

## Patrol Leader Requirements

Position description: The Patrol Leader is the elected leader of his patrol. He represents his patrol on the Patrol Leaders' Council.

Reports to: Senior Patrol Leader

Patrol leader duties:

- Represents the patrol on the Patrol Leaders' Council.
- Plans and steers patrol meetings.
- Helps Scouts advance.
- Acts as the chief recruiter of new Scouts.
- Keeps patrol members informed.
- Knows what his patrol members and other leaders can do.
- Sets the example, wears the uniform correctly, lives the Scout Oath and Law, and Shows Scout spirit.
- Attend at least 80% of Troop meetings

In addition to the requirements laid out by BSA:

- A PL should be prepared to speak in front of Scouts: earn Communications OR Public Speaking merit badge. (If the Scouts has Communications he must earn Public Speaking; if the Scout has Public Speaking he must earn Communications. This requirement is waived if the Scout has both merit badges.)
- A PL should also look out for the general safety of his patrol and other Scouts in general. Earn one of the following merit badges that the Scout does not presently have: Emergency Preparedness, First Aid, Fire Safety, Safety. If a Scout has all ready earned these an alternative merit badge can be substituted at the discretion of the Scoutmaster or his designee.
- A PL shall distribute patrol calls to his patrol members via email or telephone. If email is used the SPL, ASPL, and SM should be included on the distribution list.

Lord Robert Baden-Powell's

# Letter to a Patrol Leader



What I have often told to gatherings of Patrol Leaders, I repeat now to you who read this; namely, that you have great power to do good or to do harm to the Scouts placed under your charge. It largely depends on your character and your example to them which way they go.

There are three steps you should take:

First, win your boys by making yourself their friend and helper.

Secondly, influence them by your example in conduct and in doing things.

Thirdly, control them with your good sense and by keeping them to the teaching of the Scout Law.

Your key to success is to thoroughly understand the inner meaning of the Scout Law, to carry it out in all that you do and thereby to give the lead to your boys.

## ***THE SECRET TO GOOD TEACHING***

***"What you hear, you soon forget;***

***What you see, you remember;***

***but...***

***What you do becomes part of you!"***

***THE SCOUT METHOD IS***

***LEARNING BY DOING!***

## THE METHODS OF SCOUTING

The Boy Scouts of America uses eight fundamental methods to meet boys' love for fun and adventure, and to achieve Scouting's aims of encouraging character development, citizenship, and mental and physical fitness. A Scout troop functions best when all eight methods are employed.

### The Methods of Scouting

1. The ideals
2. The patrol method
3. The outdoors
4. Advancement
5. Association with adults
6. Personal growth
7. Leadership development
8. The uniform



### Method 1—The Ideals

The ideals of the Boy Scouts of America are spelled out in the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan. Boy Scouts and adult leaders incorporating these ideals into their daily lives are said to have *Scout spirit*. Scout meetings and Scouting activities reinforce the ideals of Scouting, through the message of a Scoutmaster's Minute and in the form of new understandings the Scouts discover for themselves.

### Method 2—The Patrol Method

Within the larger community of the troop, the patrol is a Scout's "family circle." Often made up of boys who are close in age and experience level, each patrol helps its members develop a sense of pride and identity. The boys themselves elect their *patrol leader*, divide up the jobs to be done, and share in the satisfaction of accepting and fulfilling group responsibilities.

### Method 3—The Outdoors

Boys join Scouting for the challenge, the excitement, and the fun. Much of Scouting is designed to take place outdoors in settings where boys can find real adventure. Outdoor activities put the sizzle into Scouting. They keep boys coming back for more. A troop with a strong outdoor program is well on its way to finding success in all areas.

