



Climbing

Scouts BSA · Outdoors

Name

Started

Completed

Climbing is a thrilling sport that builds strength, focus, and trust in your team. This badge teaches safety first, then gear, knots, belaying, climbing, and rappelling. Every step happens under qualified supervision, so you can challenge yourself with confidence.

Requirements

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

1 Safety and first aid

Tips for this section: Learn first aid for common climbing injuries like scrapes, sprains, and falls. Know who to call in an emergency.

- ☐ **1a** Explain to your counselor the hazards you're most likely to face while climbing and rappelling, and how to anticipate, prevent, mitigate, and respond to them

- ☐ **1b** Show you know how to prevent and give first aid for climbing injuries and illnesses: sprains, fractures, abrasions, blisters, rope burns, concussions, dehydration, heat and cold reactions, stopped breathing, snakebite, and insect bites or stings

- ☐ **1c** Name the conditions that must be present before you give someone CPR

- ☐ **2** Explain the meaning of the Outdoor Code and each of the Leave No Trace Seven Principles

Tip: Think about how to protect rock, plants, and trails at climbing areas. Practice the Outdoor Code on every outing.

- ☐ **3** Show up properly dressed to belay, climb, and rappel; explain why you're wearing each item and how your clothes let you move easily, avoid snagging, and give comfort and weather protection

Tip: Ask your instructor to look over your clothes and shoes. Learn what each piece of gear does and why it matters.

4 Climbing location

Tips for this section: Look at a climbing area with your instructor and talk about hazards, route ratings, and how you'd get help if needed.

Example for this section: Look at a crag or gym wall with your instructor and talk through it: loose rock or slick holds, where the anchors are, what the route ratings mean (for example, 5.6 is easier than 5.9), and the emergency plan, including the nearest phone signal and road access.

- ☐ **4a** Explain how climbs are rated for difficulty, and rate the rock faces or walls where you'll show your climbing skills

- ☐ **4b** Explain top-rope climbing, lead climbing, and bouldering

- ☐ **4c** Judge how safe a particular climbing area is, checking the weather, how well you can see, the state of the rock or wall surface, and other environmental dangers

- ☐ **4d** Figure out how to get emergency help to the climbing area, and discuss what medical training your group needs when it climbs or rappels far from help

- ☐ **5** Explain why verbal signals matter on every climb and rappel and while bouldering; then, with your counselor or another Scout, show the signals each of the following uses

Tip: Practice the signals out loud with your belayer until they feel natural. Clear communication keeps everyone safe.

Example: Run the signals like a script: Climber: "On belay?" Belayer: "Belay on." Climber: "Climbing." Belayer: "Climb on." Add "Slack," "Up rope," "Falling," and "Off belay" so you can explain when each one is used.

- ☐ **5a** Show the verbal signals climbers use

- ☐ **5b** Show the verbal signals rappellers use

- ☐ **5c** Show the verbal signals belayers use

- ☐ **5d** Show the verbal signals boulderers and their spotters use

6 Rope

Tips for this section: Ask your instructor to show you how to inspect a rope and what signs mean it should be retired.

Example for this section: Explain why climbing uses dynamic rope that stretches to absorb a fall, while rappelling and anchors often use static rope. Then show how to run the rope through your hands looking for cuts, soft spots, or stiffness, and why a rope gets retired.

- ☐ **6a** Describe which kinds of rope are acceptable for climbing and rappelling

- ☐ **6b** Show how to inspect a rope for wear or damage

- ☐ **6c** Discuss ways to keep a rope from getting damaged

- ☐ **6d** Explain when a rope should be retired and how to retire it

- ☐ **6e** Coil a rope properly

7 Climbing knots

Tips for this section: Practice each knot at home with a short rope until you can tie it without looking. Have an instructor check every knot before climbing.

Example for this section: Tie each required knot and explain its job, like a figure eight follow-through to tie into a harness or a water knot for webbing. Have the instructor check every knot before anyone leaves the ground.

- ☐ **7a** Tie a figure eight on a bight and give at least one way it's used in belaying, climbing, or rappelling

- ☐ **7b** Tie a figure eight follow-through and give at least one way it's used in belaying, climbing, or rappelling

- ☐ **7c** Tie a water knot and give at least one way it's used in belaying, climbing, or rappelling

- ☐ **7d** Tie a double fisherman's knot (grapevine knot) and give at least one way it's used in belaying, climbing, or rappelling

- ☐ **7e** Tie a Prusik hitch onto a rope and give at least one way it's used in belaying, climbing, or rappelling

8 Harness, helmet, and gloves

Tips for this section: Have an instructor check your harness, helmet, and gloves every time you gear up.

- ☐ **8a** Explain what a commercially made climbing harness is for and show how to put it on correctly

- ☐ **8b** Explain what a climbing helmet is for and show how to put it on correctly

- ☐ **8c** Explain what climbing or rappelling gloves are for and show how to put them on correctly

- ☐ **9** Name each part of the CHECK system and explain to your counselor what each one means

Tip: Learn the CHECK system well enough to explain each step. Use it every single time before you climb.

Example: Learn each step of the CHECK system the way your instructor teaches it, then say it out loud before every climb as partners check each other's harnesses, helmets, buckles, knots, and belay devices. No one climbs until the belayer says "Climb on."

10 Belaying

Tips for this section: Practice belaying only with a qualified instructor watching and a backup belayer in place.

- ☐ **10a** Explain why belaying climbers and rappellers is important and when it's needed

- ☐ **10b** Belay 3 climbers, each a different person, on 3 different routes

- ☐ **10c** Act as backup belayer for 3 different climbs

- ☐ **10d** Belay 3 rappellers, each a different person, on 3 different routes

- ☐ **10e** Act as backup belayer for 3 different rappels

11 Climbing

Tips for this section: Start with easier routes and build up. Focus on using your legs more than your arms.

Example for this section: Start on an easy route to warm up, then try something a little harder. Focus on pushing with your legs, keeping your hips close to the wall, and resting on straight arms instead of bent ones.

- ☐ **11a** Tie a belay rope directly to your harness the correct way

- ☐ **11b** Climb at least 3 different routes on a climbing wall or rock face, using good technique and verbal signals with a belayer

12 Rappelling

Tips for this section: Rappel only with a qualified instructor and a safety backup. Take it slow and keep a good stance.

- ☐ **12a** Tie a belay rope directly to your harness the correct way

- ☐ **12b** Attach a rappel rope to your harness using a carabiner and a rappel device

- ☐ **12c** Rappel down 3 different rock faces or 3 rappel routes on a climbing wall, using verbal signals with a belayer and good rappelling technique

- ☐ **13** Show how to store climbing, rappelling, and belaying gear, including rope and hardware

Tip: Help coil and pack the gear after each session. Store it clean and dry, away from chemicals.