



American Cultures

Scouts BSA · Citizenship

Name

Started

Completed

America is made up of people from many backgrounds, each with its own foods, faiths, music, and traditions. This badge invites you to step outside your usual circle and learn from others. You'll come away with new friends, new ideas, and a better sense of how people can live well together.

Requirements

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

1 Experience other cultures: Choose 2 of 5

Tips for this section: Look for cultural festivals, heritage days, places of worship with open houses, or library and museum exhibits about other backgrounds. Go with a parent and ask questions politely.

Example for this section: Two experiences, each with a different group, might look like: going to a Lunar New Year parade with your family (1a), and sitting down with a neighbor to hear how her family celebrates Día de los Muertos (1c). Keep notes on what you saw and asked.

- ☐ **1a** Attend a festival, celebration, or other event tied to one of your groups and report what you saw and learned (use a different group for each choice)

- ☐ **1b** Visit a school, place of worship, or other institution connected with one of your groups and report what you saw and learned (use a different group for each choice)

- ☐ **1c** Talk with someone from one of your groups about its heritage and traditions and report what you learned (use a different group for each choice)

- ☐ **1d** Learn a traditional song, dance, poem, or story from one group and teach it to some of your friends (use a different group for each choice)

- ☐ **1e** See a library or museum program or exhibit about one group's traditions and report what you saw and learned (use a different group for each choice)

- ☐ **2** Describe what a city or country might be like today if only one of your groups had ever lived there, then how it might be if all three groups lived there together

Tip: Picture your school or town if everyone shared one background. Think about what foods, holidays, music, and ideas would be missing.

Example: Imagine your school cafeteria, playlist, and sports teams if everyone came from one background. Write a short "day in the life" of that town, then a second one for your real community, and compare what's gained and lost.

- ☐ **3** Describe some differences in religious and social customs among your three groups, plus some ideas or ways of doing things they share

Tip: Ask friends or neighbors from different groups about a holiday or custom they celebrate. Listen with respect and note what is similar to your own traditions.

Example: Make a three-column chart for three groups with rows for a major holiday, a coming-of-age custom, how elders are honored, and a typical wedding. Circle the places where the groups are more alike than you expected.

- ☐ **4** Describe something three people contributed to our country, each person having a different racial, ethnic, or religious background from the others

Tip: The public library can help you find stories of people from many backgrounds who made a difference. Pick ones whose work you find interesting.

Example: Pick three people whose work you already use, like an inventor, an athlete, and a musician from three different backgrounds. For each, write one sentence on what they did and one on what obstacles they faced.

- ☐ **5** Give a talk to your Scout unit or school class about how people of different groups have gotten along, then lead a discussion on helping groups understand each other better

Tip: Practice your talk with your family first. Plan two or three open questions to get your group talking, and make sure everyone gets a turn.

Example: For your troop talk, share one story from your cultural experiences, then ask open questions like "When have you felt like an outsider?" and "What helps a new kid feel welcome in our patrol?" Keep it to about 15 minutes.