### Method 4—Advancement

The Boy Scouts of America believes that a boy should receive recognition for his achievements. The requirements for the ranks of Tenderfoot through First Class prepare boys to take full advantage of all that Scouting has to offer. Earning merit badges allows them to explore many fields, helps them round out their skills, and perhaps introduces them to subjects that will become lifelong interests and rewarding careers. In addition, advancement sets a pattern of setting positive goals and reaching them throughout life. Star, Life, and Eagle requirements focus on service to others and developing leadership skills.

As one of the eight methods of Scouting, advancement is a natural outcome of the other seven. A boy whose Scouting experience is introducing him to the BSA ideals, the patrol method, the outdoors, association with adults, personal growth, leadership development, and the uniform will almost certainly find himself moving steadily along the BSA's advancement trail.

## THE AIMS OF SCOUTING

A goal of the Boy Scouts of America is to help boys develop into honorable men. Scouting's values can be incorporated into a boy's home, school, and religious community, adding to all three and, in some cases, filling in where family, school, or religious support is lacking.

Is Scouting educational? You bet it is. Scouts have many opportunities to learn skills of leadership, of the outdoors, and of life. Each boy decides what he will learn and how quickly he will do it. As he progresses, the value of his achievements will be reinforced through recognition—advancement in Scouting's ranks, positions of leadership in the troop, and accomplishments during outdoor adventures.

### Character Development

*Character* encompasses a boy's personal qualities, values, and outlook. Scouting strives to help a boy grow in the following ways:

- He becomes confident but is not conceited.
- He is honest with himself and others.
- His personal appearance shows that he respects himself.
- He develops special skills and interests.
- He can take care of himself, especially in emergencies.
- He can be counted upon to do his best, even in difficult situations.
- He practices his religious beliefs.
- He respects other people regardless of their differences.

**Character is what you do when  
no one is looking.**

### Citizenship Training

The Scouting program allows boys to practice good *citizenship* by living and working among others in a troop with rules based on the common good. Each Scout is further encouraged to do the following:

- Learn about and take pride in his national heritage.
- Develop an understanding of the social, economic, and governmental systems of which he is a part.
- Be of service to others.
- Have knowledge of and respect for cultures and social groups other than his own.

**Every Scouting activity moves  
boys toward three basic aims:**

- **Character development**
- **Citizenship training**
- **Mental and physical fitness**

- Be aware of community organizations and their functions.
- Appreciate the environment and seek to protect it.

### Mental and Physical Fitness

People get the most out of life when they are *mentally and physically fit*. Scouting motivates each

Scout to work toward these goals:

- Improve his general physical condition through exercise and participation in vigorous activities that might include outdoor adventures and sports.
- Eat properly, get enough sleep, and follow other habits for good health.
- Keep his weight within a healthy range.
- Reject experimenting with tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs, or with other activities that can be harmful to himself or others.
- Strive to be mentally alert.
- Use good judgment and make sound decisions.
- Train himself to be resourceful in solving problems.

## THE BOYLED PATROL

**"The patrol method is not a way to operate a Boy Scout troop, it is the *only* way. Unless the patrol method is in operation you don't really have a Boy Scout troop."**

—Robert Baden-Powell

Patrols are the building blocks of a Boy Scout troop. A patrol is a small group of boys who are more or less similar in age, development, and interests. Working together as a team, patrol members share the responsibility of making the patrol a success. They gain confidence by serving in positions of patrol leadership. All enjoy the friendship, sense of belonging, and achievements of the patrol and of each of its members.

Patrol size depends upon a troop's total enrollment and the needs of its members, though an ideal patrol size is eight. That size is appropriate not only for effective patrol and troop meetings, but also for hiking and camping without leaving a trace. New-Scout patrols are sometimes smaller, allowing the flexibility for patrol members to invite friends to become Scouts and join their patrol. However, patrols with fewer than five members are seldom very efficient. (For more on Leave No Trace camping and hiking and the importance of group size, see chapter 9, "The Outdoor Program.")

