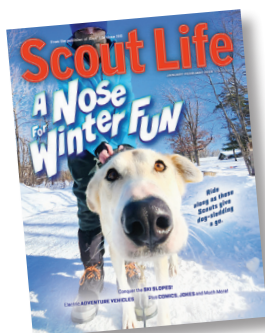
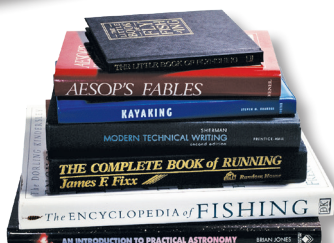
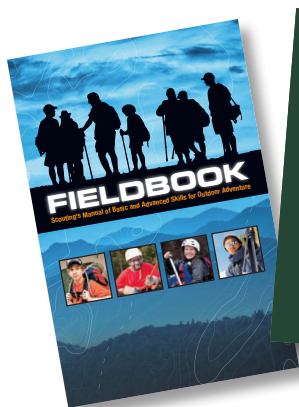


MERIT BADGE SERIES



READING



SCOUTING AMERICA
MERIT BADGE SERIES

READING



"Enhancing our youths' competitive edge through merit badges"

Scouting  America

Requirements

Always check scouting.org for the latest requirements.

1. Do EACH of the following:
 - (a) Take a tour of a library. Discuss with your counselor how the library is organized and what resources and/or services are offered in the library.
 - (b) Learn how to search a library's card catalog or computerized catalog by author, title, and subject.
 - (c) In a library, search the card catalog or computerized catalog for six books of four different types, such as poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and biographies.
 - (d) With the assistance of your merit badge counselor or the librarian, see if you can locate on the shelves the six books you selected.
 - (e) Explain what is a library card, why it is needed, and how to get one.
2. Do EACH of the following:
 - (a) Identify a book you have enjoyed. Find out what other books the author has written.
 - (b) Look at one or more "best books" lists. These can be based on year, subject, or even all time. Identify at least one book you would like to read.

3. Read four different types of books, such as poetry, fiction, nonfiction, or biographies. Do any one of the following for each book you have read:
 - (a) Write a review of the book. Include what you liked/ didn't like about the book. Include whether you would recommend this book, and if so, who might enjoy reading it.
 - (b) Watch a movie based on the book. What was the same between the book and movie? What was different? Which did you enjoy more? Discuss this with your merit badge counselor.
 - (c) Give a "book talk" to your class, troop, or patrol.
4. Read a nonfiction book or magazine that teaches you how to do something like cooking, wood-building projects, video game design, science experiments, knot-tying, etc. With your counselor's and parent or guardian's permission, complete a project from the book. Share your experience with your merit badge counselor. Reading a merit badge pamphlet will not count toward completing this requirement.
5. Read about the world around you from any two sources: books, magazines, newspapers, the internet (with your parent or guardian's permission), field manuals, etc. Topics may include Scouting, sports, environmental problems, politics, social issues, current events, nature, religion, etc. Discuss what you have learned with your counselor.
6. With your counselor's and parent or guardian's permission, choose ONE of the following activities and devote at least four hours of service to that activity. Discuss your participation with your counselor.
 - (a) Read to a sick, blind, or homebound person in a hospital or in an extended-care facility.
 - (b) Perform volunteer work at your school library or a public library.
 - (c) Read stories to younger children, in a group or individually.
 - (d) Organize a book swap in your troop, school, or place of worship.
 - (e) Organize a book drive to collect books. Donate them to an organization in need.



Working With Your Merit Badge Counselor

Talking with your counselor about your reading is a big part of fulfilling the requirements for the Reading merit badge. Your counselor has not read every book written. That would be impossible for anyone. Tens of thousands of new books are published each year. Add to those the classic books from earlier years, and even the most enthusiastic reader has a hard time keeping up with all the books worth reading.

Your counselor, therefore, will not be familiar with all the books you will read. Your counselor, as well as your family members and your school or public librarian, may recommend books he or she has enjoyed, but the final choice is yours. The books and other materials you select should be ones you want to read. If your counselor has not read one or more of your choices, briefly tell what the book is about and why you wanted to read it. Your counselor might like to read some of the books and other materials you have especially enjoyed.

If you have trouble reading, tell your counselor. He or she can get you some help.

