

Every Boy Deserves a Trained Leader

The journey from Fast Start to Wood Badge is a seamless progression for adults and an unending benefit for BSA youth. Fast Start Orientation and New Leader Essentials—the first two steps in new-leader training—introduce new leaders to the Boy Scouting program. Leader Specific Training, as the name implies, focuses on specific leader roles and will require several days to complete, depending on an individual's previous outdoor skills experience. Wood Badge has evolved into the premier leadership course of the BSA, strengthening a leader's ability to effectively work with groups of youth and adults.

Fast Start Orientation

Welcome to Scouting! As a new Scout leader, you are joining our Scouting family, and we want you to understand how the program works. The Fast Start Orientation video and guide will help explain it. These materials present a quick introduction to get new leaders ready for your first Boy Scout meeting.

You will learn in Fast Start Orientation that Scouting employs eight fundamental methods to deliver its three aims of character development, citizenship training, and personal fitness. The eight methods are the ideals, the patrol method, the outdoors, advancement, association with adults, personal growth, leadership development, and the uniform. A troop functions best when all eight methods are employed. As a leader progresses through the levels of training, the eight methods are continually emphasized.

Part One—Introduction

The first thing new leaders should know is that many resources are available to help them. The video's introduction lays out the basics to help new volunteers get started as Scouting leaders.

Part Two—The Troop Meeting

Part Two of the video explains how troop meetings are important in preparing the troop for its monthly outdoor adventure. Each 90-minute meeting should be fun and meaningful for the Scouts. A troop meeting has seven essential parts, each of which is explained in the video.

Part Three—The Outdoor Program

This section of the video explains the importance of the outdoor program to Scouting. Boys are attracted to Scouting by its offer of outdoor fun and adventure. Through exciting outdoor activities like camping and hiking, studying nature, and watching wildlife, Scouts learn to care for the environment and master outdoor skills. At the same time, the outdoor program helps them develop leadership and teamwork.

Part Four—The Troop Committee

This segment of the video illustrates the role of the troop committee, a group of adult volunteers that work behind the scenes to support the Scoutmaster. Troop committee members do a wide variety of tasks, from repairing tents to maintaining troop records. The troop committee's most important responsibility is to make sure that the very best adult leaders are selected, recruited, and trained to work with their boys.

New Leader Essentials

As the first section of Basic Leader Training, New Leader Essentials is a 90-minute introductory session that highlights the values, aims, history, funding, and methods of Scouting and provides new leaders with a look at the resources available to them. New Leader Essentials often is offered as the first part of Leader Specific Training.

Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training

Leader Specific Training is divided into four parts. The first three parts are designed to teach troop operations and can be completed in one full day or three evenings. The fourth part is completing "Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills," which are the skills required for the Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks. Because emphasis is placed on a leader's previous knowledge of the skill rather than course attendance, a new leader can complete this course at an accelerated pace.

Varsity Coach Leader Specific Training

Varsity Coaches and assistant Coaches have similar training requirements to Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters. Requirements for trained Varsity leaders are Varsity Fast Start Orientation, New Leader Essentials, Varsity Coach Leader Specific Training, and Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills.

Troop Committee Training

For troop committee members, Leader Specific Training includes Troop Committee Challenge. Upon completion of the three-hour challenge, a troop committee member is considered trained.

Wood Badge for the 21st Century

Upon completion of Leader Specific Training, an adult is eligible to attend Wood Badge for the 21st Century. As the core leadership skills training course for the BSA, Wood Badge focuses on strengthening every volunteer's ability to work with groups of youth and adults and is less focused on outdoor skills, which are more effectively addressed in other training courses.

The task force that developed Wood Badge for the 21st Century was charged with developing an adult training course that was on the cutting edge of training for the 21st century. They created a highly user-friendly course that would encourage BSA local councils to offer more courses and, ultimately, train more Scouters. The Wood Badge course has made significant accomplishments in both areas.

Incorporating leadership concepts that are used in corporate America, the course teaches participants the basics of listening, communicating, valuing people, team development, situational leadership, problem solving, and managing conflict. Once the skill is learned, each member is given the opportunity to use the skill as a member of a successful working team. At the conclusion of the course, each participant develops a set of personal goals related to his or her Scouting role. Working toward these goals allows each participant to practice and demonstrate new skills.

Nationwide over the past two years, Wood Badge courses have increased more than 30 percent. The course is for all Scouters—Boy Scout leaders, Cub Scout leaders, Venturing leaders, and district and council leaders. This has increased communication to allow for a more seamless connection among all

BSA programs.

Supplemental Training

There is always something new to learn and experience in BSA training. A number of [supplemental training modules](#) are available on the BSA Web site. They are designed to be downloaded for one-hour course outlines or viewed as self-study courses.

Most BSA local councils offer additional training for Scout leaders, focusing on outdoor skills, Youth Protection, and youth leadership development. At the national level, a number of training courses are conducted each summer at the Philmont Training Center in northern New Mexico. Courses focus on everything from teaching outdoor skills to working with the troop committee.

Another supplemental training opportunity is the monthly district roundtable—meetings that bring together Scout leaders from a number of troops to share ideas and teach skills. Each meeting is an opportunity for enjoying fellowship and fun with others who are committed to Scouting's aims and ideals.

Boy Scout Leader Assessment Tool

Whether you have been in Scouting for many years or are just starting out, the Boy Scout Leader Assessment Tool is for you. The online assessment will help Scouters of all experience levels discover opportunities to refresh their understanding of Scouting and determine how to update their skills. Specifically, the Boy Scout Leader Assessment Tool will

- Identify which BSA training courses would be most beneficial to the individual Scouter.
- Allow local council trainer chairpersons to know and understand which courses should be offered.
- Remind long-term Scouters that there are new and interesting skills for them to learn.
- Allow adult leaders to determine their strengths and weaknesses regarding Boy Scout training.
- Help our adult leaders to have the latest and greatest skills to support and mentor our Scouts.