Each patrol selects a name for itself, decides on a yell, and designs a flag. A patrol takes pride in its own identity, and its members strive to make theirs the best patrol possible. While they see their patrol as their home in Scouting, they often cooperate with other patrols during troop games, adventures, and opportunities to learn skills and to complete requirements for advancement.

There are three kinds of patrols—*regular patrols*, *new-Scout patrols*, and *Venture patrols*. What number and kinds of patrols a troop has depends upon the ages of the Scouts, their interests, and their needs. Patrols are also sometimes organized according to the neighborhoods in which boys live.

### Regular Patrols

*Regular patrols* usually are composed of Scouts who have completed the First Class requirements or who are in at least the seventh grade. They are groups of peers similar in age, achievement, and interests. Most of them have been around Scouting long enough to be comfortable with patrol and troop routines, and are well versed in camping, hiking, cooking, and Scouting's other basic skills.

### New-Scout Patrols

Many troops have a *new-Scout patrol* for 11-year-old boys who are just joining. The new Scouts function together as a patrol during their first year in the troop, working toward their goal of completing the requirements for the First Class rank. Some troops phase their new Scouts into regular patrols after three to six months.

An older, experienced Scout will be appointed by the senior patrol leader, with the advice and consent of the assistant Scoutmaster, to serve as troop guide for the new-Scout patrol. The troop guide helps new Scouts through the early challenges of troop membership. An assistant Scoutmaster should work closely with the troop guide and the new-Scout patrol to ensure that each Scout has every opportunity to succeed right from the start.

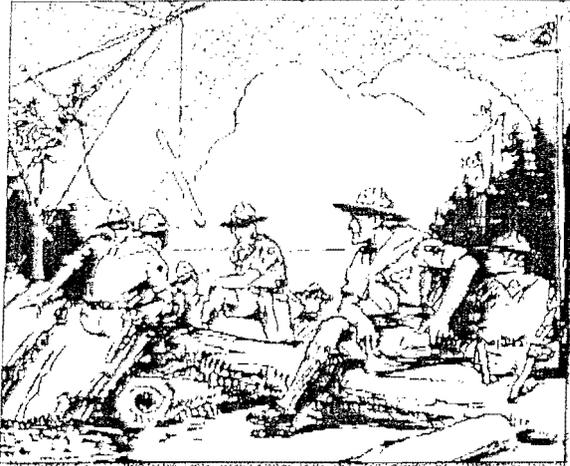
### Venture Patrols

A *Venture patrol* is an *optional* older-boy patrol (ages 13 through 17) within a troop. These boys have the maturity and experience to plan and take part in more challenging high-adventure outings and sports activities. An assistant Scoutmaster assigned to the Venture patrol can help the Venture patrol leader and other patrol members transform their plans into action.

A Venture patrol can be a valuable tool for keeping older boys interested and active in Scouting. About half of all troops currently incorporate one or more Venture patrols in their programs. Every troop with older boys should strongly consider establishing a Venture patrol. (For more on Venture patrols, see chapter 13, "Opportunities for Older Scouts.")

**"The object of the patrol method is not so much saving the Scoutmaster trouble as to give responsibility to the boy."**

—Robert Baden-Powell



*From the Scoutmaster's Handbook, BSA, 1937*

## Learning About Leadership

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**"Learning About Leadership"** is adapted from *Patrol and Troop Leadership*, the handbook on leadership development written for Patrol Leaders and published by the Boy Scouts of America in 1972.

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### Why Leadership?

In most football teams the quarterback is the team leader. Why is that? Is there something magic about the position? Does he automatically become the leader -- the guy who makes the team go -- when he is named quarterback by the coach?

No, there's more to it than that. Lots more. Usually he is named quarterback because he's already a leader. He's already the kind of guy the other players like to follow.

And if the coach is wrong about him, he probably won't stay quarterback very long. If he can't lead the team, he won't have much value even if he can hit a receiver at 40 yards. Because every successful team must have a leader.