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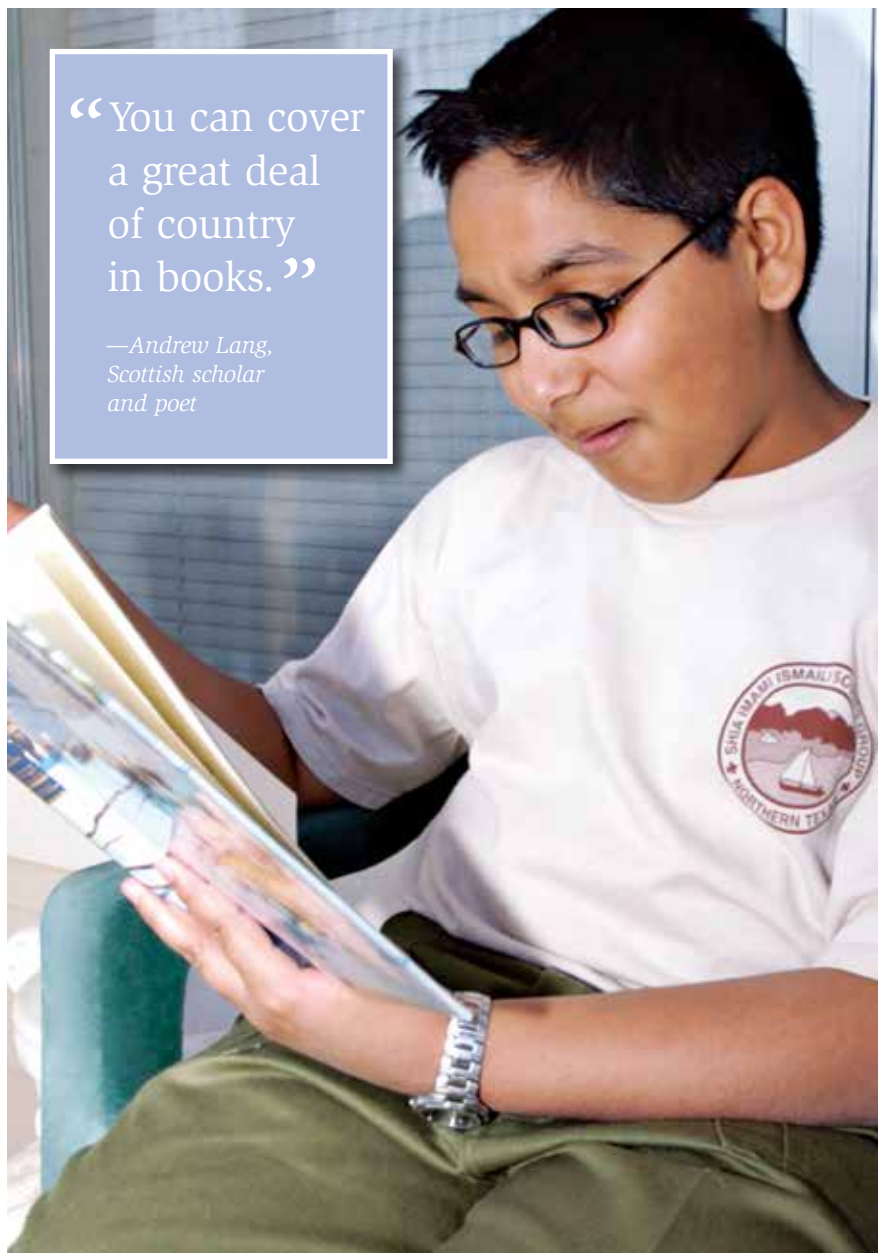
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“You can cover
a great deal
of country
in books.”

—Andrew Lang,
Scottish scholar
and poet



Why Read?

If you have ever wanted to go back in time or wished you could visit the future, if you are curious about the world, or if you are interested in how things work or like to learn new things, these are all reasons why you should want to read.

If you dream big dreams, or if you wonder how people make their dreams come true, in the pages of books, you can find everything in the world—or out of it—that interests you. If people fascinate you, you will meet an endless parade of memorable characters, real and fictional, in biographies and novels. If science or nature is your thing, books can give you the facts from aardvarks to zygotes. Books can make you a time traveler, leading you deep into the historical past or, even deeper, into the prehistoric ages before people learned to write. Books can take you far into the future and far out into the realms of imagination.

In the pages of a book you can go anywhere. Some books will walk you down the street. Some will take you to the world's biggest cities. Others will carry you off to high mountains, desert wildernesses, or polar ice caps. Some books will take you off Earth and set you down on another planet, where you may meet some of the weirdest characters ever created.

Reading is fun. It's fascinating. It's full of surprises. And it will take you places you can't get to in any other way.

“My advice about reading is to do a lot of it. Those make-believe worlds are the best worlds I know.”

—Stephen King,
American novelist

The Rewards of Reading

If you watch television, you know that TV tells stories, reports current events, and offers sports lovers an endless schedule of athletic events. With all that's on television to amuse, entertain, and teach people, you might think there is no special reason to read books—especially since you read a lot of books for school. Textbooks and television both have their places. But your own personal reading can take you far beyond anything you will get from television watching or classroom assignments.

Through reading, you can learn about the things that interest you. You can learn about the things no one seems able to tell you about—the subjects that people seem uninformed or uncomfortable about. You will find that many authors have written about the things that interest you.

Books can be fun. At the same time they can help you understand who you are, where you are going, and where you want to be. Reading about other people your age facing the same sorts of problems you face can help you feel less alone. The thoughts and experiences of other people as they are shown in books will help you know what you think and feel about yourself and others.

Through reading, you will gain a deeper understanding of yourself, your family, your friends, your country, and the world in which you live. Reading can help you figure out how you see the world and how you will make decisions. Reading can help you find your place in the world.

“I declare after all there is no enjoyment like reading!”

—Jane Austen,
English novelist



How Many Books Can You Carry?

Today we have a wealth of great reading material available through electronic devices like iPads, Kindles and others, which offer some great advantages, including storing multiple volumes and stories in one little device. These resources make reading both engaging and effective in several ways:

E-Books and Digital Libraries: Platforms like Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play Books offer vast libraries. Access everything from classic literature to the latest bestsellers, often with features like adjustable text sizes and built-in dictionaries.

Educational Apps: There are many apps designed specifically for youth that promote reading and literacy. Apps like Epic!, Reading Eggs, and Raz-Kids provide interactive books and reading exercises tailored to different age levels and reading abilities.

Interactive Features: Many e-books and apps include elements such as animation, sound effects, and videos that make the reading experience more engaging. These features can help maintain interest and support comprehension.

Audiobooks: Services like Audible and Libby offer a wide range of audiobooks. Listening to books can improve comprehension and expose you to a broader range of literature, especially for those who struggle with reading text.

Online Articles and Blogs: Websites geared toward youth, like *ScoutLife.org*, offer articles on a variety of topics. They are a great way to encourage reading.

Educational Games and Platforms: Websites and apps like Khan Academy and ABCmouse incorporate reading into their educational games and activities. These platforms blend learning with fun.

Digital Reading Communities: Platforms like Goodreads have sections specifically for younger readers where you can get book recommendations, read reviews, and discuss books with peers. This can be a great way to encourage a love of reading through social interaction.

Reading on Phones: Many people use their smartphones to read e-books, articles, and other digital content. Phones offer the convenience of reading on-the-go and access to a wide range of reading apps, making it easy to fit reading into your busy lives.

