



MERIT BADGE WORKSHEET

Sustainability

Scouts BSA · Nature · Eagle-required

Name

Started

Completed

Sustainability is about meeting today's needs without using up what future people will need. You will look at how your family uses water, food, energy, and stuff, and find small changes that make a big difference. It's a badge you can share with your whole household.

Requirements

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

- ☐ **1** In your own words, explain what sustainability means, why it matters to society, and how you can help meet today's needs without hurting future generations' ability to meet theirs

Tip: Talk about what sustainability means to you and one simple thing you can do this week.

Example: Give a definition in your own words, like "meeting our needs now without using up what future people will need." Then name two ways you already contribute, such as packing a reusable lunch or biking to school.

2 Water: Choose 1 of 3

Tips for this section: Track how much water your family uses for a week and look for ways to save some.

Example for this section: Track your family's water use by reading the water meter or bill, then try a few changes like shorter showers, fixing a dripping faucet, or running the dishwasher only when full. Compare before and after.

- ☐ **2a** Evaluate your household's water use; if you can, review a year of water bills for seasonal changes. Find three ways to use less water. Discuss it with your counselor

- ☐ **2b** Explain why we need water. Diagram how your home gets clean water from a natural source and where it goes after use, and give two ways to protect your community's clean water for the future. Discuss it with your counselor

- ☐ **2c** Find out if your area deals with flooding, drought, or both. Identify three water-saving or flood-control efforts, successful or not, tried locally or in a place that interests you. Discuss it with your counselor

3 Food: Choose 1 of 3

Tips for this section: Trace where a few of your favorite foods come from, or track how much food your family throws out for two weeks and find ways to waste less.

Example for this section: Trace four foods, like milk, eggs, tuna, and ketchup, from farm or sea to your table. Or measure how much food your family throws out for a few days as a baseline, try ideas like a leftovers night or smaller portions, and record the results for two weeks.

- ☐ **3a** Explore how sustainable plant-based, animal-based, and aquaculture foods are. Trace where four foods (like milk, eggs, tuna, avocados, or ketchup) come from and how they're processed and shipped to you. Discuss it with your counselor

- ☐ **3b** Identify four factors that limit food availability around the world and how each affects global food sustainability. Share three ways people, families, or communities can produce their own food. Discuss it with your counselor

- ☐ **3c** Make a plan to cut your household's food waste sustainably. Set a baseline, then track and record results for two weeks. Discuss it with your counselor

4 **Community: Choose 1 of 3**

Tips for this section: Look for ways your town handles transportation, housing, or parks, and suggest one improvement.

- ☐ **4a** Sketch a sustainable community you'd design and be ready to explain how its housing, workplaces, shops, schools, and transportation affect energy, pollution, natural resources, and the local economy. Discuss it with your counselor

- ☐ **4b** Find one unsustainable practice in your community and write a plan to fix it. Discuss it with your counselor

- ☐ **4c** Identify five sustainability factors for housing and rate your home against them. Discuss it with your counselor

5 Energy: Choose 1 of 3

Tips for this section: Check lights and devices at home and find ways to use less energy.

Example for this section: Walk through your home and list everything that uses power, from lights to chargers. Try turning off and unplugging what you're not using, then check whether your family's electric bill changes.

- ☐ **5a** Learn how sustainable various energy sources are (coal, gas, geothermal, hydro, nuclear, petroleum, solar, wind). Pick three common in the U.S. and describe how producing and using each affects sustainability. Discuss it with your counselor

- ☐ **5b** List eight ways your family uses energy (appliances, electricity, heating, cooling, transportation). For one home use and one transportation use, list three ways to use less and shrink your carbon footprint. Discuss it with your counselor

- ☐ **5c** List five ways your family could use less energy at home, such as changing the thermostat, using window shades, opening windows, lowering hot-water temperature, or using less water. Identify each idea's benefits and risks and try them if you can. Discuss it with your counselor

6 Stuff: Choose 1 of 3

Tips for this section: Sort what you own into needs and wants and find things to donate or recycle, or look into what the numbers on plastics mean and where trash ends up.

Example for this section: List 15 of your things and sort them into needs, like soap, and wants, like a video game. With your family, pick out things you no longer use and decide what to donate, repurpose, or recycle.

- ☐ **6a** List 15 of your things and sort each as a need (like soap) or a want (like a video game). With your family if possible, find extras you no longer need and donate, repurpose, or recycle what you can. Discuss it with your counselor

- ☐ **6b** List five ways having too much stuff impacts you, your family, your community, AND the wider world, considering cost, time, upkeep, health, storage, and waste for each. Identify habits that keep stuff from piling up. Discuss it with your counselor

- ☐ **6c** Research how waste harms land, water, and air. Explain the trash vortex and how it came about, what the numbers on plastics mean and which plastics get recycled most, and one home device's usual lifespan and whether it can be recycled. Discuss it with your counselor

7 Global topics (discuss your picks with your counselor): Choose 2 of 6

Tips for this section: Pick two global topics that interest you, like climate or population, and learn the main ideas.

- ☐ **7a** Pick a UN Sustainable Development Goal: Affordable and Clean Energy, Clean Water and Sanitation, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life on Land, Responsible Consumption and Production, Sustainable Cities and Communities, or Zero Hunger. Summarize it and its effect on your life, family, community, and the world, now and later

- ☐ **7b** Explain how Earth's life-support systems (soil, climate, freshwater, atmosphere, nutrients, oceans, ecosystems, species) sustain life and interact, and what happens to sustainability when nature or people disrupt them

- ☐ **7c** Explain how a product's life cycle (design, sourcing, production, use, and reuse or disposal) affects sustainability now and later, using one common product to show every stage

- ☐ **7d** Learn how world population affects Earth's sustainability, and talk about three human activities that may endanger Earth today and in the future

- ☐ **7e** Explain what species (plant or animal) decline means, which human activities cause it, what can help reverse it, and how it affects a sustainable environment

- ☐ **7f** Find a world map showing temperature change over at least 100 years. Identify three factors scientists think affect global weather and temperature, and discuss how climate change affects food, water, or other resources

8 Sustainability in Scouting and at home

Tips for this section: Practice Leave No Trace on your next outing, then work with your family to set a few new habits.

Example for this section: On your next campout, practice Leave No Trace by repackaging food and packing out all trash. At home, hold a family meeting to choose two or three new habits and check in on them a few weeks later.

- ☐ **8a** During a campout or other outdoor Scouting activity, take notes on the sustainability practices you and other Scouts follow, observing transportation, forestry, soil conservation, water, habitat, buildings, campsites, and sanitation. Tell your counselor what you saw and learned

- ☐ **8b** Discuss with your counselor how following the Scout Oath and Law, the Outdoor Code, and the Leave No Trace Seven Principles every day helps sustainability

- ☐ **8c** Identify five changes in behavior you and your family can make to live more sustainably at home, and discuss each with your counselor

- ☐ **9** Learn about careers in sustainability. Choose one and research the schooling, training, and experience it needs. Discuss with your counselor what you learned and why it might interest you
Tip: Research jobs in sustainability and ask someone in that field about their work.