That goes for your Scouting team, too -- your patrol and your troop. In fact, if the patrol and troop are to succeed, you need several leaders. Guys like yourself who want to try "quarterbacking" in Scouting. One of the aims of your local council Junior Leader Training Conference is to show you how to become a better leader.

Let's begin by being honest about it. This handbook is not going to make you a good leader. You are not going to find 5 or 10 simple rules to follow to become a good leader. If leadership were as easy as that, almost everyone would be a good leader. And you know that most people are not.

There are no rules for leadership. But there are certain skills that every good leader seems to have. You learned about them at your local council Junior Leader Training Conference and have practiced some of them in your troop at home.

Here is the first one. True or false?

***The only people who lead have some kind of leadership job, such as chairman, coach, or king.***

Do you think that's true? Don't you believe it. It's true that chairmen, coaches, and kings lead, but people who hold no leadership position also lead. And you can find some people who have a leader's title and ought to lead. But they don't.

In other words, you are not a leader because you wear the leader's hat. Or because you wear the patrol leader's insignia on your uniform. You are a leader only when you are getting things done through other people.

Leadership, then, is something people do. Some people inherit leadership positions, such as kings, or nobles, or heads of family businesses. Some are elected: chairman, governor, patrol leader. Some are appointed, such as a coach, a city manager, or a den chief. Or they may just happen to be there when a situation arises that demands leadership. A disaster occurs, or a teacher doesn't show up when class begins, or a patrol leader becomes sick on a campout.

Try this statement. Is it true or false?

***Leadership is a gift. If you are born with it, you can lead. If you are not, you can't.***

Some people will tell you that. Some really believe it. But it's not so.

Leadership does take skill. Not everyone can learn all the skills of leadership as well as anyone else. But most people can learn some of them -- and thus develop their own potential.

You don't have to be born with leadership. Chances are, you weren't. But you were born with a brain. If you can learn to swim or play checkers or do math, you can learn leadership skills.

How about this statement. True or false?

***"Leader" is another word for "boss."***

Well, what do you mean by "boss"? A guy who pushes and orders other people around? No, a leader is not one of those. (But some people try to lead this way.)

Or do you mean a boss is somebody who has a job to do and works with other people to get it done? This is true. A leader is a boss in that sense.

True or false?

***Being a leader in a Scout troop is like being a leader anywhere else.***

This one is true. When you lead in a Scout troop, you will do many of the same things as any leader anywhere.

The important thing now is Scouting gives you a chance to lead. You can learn *how* to lead in Scouting. You can practice leadership in Scouting. Then you can lead other groups, too. The skills you will need are very much the same.

"No problems?"

"No." Frank wondered what he meant by that.

"Oh! Well, a couple of the boys in your patrol asked me if they could change to another patrol. I thought maybe something had gone wrong...."

And that was how Frank learned that getting the job done isn't all there is to leadership. He had really given the group a hard time, and now they wanted to break up.

Almost anybody with a whip and a mean temper can get a job done. But in doing it, they usually destroy the group. And that's not leadership. The group must go on.

Another new patrol leader called a meeting at his house. Everybody seemed to be hungry when they came. So they got some snacks from the kitchen. Then they tossed a football around. It began to get dark, and one by one they went home. Everybody had fun. But the patrol meeting -- the job -- never started.

One of the following statements is the message of this section. Which one?

- a. Nice guys finish last.
- b. Mean guys finish last.
- c. Leaders get the job done and keep the group going.
- d. Leaders have a special title or badge that makes others like to follow.

We'll take the third one. Will you?

### **What Affects Leadership?**

Leadership is not magic that comes out of a leader's head. It's skill. The leader learns how to get the job done and still keep the group together.

Does this mean that the leader does the same things in every situation? No. Here's why.

Leadership differs with the *leader*, the *group*, and the *situation*.

**Leaders** -- like other people are all different. No leader can take over another leader's job and do it the same way.

**Groups** are different, too. A great football coach might have difficulty leading an orchestra. A good sergeant might be a poor Scoutmaster. So when a leader changes groups, he changes the way he leads.