Renting Digital Books: Services like Amazon's Kindle Store and other online bookstores offer the option to rent digital books. This can be a cost-effective way to access popular or educational books without needing to purchase them, making it easier to explore a variety of reading materials.

Adjustable Features: Many reading apps and devices allow for customization in terms of font type, size, and background color. This can make reading easier and more enjoyable, especially for people with visual or learning differences.

By leveraging these digital tools and resources, anyone can enjoy a wide range of reading materials that cater to their interests and reading levels.





Once mastered, reading can become one of the most important skills in your life, both now and in the future. How do people become good readers? They read often.

“The man who does not read books has no advantage over the man who can’t read them.”

—Mark Twain, American writer and humorist

Reading for Your Future

Maybe you have heard teachers say that a young person who does not know how to read is not likely to make it in life. You might feel that’s an unkind thing to say. But the truth is, for many fields that young people might want to consider for their lifetime work, reading is absolutely necessary.

Without the ability to read quickly and with understanding, a person would find it nearly impossible to train for a career in medicine or law or to become a scientist, engineer, computer specialist, teacher, or business owner or professional. In fact, you must be a good reader to pursue any career that requires keeping up with progress and communicating in writing with coworkers. Reading opens opportunities that are closed to nonreaders.

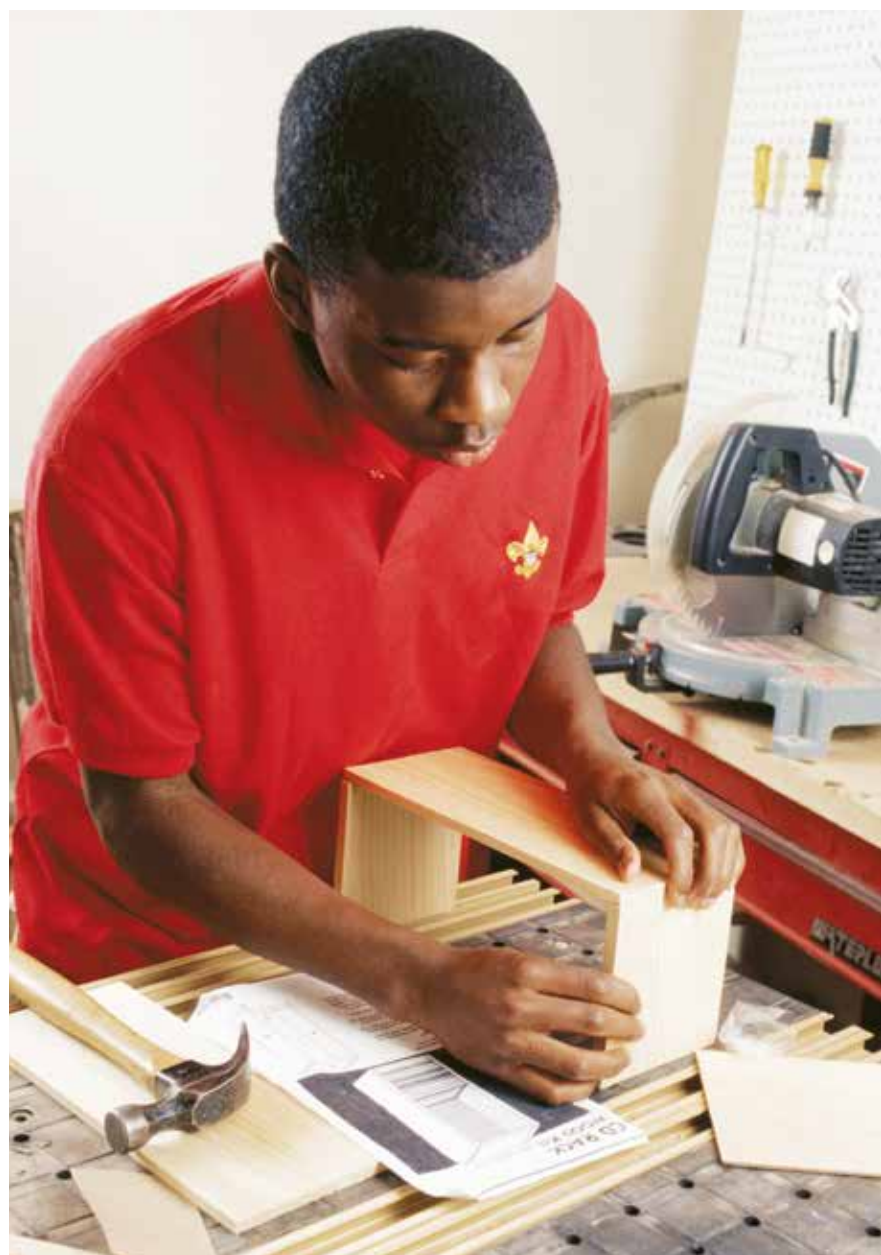
Not being able to read makes life much harder. Reading is an important part of everyday life. People who are *illiterate* (unable to read or write) find it difficult or impossible to fill out a job application or read street signs or a recipe on a soup can. In today's information-filled world, people simply do not function well if they cannot read.



“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.”

—Frederick Douglass,
American social reformer
and abolitionist





What Is Reading?

Maybe you have enjoyed books, magazines, and the internet for years, without ever thinking of reading as a skill you have mastered, just as carpenters who build the frameworks of houses use skills they have mastered.

When you first went to school (whether you knew it at the time), your teacher's most important goal was teaching you how to read. Reading specialists have developed countless ways to teach reading. You were taught by one method or maybe more than one, especially if your family moved and you changed schools.

What were you learning as you began to master the skill of reading? Basically, reading is making sense out of symbols that in combinations become words and in combinations of words become sentences. Over time, you identify the symbols or letters without being consciously aware that you are making an identification. When you see a *g* you know it is a *g* because you learned it as a *g*. You learned the meaning for that symbol.

