

Shotgun Shooting

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.
This workbook is unofficial and not endorsed by Scouting America.

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1. Do the following:

(a) Explain what a projectile is, and why any device that shoots a projectile at high speed must be handled with care and respect, and used only in approved locations.

Scouting America resources: High-Speed Collisions in Space - Experiments with a Carrot Gun (video)

What a projectile is, and why a device that shoots one at high speed needs care, respect, and an approved location

(b) Explain the basic rules of safe gun handling that apply to all firearms.

Scouting America resources: Rules of Gun Safety (PDF) · NRA Gun Safety Rules (website)

The basic rules of safe gun handling for all firearms

(c) Describe how you would react if a friend visiting your home asked to see your or your family's firearm.

How I would react

(d) Explain the need for, types, and use of eye protection and hearing protection.

Eye and hearing protection

Protection	Why it is needed	Types	How to use it
Eye protection			
Hearing protection			

(e) Explain the main points of the laws for owning and using guns in your community and state.

Scouting America resources: State Laws for Gun Ownership and Use (website)

My community _____ My state _____

Main points of the laws for owning and using guns where I live

(f) Explain how hunting is related to the wise use of renewable wildlife resources.

How hunting is related to the wise use of renewable wildlife resources

(g) Successfully complete a state hunter education course, or obtain a copy of the hunting laws for your state, then do the following:

Scouting America resources: NRA Hunter Education (website)

- ☐ Completed a state hunter education course
- ☐ Got a copy of my state's hunting laws

Date _____ Course name or where I got the laws _____

(1) Explain the main points of hunting laws in your state, and any special laws on the use of guns and ammunition, AND

Main points of my state's hunting laws, and special laws on guns and ammunition

(2) List the kinds of wildlife that can be legally hunted in your state.

Kinds of wildlife that can be legally hunted in my state

(h) Explain to your counselor the proper hygienic guidelines followed while shooting.

Hygienic guidelines I follow while shooting

(i) List and explain three shotgun sports. Identify places in your community where you could practice these sports, and explain how you can join or be a part of range and target activities.

Three shotgun sports

Shotgun sport	How it works

Places in my community to practice, and how to take part

Place	Sports I could practice there	How I can join or be part of range and target activities

(j) Discuss with your counselor a list of sources you could contact for information on firearms and their use.

Sources I could contact for information on firearms and their use

Source	What I could learn from it

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. Working under the supervision of a certified National Rifle Association (NRA) Shotgun instructor and a certified range safety officer, at a nationally authorized camp property or at a commercial firearm range (as defined in the Scouting America National Range and Target Activities Manual), do ONE of the following options:

NRA Shotgun instructor _____ Range safety officer _____

Camp or range _____ Dates _____

☐ **Option A—Shotgun Shooting (Modern Shotshell Type). Do ALL of the following:**

(1) Identify and explain the principal parts of a shotgun, action types, and how they function.

Scouting America resources: Parts of a Shotgun (PDF) · Parts of a Shotgun (photo)

Principal parts of a shotgun

Part	How it functions

Shotgun action types

Action type	How it functions

(2) Identify and demonstrate the rules for safely storing and handling a shotgun.

Scouting America resources: Rules for Using or Storing a Gun (PDF)

Rules for safely storing and handling a shotgun

Date demonstrated _____ Where _____

(3) Identify the parts of a shotgun shell and their functions.

Scouting America resources: Parts of a Shotgun Shell (PDF) · Shot Size (photo) · Shotgun Ammunition (photo)

Parts of a shotgun shell

Part	Its function

(4) Identify the various gauges of shotguns. Explain which you would choose for a particular use and why.

Gauges of shotguns

Gauge	Notes

The gauge I would choose for a particular use, and why

(5) Identify the causes of a shotgun's failure to fire, and explain what a misfire, hangfire, and squib fire are. Explain and demonstrate proper preventive measures, and the procedures to follow in response to each.

Causes of a shotgun's failure to fire

Misfire, hangfire, and squib fire

Problem	What it is	Preventive measures	Procedure to follow
Misfire			
Hangfire			
Squib fire			

Date demonstrated _____ Where _____

(6) Demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary to safely shoot a shotgun on a range, including understanding and following range procedures and commands.

Date _____ Range _____ Instructor _____

(7) Explain the basic safety rules for cleaning a shotgun, and identify the materials needed.

Basic safety rules for cleaning a shotgun

Materials needed

(8) Demonstrate how to clean a shotgun properly and safely.

Date demonstrated _____ Where _____

(9) Discuss what points you would consider in selecting a shotgun.