**Situations** differ, too. The same leader with the same group must change with conditions. A fellow leading a group discussion needs to change his style of leadership when a fire breaks out. As a Scout leader, you probably can't lead the group in the rain the same as you do in the sunshine.

An effective leader, then, must be alert at all times to the reaction of the members of the group; the conditions in which he may find himself; and be aware of his own abilities and reactions.

## HINTS FOR HANDLING A GROUP

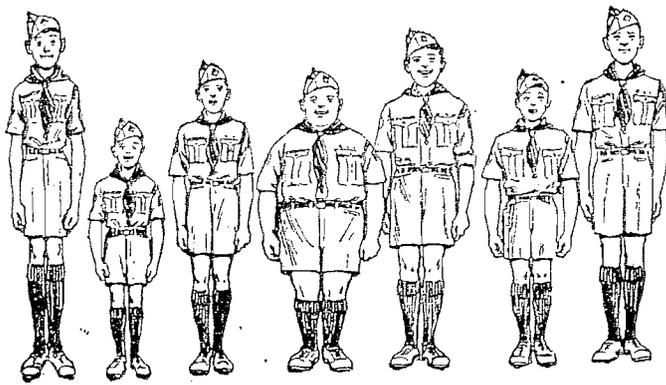
2. Don't start talking until you have the attention of the entire group. Just stand up and wait for the chatter to subside. Don't rap for attention. Someone will see you standing there, ready to begin, and will do the shushing for you.
3. Talk to the entire group. If you direct your attention exclusively to one or two you are eager to impress, the others will sense they are being ignored and start acting up to gain attention.
4. Don't let one person monopolize everyone's time.
5. Don't stand for whispering, talking or horseplay in your group. Stop and wait for the mannerless person to quit.
6. Don't "scold" -- just keep things so interesting that competition can't develop.
7. Never raise your voice to shout someone who's trying to interrupt you. Keep talking till you've made your point -- but lower your voice. People will automatically strain to hear you and will tune out the loudmouth.
8. If things start to get out of hand -- stop -- then ask for cooperation, then go ahead.
9. Pause, occasionally, always at the end of a sentence to let your words sink in and to look around at your listeners.
10. NEVER allow anyone to stand behind you or peer over your shoulder.

***To keep Scouts alert -- ASK QUESTIONS -- do this to keep their attention - not in order to embarrass anyone.***

## HOW TO CORRECT

1. Determine if it really matters.  
What difference will it make?  
Is it important to correct him?  
If not, don't do it; it can easily backfire.
2. Criticize in private  
Frequently a person will admit his error and take helpful correction without hurt feelings -- but not if it is done in front of an audience.
3. Apologize for him.  
Make an excuse for him so he can save face.  
Let him know that there was a good reason for his doing it the wrong way.  
For Example:  
"I've seen Eagle Scouts make the same mistake"  
"I've made the same mistake myself"  
"It's easy to make such a mistake"  
"I should have explained that to you"
4. Praise first before criticizing.  
(i.e., pat him on the back before kicking him in the pants)  
"You are usually right about everything but..."  
"Good campers like you often make such mistakes"  
"You are so good about other things, what happened here?"
5. Focus on the act -- not the person.  
Not what idiot did this but what thing was done wrong  
It is a great temptation to point out a person's faults -- don't succumb.
6. Be specific about the error.  
Never be vague... point out exactly what is wrong.
7. Point out what should be done to correct the situation --  
Be specific about what the person can do to better his performance.
8. Follow up  
Stop by later to reassure him -- by your presence -- that you are his friend  
Let him know that the incident is closed -- by your SILENCE about the matter  
Let him have an opportunity to ask questions and show that he is doing it right now  
If he is doing the job right, be sure to compliment him

**DON'T CORRECT -- HELP!**



Here's the gang—all shapes and kinds, but good Scouts all.