In fact, the letter *g* is nothing more than an arrangement of lines and curves that has taken on a clear meaning. It is entirely possible that *g* could have been designed differently—as *Q*, perhaps—and you could have learned this different symbol for that letter.

When you learn another language—Japanese, for instance, or Arabic or Russian—that uses a set of symbols different from the set you know, it becomes clear that reading is the ability to understand symbols. Together these symbols make up words that are used to describe objects, acts, or ideas.



“Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope.”

—Kofi Annan, Ghanaian diplomat and former Secretary-General of the United Nations

Another definition of reading is the skill and ability to receive information through means other than direct contact or observation.

Like the symbols we use for letters, the words people have invented to stand for different things are often pretty much a matter of chance. By connecting words with the things they stand for, a child learns what others mean when they say, for instance, *roof*. Most children somehow absorb the fact that *roof* refers to something above a house, not something under it. However, if you think about it, you may decide that English speakers made a chance, or arbitrary, decision when they chose to call a roof a *roof* instead of, say, a *floor*.

To better understand this whole idea, it helps to study a foreign language. The “chancy,” or arbitrary, nature of words is easier to see when you are learning the meanings of words in a language other than your own.



The Skill of Reading

Reading may be the most important skill a Scout can master. It is a skill that prepares and allows you to learn about the world and society. It helps you grow as a leader. It helps you learn from the experiences of others.

No one is born self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency (being able to provide for your own needs) is learned day by day as you grow up. Reading helps you learn self-sufficiency.

The more you read,
the more you know.

The more you know,
the farther you will go.

Braille: “Hands-On” Reading

A system of six simple dots, developed around 1820, presented an invaluable gift to people who are blind: the means with which to read and write. Frenchman Louis Braille, blinded at age 3, was a teenager when he created the code now known worldwide by his name. The first Braille book, a three-volume history of France, was published in 1837. Today, Braille is used across the globe to publish books, magazines, scientific charts, and sheet music.

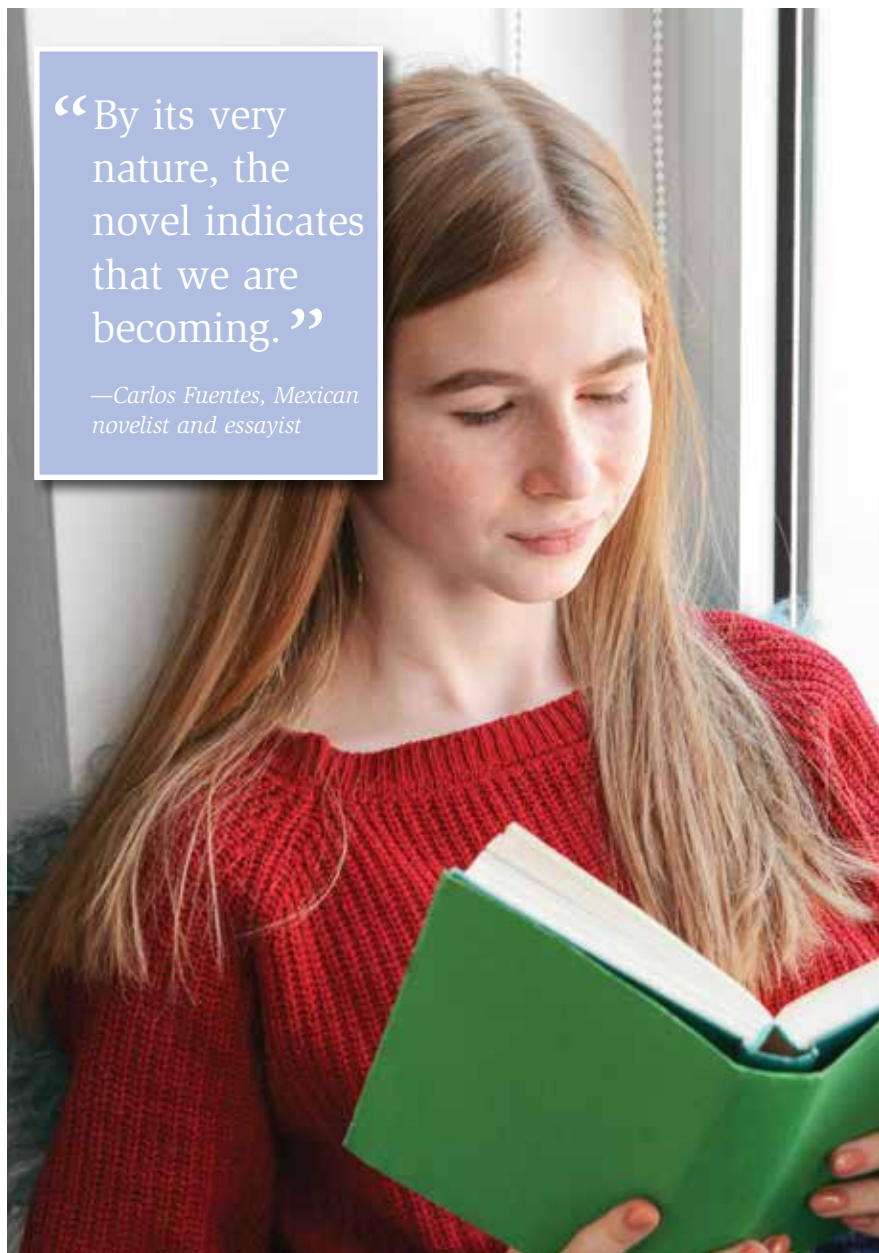
Braille is read by running the finger over a series of raised dots on a page. Each cell contains six dots, which fit easily under the fingertip. These six dots can be combined in 63 different ways to represent letters, numbers, punctuation, and other symbols. Most publications use *Grade 2* Braille, which uses contractions to save space and make reading easier. (If every letter is written in Braille, *Grade 1* Braille is being used.)

