a)** Crop your photograph.

How I cropped it, and why

☐ **(b)** Adjust the exposure or make a color correction.

What I adjusted, and how it changed the photo

☐ **(c)** Show another way you could improve your picture for impact.

What I did to improve its impact

Requirement 6 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

7. Using images other than those created for requirements 4, 5, and 6, produce a visual story to document an event to photograph OR choose a topic that interests you to photograph. Do the following:

The event or topic my photo story is about _____

(a) Plan the images you need to photograph for your photo story.

Scouting America resources: Storytelling in Photography (video)

My photo story plan

Shot	What the image will show	Where and when

(b) Share your plan with your counselor, and get your counselor's input and approval before you proceed.

Date I shared my plan | Counselor approved on

My counselor's input

(c) Select eight to 12 images that best tell your story. Arrange your images in order and mount the prints on a poster board, OR create an electronic presentation. Share your visual story with your counselor.

Scouting America resources: How to Make a PowerPoint Photo Slideshow (video)

Number of images I selected | Poster board or electronic presentation

Date I shared my visual story

Requirement 7 completed on | counselor initials

8. Identify three career opportunities in photography. Pick one and explain to your counselor how to prepare for such a career. Discuss what education and training are required, and why this profession might interest you.

Scouting America resources: Top 10 Careers For Photographers (video) · Indeed Career Guide (website)
ScoutSmarts: Requirement 8 explained

Three careers in photography

Career	What it involves

The one I picked: how to prepare, the education and training required, and why it interests me

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