



American Business

Scouts BSA · Careers

Name

Started

Completed

Almost everything you buy, use, or hope to do for a job connects to a business. This badge shows you how businesses start, make money, treat people fairly, and grow. It's a great head start if you ever want to run your own business someday.

Requirements

Every official requirement, in plain language. Check the official wording when you sign off (scouting.org/merit-badges/american-business/). Tips and examples are ideas, not extra requirements.

1 Free enterprise, history, and labor

Tips for this section: Pick a local shop you know and think about how it fits into free enterprise. Ask a grown-up who belongs to a union what it does for its members.

- ☐ **1a** Explain four features of the U.S. free enterprise system, tell how freedom differs from license, and say how the Scout Oath and Law relate to business

- ☐ **1b** Describe the Industrial Revolution and the key developments that began the modern U.S. industrial era; discuss three people who greatly shaped American business or industry and what each did

- ☐ **1c** Name and describe the five primary areas of business to your counselor

- ☐ **1d** Explain the history of U.S. labor unions and why it matters that unions and employers cooperate; name two major unions that exist today

- ☐ **1e** Discuss with your counselor how business affects the economy locally, nationally, and around the world

2 Money, structure, and insurance

Tips for this section: Ask a parent or family friend to walk you through a simple income statement or balance sheet. Sketch one for a pretend lemonade stand to see how the pieces fit.

Example for this section: Build an income statement for a pretend car wash: \$300 in sales, minus \$40 for soap and sponges and \$60 for a sign and a hose, equals \$200 in profit. Then list one risk, like a rainy weekend, and how insurance or savings could cover a bigger loss.

- ☐ **2a** Explain the three basic financial statements (income statement, balance sheet, statement of cash flows) and discuss with your counselor how each helps leaders decide better

- ☐ **2b** Explain how rising or falling interest rates, taxes, and government spending shift the flow of money to and from companies and industry

- ☐ **2c** Explain how a sole proprietorship, partnership, or LLC raises capital, and explain four ways a corporation raises capital

- ☐ **2d** Name five types of insurance that are useful to a business and describe what each one is for

3 Profit, ethics, and how businesses operate

Tips for this section: Compare buying the same item online and in a store. Talk about which business seems more honest, careful, or earth-friendly and why.

Example for this section: Compare a small bakery and a big online seller. The bakery might win on freshness and knowing customers by name; the online seller on price and convenience. Then talk about one ethical choice each faces, like honest ads or how they handle packaging waste.

- ☐ **3a** Explain the role profit plays in business

- ☐ **3b** Describe green marketing and sustainable business practices to your counselor

- ☐ **3c** Explain how ethics affects business decisions

- ☐ **3d** Discuss how running a brick-and-mortar business differs from running an online one

- ☐ **4** Describe what the U.S. Department of Labor does, and discuss two of these with your counselor: FLSA, OSHA, FMLA, or ERISA

Tip: Look up the Department of Labor online and pick two labor law topics, like child labor or workplace safety, that matter to teens.

Example: Pick two of the four laws and tie each to teens: the FLSA sets how many hours someone under 16 may work on a school day and which jobs are too dangerous for young workers, and OSHA sets workplace safety rules, like required protective gear. Explain why each rule exists.

- ☐ **5** Pick a business and research how it handles each primary area of business (accounting, finance, economics, marketing, management); share your findings with your counselor

Tip: Choose a business you can actually learn about, such as a family friend's company or a nearby store. Prepare questions on each area before you talk with them.

Example: Choose a family-run restaurant and make a one-page chart with five rows: accounting (who tracks money), finance (how they paid to open), economics (what happens when food prices rise), marketing (how people find them), and management (who makes the schedule).

6 Business careers: Choose 1 of 2

Tips for this section: Make a short list of questions about how the person got started and what a normal day looks like. Take notes so you can share what you learned.

Example for this section: Interview a business leader with a parent present. Good topics: their first job, a mistake that taught them something, how they decide what to charge, and what a regular Tuesday looks like for them.

- ☐ **6a** Pick one primary area of business and find three careers in it; research the education, training, and experience one of them needs, then discuss it with your counselor and say why it interests you

- ☐ **6b** Interview a business leader about their company and career path, discuss how ethics shapes business decisions, and share what you learned with your counselor