Braille can be “handwritten” using a slate and stylus to punch out words, or it can be “typed” by a machine called a braillewriter. Today, there also are software programs that translate Braille; Braille personal printers; portable, electronic Braille notetakers; and Braille displays that make the information on a computer screen readable via a portable, refreshable surface.



“By its very nature, the novel indicates that we are becoming.”

—Carlos Fuentes, *Mexican novelist and essayist*



Reading for Fun

With a good book you can relax, stop boredom, and be entertained for hours or days. Reading for fun is at the heart of requirement 1 for this merit badge. You can read simply to enjoy and appreciate a writer's way with words. You also can apply what you find in books to your own life and concerns.

As you choose six books to read for requirement 1, think about your interests. What do you like? What are you curious about?

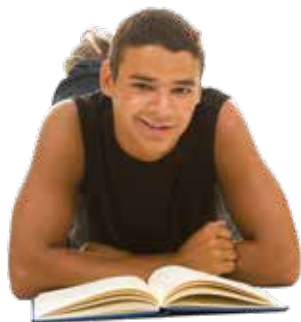
You will find it fun to learn all you can about your favorite subject. If you play sports, you might want to read a book about your favorite game and maybe a biography of a famous athlete. If you're into astronomy, you can read both fiction and nonfiction books about the stars and planets.

Is there a period in history that interests you? A realm from legend or mythology? A far corner of Earth? Maybe your hobby is fishing, or fast cars, or music. Maybe you've seen a great movie, and now you would like to read the book that the movie is based on.

Whatever intrigues you, you can be sure someone has written about it. Finding six books (of four different types) to read for requirement 1 won't be hard. Your merit badge counselor or a librarian can help you narrow your choices from the countless books available.

Even with expert help, however, you may find that a book you have chosen is not to your taste. That's no problem. One of the great things about reading is that you are free to dislike what you are reading. Maybe that particular book doesn't tell you enough; maybe it tells you too much. Or it may just bore you.

Whatever the reason, feel free to abandon a book you don't like. Put it aside and pick another. There are too many good books to read for you to spend time on a book that does not satisfy you.



“For me, a holiday is about taking a book and going to a mountain and reading.”

—Sonam Kapoor,
Indian film actress

Adventures in Reading

Requirement 3 asks you to read books of different types. Books are divided into two big groups depending on whether they are based on facts or imagined stories. There are many types, or genres, of books within these groups. A *genre* is a group of books that share something in common. For example, books in the *biography* genre tell true stories about the lives of real people. Books in the *fantasy* genre tell imagined stories about places and circumstances that cannot be logically true. Yet the reader is expected to suspend disbelief, or go along with the author on this reading adventure.

Nonfiction includes factual writing such as the Scouts BSA handbook, *Fieldbook*, merit badge pamphlets, and field guides. You read nonfiction to get information or learn about a subject, person, or event. Some of the types of nonfiction are:

- How-to manuals
- Travel guides
- Biographies and autobiographies
- Books about history, science, energy, animals, politics, sports, and other subjects

Fiction is made up. It is created in the author's imagination and may be based on facts and real people or places, but it isn't true. Fiction takes many forms, such as novels, short stories, essays, poems, and plays. Some of the types, or genres, of fiction are:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Science fiction | • Horror |
| • Adventure | • Myth and legend and folklore |
| • Mystery | • Poetry |
| • Fantasy | • Drama, or plays |

You will discover that a genre may have subgroups, or subtypes. Science fiction, for example, may be further categorized as apocalyptic (end of the world), spy-fi, time travel, or superheroes. You can focus your reading interest or expand it, as you like.

Your librarian may suggest books that have won the Newbery Award, the National Book Award for Young People's Literature, or your state's award for outstanding books for young readers. The resources section of this pamphlet has more information about finding some of these award winners.

Using Your Library

To complete all parts of requirement 1, you need to know your way around a library. Start at the library's catalog. It will be either a card catalog or (more likely) a computerized catalog that has information on every book in the library's collection.

At one time, most libraries used a card catalog that listed each book and item in the library's collection on individual index cards. The cards were filed in alphabetical order by title, by author, and by subject. Card catalogs were easy to use, but it was hard to keep them up-to-date. Making cards for new books took a lot of time.

Today, you can still find card catalogs in some libraries. But computerized systems have replaced the old-style card system in most libraries. Like the card catalog, a computer catalog lists books three ways: by author (last name first), by title, and by subject. To look up *The Greatest: Muhammad Ali*, for instance, you could search the computer catalog by the author's name (Myers, Walter Dean), by the book's title (without the *The*), or by subject (Ali, Muhammad). See the illustrations on the following pages.

When you find a book you want to examine more closely, write down the book's call number. A call number is a combination of numbers and letters that identifies the book and tells where it will be found on the shelves. Using that unique number, you can locate the book on the library's shelves. A librarian will be happy to show you how.

If you are not looking for a specific book or a particular author, search by subject. Suppose you want to find books about wilderness survival. Choose "Subject" from the list of search options, and enter "wilderness survival" as the search term. The computer will display every title in the library's collection that has to do with the topic. For a more detailed description of a book that interests you, click on the title.



Fort Worth Public Library and the MetroPAC Public Libraries' Catalog

Getting Started

FORT WORTH PUBLIC LIBRARY

NoveList: Your Guide to Fiction
Looking for something good to read?
Use NoveList [in the library](#) or [at home](#)

[Kids' e-Branch](#) [Español e-Branch](#)

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- ☐ Subject Keyword
- ☐ General Keyword
- ☐ Audiobook Title Keyword
- ☐ Awards Note Keyword
- ☐ Best Seller Browse
- ☐ Children's Subject Keyword
- ☐ Children's Title / Series Keyword
- ☐ Dewey Call Numbers
- ☐ DVD Title Keyword
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- ☐ ISBN Exact Match
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- ☐ Item Barcode

Myers, Walter Dean

AND

Go

AND

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limit or sort option.

