



Leatherwork

Scouts BSA · Hobbies

Name

Started

Completed

Leatherwork is an old craft that's still useful today. You'll learn about leather and tools, then make something real, like a wallet, key fob, or braided lanyard. It's satisfying to use something you made with your own hands.

Requirements

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

1 Safety and first aid

Tips for this section: Learn to handle sharp knives and punches safely, and know first aid for small cuts before you start.

Example for this section: Before you start, show your safety setup: a cutting mat, a sharp knife (dull ones slip), cutting away from your hand, a mallet only on stamps and punches, and dyes used with gloves in a ventilated space. Know first aid for small cuts.

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

- ☐ **1b** Show you know first aid for leatherwork injuries and illnesses, including small cuts and scratches, puncture wounds, swallowed poisons, and reactions to dyes, cements, and finishes

2 About leather

Tips for this section: Look at leather items around your house, like shoes, belts, and bags, and talk about which kinds of leather they might be.

Example for this section: Explain that most leather comes from cattle hides that are a byproduct of the meat industry. Compare vegetable-tanned leather, which is firm and good for stamping, with chrome-tanned leather, which is soft and used for jackets and shoes.

- ☐ **2a** Explain where leather comes from

- ☐ **2b** Explain which kinds of hides are made into leather

- ☐ **2c** Explain five types of leather

- ☐ **2d** Explain what each type of leather is best used for

3 Make leather articles using five or more steps: Choose 5 of 8

Tips for this section: Start with a simple kit project so you learn the basic steps, like cutting, stamping, dyeing, and stitching.

Example for this section: A key fob in five steps: trace a pattern on the leather, cut it out, dampen and stamp a design, dye and seal it, then punch a hole and set a rivet for the key ring. Keep notes on what you'd change next time.

- ☐ **3a** Lay out a pattern and transfer it to the leather

- ☐ **3b** Cut the leather

- ☐ **3c** Punch holes

- ☐ **3d** Carve or stamp a design into the surface

- ☐ **3e** Apply dye or stain to the project, then a finish

- ☐ **3f** Assemble the pieces by lacing or stitching

- ☐ **3g** Set snaps and rivets

- ☐ **3h** Dress (finish) the edges

☐ **4** Braid or plait an item from leather, vinyl lace, or paracord

Tip: Practice a braid with paracord first, since it's forgiving and cheap, then make a lanyard or bracelet.

Example: Braid a lanyard from paracord or leather lace using a four-strand round braid, or a bracelet with a three-strand flat braid. Finish the ends neatly with a knot or a clasp.

5 Tanning, leather care, or a business visit: Choose 1 of 4

Tips for this section: Bring old leather boots or a baseball glove back to life with cleaner and conditioner, or visit a saddle or shoe repair shop.

Example for this section: Recondition an old pair of boots or a baseball glove: brush off dirt, clean with saddle soap, let it dry, then work in conditioner. Take before and after photos to show your counselor.

☐ **5a** Learn how leather is tanned commercially and report on it to your counselor

☐ **5b** Tan a small animal's skin, then tell your counselor what safety precautions you planned and which tanning method you used

☐ **5c** Recondition, or show you can properly care for, leather items such as your shoes, a baseball glove, a saddle, or furniture. Discuss with your counselor the pros and cons of leather compared with synthetics

☐ **5d** Visit a leather-related business, such as a leathercraft supplier, tannery, leather goods or shoe factory, or saddle shop, and report on your visit to your counselor