



Citizenship in the Nation

Scouts BSA · Citizenship · Eagle-required

Name

Started

Completed

This badge helps you understand how the United States government works and what your rights and responsibilities are as a citizen. You'll study the founding documents, follow the news, and even write to your representative. It shows you that your voice matters.

Requirements

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

- ☐ **1** Explain what the U.S. Constitution is, what it does, the principles behind it, and why having a constitution matters

Tip: Read the Constitution with a parent a little at a time. Talk about why the founders wrote it and how it still affects you.

- ☐ **2** List the 6 purposes for the Constitution named in its Preamble, and explain how they affect your family and community

Tip: Write the six purposes on a card. Next to each, write an example of how it shows up in daily life.

Example: Tie each purpose to real life: "form a more perfect Union" (states working together), "establish Justice" (courts), "insure domestic Tranquility" (keeping the peace), "provide for the common defence" (the military), "promote the general Welfare" (things like highways), and "secure the Blessings of Liberty" (rights for future generations).

- ☐ **3** List the 3 branches of the U.S. government and explain the items below

Tip: Draw a chart with the three branches. Add arrows showing how each one checks the others.

Example: Draw the three branches as a triangle with arrows: Congress passes laws, the President can veto them, Congress can override with a two-thirds vote, and the Supreme Court can strike down laws that conflict with the Constitution. Add one real example of each check.

- ☐ **3a** What each branch does

- ☐ **3b** Why power is split among separate branches

- ☐ **3c** How each branch checks and balances the other two

- ☐ **3d** How citizens can take part in each branch

4 Founding documents and the national motto

Tips for this section: Pick a right from the Bill of Rights that matters to you and think of a real example of it in action.

- ☐ **4a** Discuss why the Declaration of Independence is important

- ☐ **4b** Discuss why the Bill of Rights (the first 10 amendments) and the 14th Amendment are important

- ☐ **4c** Discuss why E Pluribus Unum, the traditional U.S. motto, is important

- ☐ **5** For 5 days in a row, watch the national evening news or read the top stories from a national news outlet; discuss the issues with your counselor and explain how one affects you, your family, and your community

Tip: Read or watch news from a trusted source for five days. Write a short note each day about one national issue.

Example: Keep a five-day news log with one national issue each day: what happened, which branch of government is involved, and two different viewpoints. On day five, pick the issue you'd most like to discuss with your counselor.

- ☐ **6** With your counselor's OK, pick a speech of national historical importance and explain the items below

Tip: Choose a famous speech and read or listen to it. Think about what the speaker wanted people to feel and do.

Example: Study a speech like Lincoln's Gettysburg Address or Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream." Explain what was happening in the country, the speaker's main message, and one line that still matters today and why.

- ☐ **6a** Who wrote it

- ☐ **6b** The historical setting

- ☐ **6c** The national problems the author wanted to address

- ☐ **6d** What the author said

- ☐ **6e** Why the speech matters in the nation's history

- ☐ **6f** Pick one or two sentences from the speech that mean a lot to you and tell your counselor why

7 Visit historic and government sites: Choose 2 of 4

Tips for this section: Look for landmarks, monuments, or federal buildings near you. Your state capitol is another good option.

Example for this section: Two visits could be your state capitol, where you watch the legislature or take a tour, and a national park site, monument, or federal courthouse. For each, write what happened there and why it was preserved.

- ☐ **7a** Visit a National Historic Landmark or a site on the National Register of Historic Places, and tell your counselor what you learned and found interesting

- ☐ **7b** Tour your state capitol or the U.S. Capitol, and share with your counselor what you found out about the building, its purpose, and its history

- ☐ **7c** Tour a federal facility and explain to your counselor what you saw, its role in the nearby community, and how it serves the country

- ☐ **7d** Pick a U.S. national monument, research it using books, brochures, the internet (with a parent or guardian's permission), and other sources, and tell your counselor what you learned and why it matters to Americans

- ☐ **8** Name your members of the U.S. Congress, write to your representative about your views on a national issue, and show your counselor your letter and any reply

Tip: Look up your representatives online. Write a polite letter about an issue you care about and share any reply.

Example: Write to your representative about an issue you care about, like protecting a national park or school safety. Keep it to one page: that you're a Scout in their district, the issue, why it matters to you, and what you'd like them to do. Send it with a parent's help.