Author search

Fort Worth Public Library and the MetroPAC Public Libraries' Catalog

Getting Started

FORT WORTH PUBLIC LIBRARY

NoveList: Your Guide to Fiction
Looking for something good to read?
Use NoveList [in the library](#) or [at home](#)

[Kids' e-Branch](#) [Español e-Branch](#)

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Search by:

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- ☐ Title Keyword
- ☐ Author/Performer Keyword
- ☐ Subject Keyword
- ☐ General Keyword
- ☐ Audiobook Title Keyword
- ☐ Awards Note Keyword
- ☐ Best Seller Browse
- ☐ Children's Subject Keyword
- ☐ Children's Title / Series Keyword
- ☐ Dewey Call Numbers
- ☐ DVD Title Keyword
- ☐ DVD & VHS Title Keyword
- ☐ ISBN Exact Match
- ☐ ISSN Exact
- ☐ Item Barcode

The Greatest: Muhammad Ali

AND

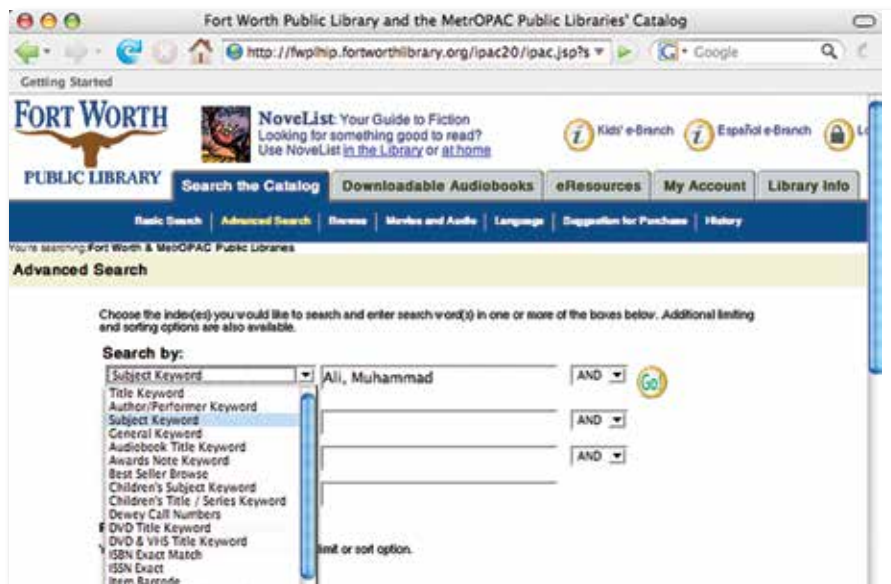
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AND

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limit or sort option.

Title search



Subject search

With some computerized catalogs, you can enter the author's name in any order or search by only the last name. Ask your librarian which works best with the system you are using.

Focus on Eye Fitness

When you read a lot, especially if you use a tablet or computer, remember that it's important to take care of your eyes. Eyestrain, or tired eyes, is a common condition that isn't serious, but it definitely can be annoying. Fight off eyestrain by practicing these good reading habits.

- Make sure you have the appropriate eyewear. If you have been prescribed with glasses for reading, wear them!
- Read in a well-lit area (not too bright, not too dim), with the light source directed onto the page.
- Give your eyes a break every 20 minutes or so by focusing on something far away for 20 seconds.
- If you're having trouble focusing on the words on the page, tell your parent or guardian and discuss seeing an eye-care professional soon. You should have your eyes checked annually.



Be careful with library books and books that belong to other people. Take care not to damage them or mark them in any way.

Classification Systems

When you have found the book you are looking for, also skim the titles of the books beside it on the shelves. All the books with similar call numbers have similar subjects.

Nonfiction books are arranged on library shelves by subject. Almost all school and public libraries use the Dewey decimal classification system to group books by subject. Some libraries have their own systems for arranging books, or they use the Library of Congress classification system. Ask a librarian about the method used in your school or public library, and ask for any help you need to locate books on the shelves.

Most public libraries have special sections or departments for children, adults, and sometimes young adults. The books you choose to read for requirement 1 may come from any or all of these sections. A librarian can show you where each section is and help you pick books that fit your needs, interests, and reading level. A librarian also can tell you how to get your own library card, if you don't already have one.

Main Dewey Decimal Classification Groups

- 000–099 General (encyclopedias, bibliographies, periodicals, journalism)
- 100–199 Philosophy and psychology (including ethics, logic, and the paranormal such as ghosts, ESP, and alien abduction)
- 200–299 Religion
- 300–399 Social sciences (political science, economics, law, education, customs, folklore)
- 400–499 Language (languages, dictionaries, grammar)
- 500–599 Natural sciences and mathematics (astronomy, physics, chemistry, geology, paleontology, biology, zoology, botany)
- 600–699 Technology and applied sciences (medicine, engineering, aviation, automotive repair, agriculture, animal science, gardening, business, radio, television)
- 700–799 The arts (architecture, sculpture, painting, music, photography, theater, film)
- 800–899 Literature (novels, poetry, plays, criticism)
- 900–999 Geography and history (including travel guides, biography, genealogy)





“Some books
are to be tasted,
others to be
swallowed, and
some few to
be chewed and
digested.”

—Francis Bacon, *English
philosopher and statesman*

Say ‘Yes!’ to Reading Here

There are many great reading resources in Scouting. Check these out:

Scout Life

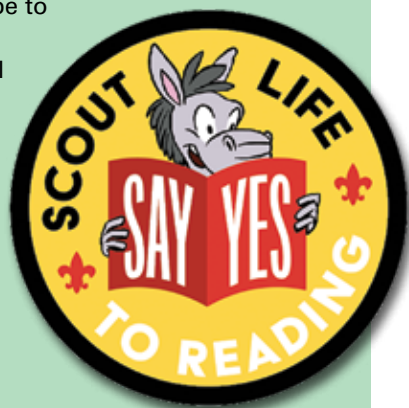
scoutlife.org

Scout Life is the monthly magazine of Scouting America. It has its own mascot, Scout the Eagle, who answers readers’ letters and is the subject of a comic strip. Besides special features on Scouting outings and topics, there are stories about adventure, entertainment, history, science, technology, sports, jokes, hobbies, and more. Scouts are invited to submit stories. You can subscribe to *Scout Life* through your Scout unit or use promo code **SLMBP15** online for a special half-price discount.

