



Law

Scouts BSA · Citizenship

Name

Started

Completed

Laws shape almost everything around you, from traffic lights to school rules to the products you buy. This badge helps you see where laws come from, how courts work, and how people get legal help. You'll talk with real people and maybe even watch a trial.

Requirements

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

☐ **1** Define law, tell where some laws come from, and describe what law does for society

Tip: Think about the rules in your home, school, and town. Which ones are laws, who made them, and what problems do they solve?

Example: Show where laws come from with real examples: the Constitution, a law passed by Congress, a state law about bike helmets, a city ordinance about noise, and a court decision that sets a rule for future cases.

2 Legal history: Choose 2 of 3

Tips for this section: Choose a topic that sounds interesting to you, like an ancient legal code or a famous trial, and read about it at the library.

Example for this section: If you pick 2a, put the Code of Hammurabi, Justinian's Code, and the Magna Carta on a timeline. Explain what each said, who it protected, and which of its ideas you can still see in laws today.

☐ **2a** Discuss the Code of Hammurabi, Justinian's Code, and the Magna Carta

☐ **2b** Discuss how the jury system developed

- ☐ **2c** Discuss 2 famous trials from history

- ☐ **3** Tell what civil law and criminal law are, the main ways they differ, and give examples of each

Tip: Come up with a simple example of each kind of case, like a broken contract and a theft, and explain how they're handled differently.

Example: Civil case: a neighbor's tree falls on your fence and they won't pay to fix it, so you sue for the cost. Criminal case: someone breaks into a car, and the government charges them. Explain who brings each case and what the outcome can be.

- ☐ **4** Ask 5 people (no more than 1 from your immediate family) what role law enforcement officers play in society. Talk over their answers with them and report what you found to your counselor

Tip: Ask a mix of people, such as a neighbor, a teacher, and a relative, then notice where their views agree and differ.

- ☐ **5** Discuss with your counselor several laws that protect buyers and sellers, and describe several organizations that help consumers and sellers

Tip: Look at a product label or warranty at home and talk about what protections a buyer has if something goes wrong.

Example: Pick a product at home, like a phone or a toy, and find its warranty. Explain what a buyer can do if it breaks, and which government agency or consumer group you could contact if the company won't help.

6 See the law in action: Choose 1 of 2

Tips for this section: Many courthouses let the public watch. Go with a parent, or set up a mock trial with your patrol using a simple made-up case.

Example for this section: For a mock trial, use a simple made-up case like "Who ate the patrol's dessert?" Assign a judge, two lawyers, witnesses, and a jury. Each side gives an opening, asks questions, and closes, and the jury decides.

- ☐ **6a** Sit in on a criminal or civil court session and write at least 250 words about what you saw

- ☐ **6b** Plan and hold a mock trial with your troop, class, or another group, then discuss it with the group afterward

- ☐ **7** Arrange to meet a lawyer employed by a bank, business, government agency, or title company. Learn about their duties and responsibilities, and report what you learned

Tip: Write your questions ahead of time, like what a typical day looks like and what they like most about their work.

- ☐ **8** Explain what it takes to become a lawyer in your state and how your state chooses its judges

Tip: Look up how judges get their jobs in your state, since it can be by election or appointment.

- ☐ **9** List 15 jobs connected to law or the legal process. Tell which one you like best and why

Tip: Brainstorm jobs beyond lawyer and judge, like court reporter, paralegal, or police officer, then pick one and explain why.

- ☐ **10** Tell where people who can't pay for a lawyer can get legal help, and what to do if you could pay a lawyer but don't know one nearby

Tip: Find out about legal aid groups and bar association referral services in your area.

Example: List places that offer free or low-cost legal help, like a legal aid office, a bar association referral service, or a law school clinic. Explain who each one serves and how a person would contact them.

11 Areas of law: Choose 2 of 11

Tips for this section: Pick two areas that connect to your interests, like environmental law or intellectual property law, and share what each one covers.

- ☐ **11a** Discuss with your counselor why administrative law matters in our society

- ☐ **11b** Discuss with your counselor why alternative dispute resolution matters in our society

- ☐ **11c** Discuss with your counselor why bankruptcy law matters in our society

- ☐ **11d** Discuss with your counselor why biotechnology law matters in our society

- ☐ **11e** Discuss with your counselor why environmental law matters in our society

- ☐ **11f** Discuss with your counselor why family law matters in our society

- ☐ **11g** Discuss with your counselor why immigration law matters in our society

- ☐ **11h** Discuss with your counselor why information technology law matters in our society

- ☐ **11i** Discuss with your counselor why intellectual property law (copyrights, patents, trademarks) matters in our society

- ☐ **11j** Discuss with your counselor why international law matters in our society

- ☐ **11k** Discuss with your counselor why privacy law matters in our society