



# Photography

Scouts BSA · Arts

Name

Started

Completed

Photography lets you capture moments and tell stories with pictures. You'll learn how light, focus, and composition make a great photo, then try different subjects and edit your work. A phone camera is a great place to start.

## Requirements

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

### 1 Safety

**Tips for this section:** Watch the Digital Safety video and talk about staying safe when taking and sharing photos.

- ☐ **1a** Explain to your counselor the hazards you're most likely to face doing photography and how to anticipate, lessen, prevent, and respond to them. Explain how you'd prepare for conditions like weather, sun, and water

- ☐ **1b** With your parent's or guardian's permission, watch the Personal Safety Awareness "Digital Safety" video

## 2 What makes a good picture

**Tips for this section:** Take the same picture with different settings or angles and see how it changes.

**Example for this section:** Shoot the same flower three ways: with a close-up blurry background, with everything sharp, and in harsh noon sun versus soft evening light. Use the pictures to explain depth of field, exposure, and the rule of thirds.

- ☐ **2a** Explain how light affects a picture: natural (existing) light, dim light like nighttime, and artificial light like a flash

- ☐ **2b** Explain how exposure affects a picture: aperture (f-stops), shutter speed, and ISO

- ☐ **2c** Explain how depth of field affects a picture

- ☐ **2d** Explain how composition affects a picture: rule of thirds, leading lines, framing, and depth

- ☐ **2e** Explain how angle of view affects a picture

- ☐ **2f** Explain how stopping action and blurring motion affect a picture

- ☐ **2g** Explain the decisive moment, when the photographer catches an action or expression, and how it affects a picture

- ☐ **3** Explain a camera's basic parts and how it works, and how a picture's exposure is made when you press the shutter

**Tip:** Look at your camera or phone settings and learn what each one does.

**4 Compare techniques: Choose 2 of 4**

**Tips for this section:** Pick two comparisons, like shooting with and without a flash, and share the results with your counselor.

**Example for this section:** Two comparisons might be a portrait lit by a flash versus window light (4b), and the same flower with a blurry background versus everything sharp (4c). Show the pairs side by side and explain what changed.

- ☐ **4a** Shoot one subject from two different angles or points of view, and share the photos with your counselor

- ☐ **4b** Shoot one subject in two kinds of light, artificial and natural, and share the photos with your counselor

- ☐ **4c** Shoot one subject using two different depths of field, and share the photos with your counselor

- ☐ **4d** Shoot one subject using two different composition techniques, and share the photos with your counselor

**5 Subjects to photograph: Choose 3 of 6**

**Tips for this section:** Try a person, a landscape, and an action shot. Take lots of photos and pick your best.

**Example for this section:** Pick three subjects: a portrait of a family member, a landscape from a hike, and an action shot like a pet running or a sibling shooting baskets. Take 20 or more of each, then choose your favorite.

- ☐ **5a** Take a close-up of a person and share it with your counselor

- ☐ **5b** Photograph two or three people interacting and share it with your counselor

- ☐ **5c** Take an action shot and share it with your counselor

- ☐ **5d** Photograph an animal and share it with your counselor

- ☐ **5e** Take a nature shot and share it with your counselor

- ☐ **5f** Photograph a person (candid, posed, or aware of the camera) and share it with your counselor

- ☐ **6** Describe how editing software can improve a photo after you take it. Then pick one of your own photos, do one of 6a through 6c, and show your counselor what you did (choose 1 of 3 below)

**Tip:** Use a free editing app to crop, brighten, or adjust colors.

**Example:** Take one photo from a campout and edit it with a free app: straighten the horizon, crop to strengthen the composition, and lift the shadows. Show the before and after and explain each change.

- ☐ **6a** Crop the photo

- ☐ **6b** Adjust its exposure or correct its color

- ☐ **6c** Show some other way to give the photo more impact

## 7 Photo story

**Tips for this section:** Pick a story, like a campout or a family event, and plan the shots before you start.

**Example for this section:** Plan a story of 8 to 12 images about making dinner: shopping, chopping, the steam from the pot, hands serving, the family at the table. Sketch the shot list first so the story has a beginning, middle, and end.

- ☐ **7a** Plan the shots for a photo story documenting an event or a topic you're interested in, using new images, not ones made for requirements 4, 5, or 6

- ☐ **7b** Share your plan with your counselor and get their input and approval before you start

- ☐ **7c** Choose the 8 to 12 images that tell your story best and put them in order, either mounted as prints on poster board or in an electronic presentation. Share your photo story with your counselor

- ☐ **8** Name three photography careers. Choose one and tell your counselor how someone gets ready for it, including the education and training needed, and why it might interest you

**Tip:** Talk with a local photographer about their work, or research jobs in photography.