Scout Life Say Yes To Reading! Contest

go.scoutlife.org/readingcontest

Each year *Scout Life* sponsors the popular “Say Yes To Reading!” contest. There are categories for youth of all ages, and the winners earn great prizes. Plus, everyone who enters gets a patch.



Scout Life Fiction

fiction.scoutlife.org

Scout Life hires some of the best writers in the country to give readers a slew of stories. You can read many of them online. Check out exclusive tales by today’s top writers like **Anthony Horowitz** of the Alex Rider series; favorite stories like “Wild Horses,” “Really, Really Lost In Space,” and “Oliver’s Great Big Universe;” and all-time classics like **Arthur C. Clarke’s** “The Sunjammer” and **Jack London’s** “The King of Mazy May.”

Official Scouting America Youth Publications

scoutshop.org

Scouting America’s official Scout Shop has a large collection of books for Scouts, including fiction, adventure, and hobby how-to guides. Plus, it’s your source for Scouts BSA handbooks, the *Patrol Leader Handbook*, Scouting safely materials, merit badge pamphlets, camp cookbooks and a lot more.

Making Time to Read

You're busy. You have school, Scouts, sports, homework, your hobbies, club meetings, or maybe a part-time job. How can you find time to read?

"The trick is to teach yourself to read in small sips as well as in long swallows," advises Stephen King, best-selling novelist and short-story writer. "I take a book with me everywhere I go, and find there are all sorts of opportunities to dip in." He reads whenever he has to wait—while standing in line, in the theater before the show starts, and in doctors' waiting rooms, for example.

You can do the same thing by reading during the breaks between activities—as you ride to sports practice or for a few minutes before homework time or bedtime, for example. Add up your "break reading" minutes (15 in the morning on the way to school, 15 in the afternoon while you wait for your ride, and 15 to 30 minutes before bed) and you may find you're reading 45 minutes or an hour a day—a perfectly respectable total.

If you "sample" a book but find it too hard, too easy, or just not interesting, you do not have to finish it.



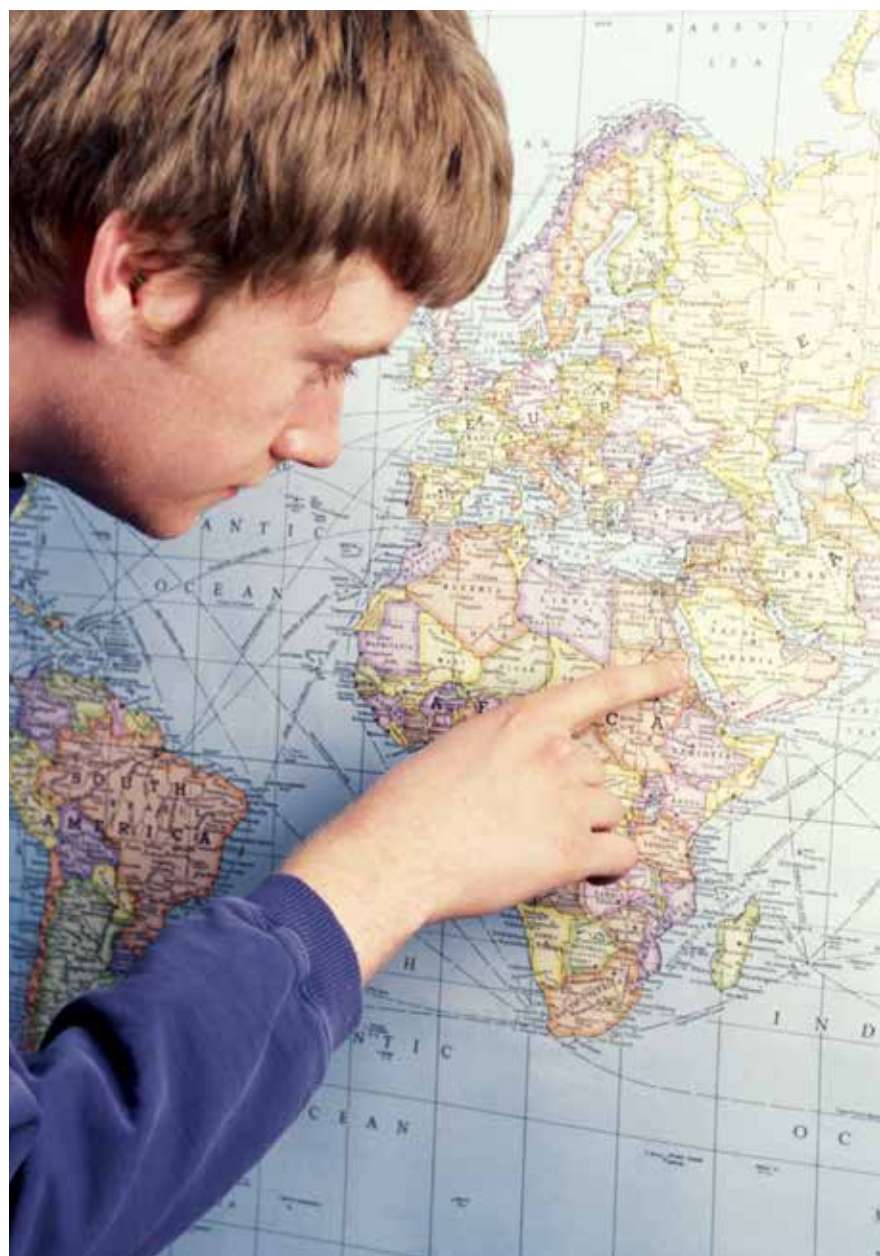
Time-Taming Tips

Aside from reading instead of watching television, here are some other strategies for making time to read.

