



Geocaching

Scouts BSA · Outdoors

Name

Started

Completed

Geocaching is a worldwide treasure hunt that uses GPS and navigation skills. You'll learn how GPS works, practice with map and compass, and find and hide caches. It's a fun way to explore and share the outdoors.

Requirements

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

1 Safety and planning

Tips for this section: Plan for weather, terrain, and water, and always tell someone where you're going. Go with a buddy and an adult.

Example for this section: Plan a hunt like a trip leader: check the weather, pick caches on public land, pack water and the Scout Basic Essentials, tell someone at home where you're going, and know where the nearest road is.

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

- ☐ **1b** Discuss preventing and giving first aid for geocaching injuries and illnesses: cuts, scrapes, snakebite, insect stings, tick bites, poisonous plants, sunburn, heatstroke, heat exhaustion, hypothermia, and dehydration

- ☐ **1c** Discuss how to plan a GPS outing well: use the buddy system, tell others your plan, and think about weather, route, and the right clothing

2 Caching rules and etiquette

Tips for this section: Learn the rules for hiding and finding caches and how to leave places as you found them.

- ☐ **2a** Discuss with your counselor why a cache must never be buried

- ☐ **2b** Discuss good etiquette when hiding or looking for a cache, and how to hide, post, maintain, and take down a geocache the right way

- ☐ **2c** Discuss how the Outdoor Code and the Leave No Trace Seven Principles apply when you go geocaching

- ☐ **3** Explain these geocaching terms: cache, waypoint, log, accuracy, trackable, attributes, and difficulty and terrain ratings. Then choose 5 more terms and explain them to your counselor

Tip: Look at a few cache pages online and make flash cards for any new terms you come across.

- ☐ **4** Explain how GPS works. Then use Scouting's EDGE to show your counselor how to use a GPS unit: mark a waypoint and edit it, change the field functions, and switch the coordinate system

Tip: Learn how a GPS uses satellites to find your location, then practice teaching it with EDGE on a family member before you show your counselor.

Example: Use EDGE with your counselor: explain why the GPS needs a clear view of the sky, demonstrate marking a waypoint and renaming it, guide your counselor as they change a data field and switch the coordinate format, then enable them to do it on their own.

5 Map, compass, and GPS

Tips for this section: Find the same spot with a map and compass and with a GPS, and compare which was easier and more accurate.

Example for this section: Find the same park bench twice: once with a map and compass from a known starting point, and once with GPS coordinates. Compare how long each took and how close each got you.

- ☐ **5a** Show that you can navigate with a map and compass, and tell why that skill is important in geocaching

- ☐ **5b** Explain how GPS navigation and regular map reading are alike and different, and describe what each one is good for

- ☐ **6** Describe to your counselor the 4 steps for finding a first cache, then mark a waypoint and edit it
Tip: Practice marking a waypoint at home and then navigating back to it from down the street.

- ☐ **7** With a parent's or guardian's permission (and help setting up a free account), look up public geocaches near you on [geocaching.com](https://www.geocaching.com). Share the posted details of 3 with your counselor, then find 1 of them

Tip: Read cache descriptions and recent logs before you go. Pick an easy one for your first find.

Example: Read three cache pages and compare them: the difficulty and terrain ratings, the size, the hint, and the last few logs. Pick the one with recent finds for your first try so you know it's still there.

8 Geocaching project: Choose 1 of 4

Tips for this section: Choose the option that fits your troop, like a Cache In Trash Out cleanup event that also helps your community.

Example for this section: A Cache In Trash Out event could be a park cleanup with your patrol: bring gloves and bags, pick up litter along the trails, and log what you collected.

- ☐ **8a** If your council has a Cache to Eagle® series, visit at least 3 of its sites. Describe the project each one features and explain how the program shows the public Scouting's service

- ☐ **8b** Make a Scouting-themed Travel Bug® that promotes a Scouting value and release it in a public cache. With a parent's or guardian's permission, track it online for 30 days, logging its moves, and share the log with your counselor

- ☐ **8c** Following the pamphlet's guidelines, hide a public geocache. First share a 3-month maintenance plan you'll personally carry out. With permission, read its online logs for 30 days, then show them to your counselor. Archive it when you stop maintaining it

- ☐ **8d** Explain Cache In Trash Out (CITO) and describe how you've practiced it at public caches or a CITO event. Then either build CITO containers to place at public caches, or run a CITO event for your unit or the public

- ☐ **9** Plan a geohunt for a youth group (your troop, a nearby pack, a school, or a place of worship): pick a theme, set a course of at least 4 waypoints, teach players to use GPS, and play. Tell your counselor how it went and share your materials

Tip: Hide small items in a park with permission, make clue cards with coordinates, and let younger Scouts hunt.

Example: For a Cub Scout pack geohunt, hide six numbered tokens in a park with permission, write the coordinates on clue cards, pair each Cub with an adult, and have a prize at the last stop.