Points I would consider in selecting a shotgun

(10) Shoot a moving target with a shotgun using the four fundamentals of firing a shot— position, mount, vision, and movement. Shooting score required: Hit at least 12 out of 25 targets (48%) in two 25-target groups. The two groups need not be shot in consecutive order. A minimum of 50 shots must be fired. Shooting skill rules:

- Targets may be thrown by a hand trap, manual mechanical trap, or on any trap or skeet field. If using a hand trap or manual mechanical trap, the trap operator should be at least 5 feet to the right and 3 feet to the rear of the shooter. If throwing left-handed with a hand trap, the trap operator should be at least 5 feet to the left and 3 feet to the rear of the shooter.
- All targets should be thrown at a reasonable speed and in the same direction.
- Targets should be generally thrown so as to climb in the air after leaving the trap.
- Scores may be fired at any time, either in formal competition or in practice, but only under approved supervision and at an approved range as noted in the Scouting America National Range and Target Activities Manual.
- Modern, age-appropriate, target shotgun models, 12-, 16-, or 20-gauge, may be used.
- Only commercially manufactured ammunition may be used. Reloads may not be used in Scouting America range and target activities.
- Shooters must shoot in rounds of 25. Rounds need not be shot continuously or on the same day. The term "round" refers to a single series of 25 shots.
- If using a trap field, shoot station 3 with traps set to throw straightaway targets.

• If using a skeet field, shoot station 7 low house.

Shotgun and gauge I used

My 25-target groups

Group	Date	Field or trap used	Targets hit (out of 25)	Supervisor initials
1				
2				
3				
4				

☐ **Option B—Muzzleloading Shotgun Shooting. Do ALL of the following:**

(1) Discuss with your counselor a brief history of the development of the muzzleloading shotgun.

A brief history of the development of the muzzleloading shotgun

(2) Identify principal parts of muzzleloading shotguns and discuss how they function.

Principal parts of muzzleloading shotguns

Part	How it functions

(3) Identify and demonstrate the rules for safely storing and handling a muzzleloading shotgun.

Scouting America resources: Rules for Using or Storing a Gun (PDF)

Rules for safely storing and handling a muzzleloading shotgun

Date demonstrated

Where

(4) Identify the various grades of black powder and explain their proper and safe use.

Grades of black powder

Grade	Proper and safe use

(5) Discuss proper safety procedures pertaining to black powder storage.

Safety procedures for storing black powder

(6) Discuss proper components of a load.

Proper components of a load

(7) Identify proper procedures and accessories used for safely loading a muzzleloading shotgun.

Procedures for safely loading a muzzleloading shotgun

Accessories used

(8) Identify the causes of a muzzleloading shotgun's failure to fire, and explain what a misfire, hangfire, and squib fire are. Explain and demonstrate proper preventive measures, and the procedures to follow in response to each.

Causes of a muzzleloading shotgun's failure to fire

Misfire, hangfire, and squib fire

Problem	What it is	Preventive measures	Procedure to follow
Misfire			
Hangfire			
Squib fire			

Date demonstrated | Where

(9) Demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary to safely shoot a muzzleloading shotgun on a range, including understanding and following range procedures and commands.

Date | Range | Instructor

(10) Explain the basic safety rules for cleaning a muzzleloading shotgun, and identify the materials needed.

Scouting America resources: The Muzzleloader Shotgun (video)

Basic safety rules for cleaning a muzzleloading shotgun

Materials needed

(11) Demonstrate how to clean a muzzleloading shotgun properly and safely.

Date demonstrated | Where

(12) Discuss what points you would consider in selecting a muzzleloading shotgun.

Points I would consider in selecting a muzzleloading shotgun

(13) Shoot a moving target with a muzzleloading shotgun using the four fundamentals of firing a shot—position, mount, vision, and movement. Shooting score required: Hit at least 5 out of 15 targets in each of two 15-target groups. The two groups need not be shot in consecutive order. A minimum of 30 shots must be fired. Shooting skill rules:

- Targets may be thrown by a hand trap, manual mechanical trap, or on any trap or skeet field. If using a hand trap or manual mechanical trap, the trap operator should be at least 5 feet to the right and 3 feet to the rear of the shooter. If throwing left-handed with a hand trap, the trap operator should be at least 5 feet to the left and 3 feet to the rear of the shooter.
- All targets should be thrown at a reasonable speed and in the same direction.
- Targets should be generally thrown so as to climb in the air after leaving the trap.
- Scores may be fired at any time, either in formal competition or in practice, but only under approved supervision and at an approved range as noted in the Scouting America National Range and Target Activities Manual.
- A 10 gauge or smaller muzzleloading rifle in appropriate size for the participant may be used. Matchlock, wheellock, or flintlock firearms are not approved.
- Standard clay targets customarily used for trap and skeet are to be used.
- On a standard trap field, the shooter should be positioned 8 yards behind the trap house.
- The trap should be set to throw only straightaway targets.
- If using a skeet field, shoot station 7 low house.

Muzzleloading shotgun and gauge I used

My 15-target groups

Group	Date	Field or trap used	Targets hit (out of 15)	Supervisor initials
1				
2				
3				
4				

Requirement 2 completed on counselor initials

3. Identify how you could apply the skills and knowledge of safe and responsible use of firearms you learned in this merit badge to pursue a career or personal hobby. Research the additional training and experience you would need, expenses you may incur, and the affiliation with organizations that could help you maximize the positive impact and enjoyment you gain from it. Discuss what you learned with your counselor, and share what short-term and long-term goals you might have if you pursued this.

Career or hobby I picked Date discussed

What I researched

Topic	What I found
Additional training	
Experience I would need	
Expenses I may have	
Organizations that could help	

My goals if I pursued this

Goals	What they are
Short-term goals	
Long-term goals	

Requirement 3 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: Shotgun Shooting merit badge page (requirements and resources)
Shotgun Shooting 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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