



American Indian Culture

Scouts BSA · Citizenship

Name

Started

Completed

American Indian peoples have lived on this land for thousands of years and are still a vital part of America today. This badge helps you learn about the many different nations, their languages, games, and ways of life, past and present. Approach it with curiosity and respect.

Requirements

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

- ☐ 1 Name the American Indian cultural areas and explain what makes each one distinct

Tip: Use a map to see the major cultural areas. Note how climate, land, and food shaped the way each group lived.

Example: Make a map with colored regions for the cultural areas, such as the Northeast Woodlands, Plains, Southwest, and Northwest Coast. For each, note the main foods, housing, and how the land shaped daily life.

- ☐ 2 Research one American Indian tribe, group, or nation and tell your counselor about its dwellings, way of life, government, religion, family and clan ties, language, clothing, arts and crafts, growing, gathering and preparing food, travel, games, warfare customs, and life today

Tip: Choose a tribe or nation from your region if you can. Look for sources written by members of that nation.

Example: Research one nation's way of life, past and present: where they live, how they govern themselves today, traditional foods and crafts, and one current project the nation is working on, like language classes or land restoration.

3 Language, place names, and leaders

Tips for this section: Look up place names near you, such as rivers, towns, or parks, that come from native languages and learn what they mean.

Example for this section: Learn what 10 place names near you mean and 10 everyday words in one native language. Then share five notable leaders and their nations, such as Sequoyah, who created a writing system for the Cherokee language.

- ☐ **3a** Learn 10 common words or terms in an American Indian language and what they mean

- ☐ **3b** Find out what 10 U.S. place names of American Indian origin mean

- ☐ **3c** Name five notable American Indian leaders, past or present, with their tribes or nations, and describe what makes each notable

4 Cultural exchange and games

Tips for this section: When teaching a traditional game, explain where it comes from and why it was played. Practice it with family first.

Example for this section: Teach your patrol a traditional game like a hoop-and-pole or stick-dice game. Start by explaining which nation it comes from and what skills it built, then play a few rounds.

- ☐ **4a** Describe how European settlers' lives might have differed if no Native Americans had been here when they arrived

- ☐ **4b** Describe eight things other people have adopted from American Indians

- ☐ **4c** Learn a game played by a tribe or group, then teach and lead it with a group of Scouts

5 Museum or gathering: Choose 1 of 2

Tips for this section: Look for a museum, cultural center, or public powwow near you. Learn the etiquette before you go, and ask before taking photos.

Example for this section: At a public powwow, learn the etiquette first: stand for the grand entry, don't touch dancers' regalia, and ask before taking any photos. Notice how the dance categories and drum groups are announced.

- ☐ **5a** Visit a museum in person or online to see American Indian exhibits; discuss two exhibits with your counselor and identify 10 artifacts by their tribe or nation, shape, size, and use

- ☐ **5b** Attend a present-day American Indian gathering; discuss with your counselor the proper etiquette for attending and what you saw and learned