- Make reading a part of your regular schedule. Set a “book hour” and stick to it.
- Look at how you spend your time. Write out your schedule for a typical week or keep an activity log. Drop some activities that are less important or less fun than your main interests, and read instead.
- You might read less during the school year or while your sport is in season, but catch up when you have more time. Fill lazy summer afternoons with fun reading and an icy drink. Many libraries have summer reading clubs that give prizes for reading a certain number of books.
- Carry nature field guides with you on hiking or camping trips to read during occasional free moments.
- Read during car rides, plane flights, and family vacations. Before your trip or outing, read books, maps, brochures, and other materials about where you are going. Share these materials with your family or fellow travelers. If you’re not traveling, read about the faraway places you would like to visit. Also look for fiction set in those places.
- Save time at the library. Check out books for pleasure reading when you’re there for school assignments.
- Read what interests you. Time goes fast when you’re reading for the fun of it. And the more you read, the faster you’ll be able to read.



If you can't give up TV for books, try linking the two. Find books that have been made into movies or TV shows and read them before you watch the filmed version. Read biographies of your favorite movie or TV actors, or books about how movies and TV shows are made. If you see a program on TV that interests you, look for books on that subject. In fact, some programs have companion books that give more information or behind-the-scenes details. Ask your librarian or counselor for help locating a “read-more-about-it” book.



Reading for Information

For requirement 5 you will research subjects that interest you. You can pick any current topic, but your reading selections for requirement 5 will be mostly, if not entirely, nonfiction. You are looking for facts and information. Your goal is to learn about the world around you by reading the most accurate and up-to-date sources you can find.

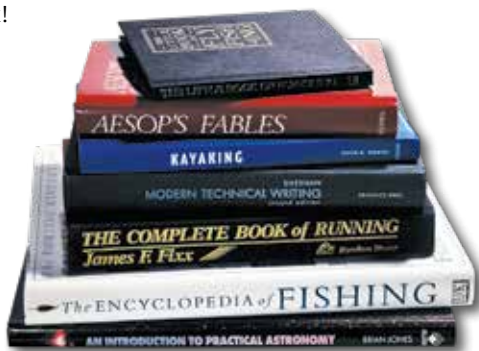
Your search probably will take you back to the library, where you will find a great variety of materials—not only books, but also newspapers, magazines, videos, CDs, DVDs, maps, photographs, online resources, and more.

What Do You Want to Know?

Maybe there is some particular topic you have wanted to learn about but have never found anybody to ask. Or perhaps there is a topic with which you are familiar but want to know more about. Or there is something you want to know how to do or make. Whatever subject interests you, you're almost certain to find that many people have written about it.

Here are some examples of topics many young people are curious about. If your choice is not on the list, add it!

- Mysteries such as the Loch Ness monster, crop circles, Stonehenge
- Fossils and dinosaurs
- Mummies and ancient Egypt
- Castles, knights, the Middle Ages
- Politics and world events
- Nations, cultures, religions
- Travel and faraway places
- Sports and athletes



When you are looking for specific information, it is a good idea to start with the reference librarian at your school or public library. Librarians are information professionals. You can save a lot of time by simply asking for their help.

- Music, art, photography, movies
- Colleges and universities
- Careers
- Animals and nature
- Robots, computers, electronics
- Machines, automobiles, aircraft
- Artificial intelligence
- Earthquakes, volcanoes, other natural disasters
- Ocean exploration, living beneath the sea
- Asteroids, comets, near-Earth objects (NEOs)
- Astronomy, Hubble Space Telescope
- Living in space, International Space Station
- Environmental issues
- Famous people
- The outdoors, hiking, camping
- Wilderness survival
- Fitness and health
- How to deal with family issues, problems, divorce, substance abuse
- How to handle problems of growing up, peer approval and pressure, self-esteem



“I cannot live without books.”

—Thomas Jefferson,
American president

Reading to Know

With your topic in mind, you're ready to find your sources and read up on it. Here's a look at some different resources you might use.

Encyclopedias. A general encyclopedia will give you basic facts or background information about many subjects. Information can change quickly, so use a good, up-to-date encyclopedia, whether it's printed in 30 volumes or contained on a single compact disc.

Specialized Reference Works. Reference works, whether print or electronic, range from almanacs, atlases, and collections of short biographies to field guides, movie guides, books of famous quotations, and many more. Reference books, electronic databases, and other general information sources help organize vast amounts of information to make specific facts faster and easier to find. All libraries, large and small, have reference sections and staff people who know how to use reference resources. They know what kinds of books, indexes, directories, and other information sources are available. They can help you quickly narrow your search to a few good resources.

Magazines and Newspapers. For the most up-to-date coverage of your subject, read articles and editorials in magazines and newspapers. Your library probably has a selection of general-interest magazines and local or major newspapers from which to choose part of your reading for requirement 5.



“You can find
the meaning
of life in a book.”

—Nicola Yoon,
Jamaican-American author



“Knowledge
is power.”

—Sir Francis Bacon,
*English philosopher
and statesman*

To find articles on your chosen subject that have been published in popular magazines, check the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*. Your library will probably have the *Guide* as a set of printed books, or it may be available electronically.

To find newspaper stories about your subject, check newspaper indexes on websites. Your librarian can help you find newspaper indexes to locate the newspaper articles you want.

Books. Books have been written about every subject. Search for them using either the library card catalog or computerized catalog as you learned for requirement 1(b).

Internet. The internet is a vast collection of information. Get your parent or guardian's permission to use the internet, and then ask your parent or guardian, counselor, or a librarian to help you find what you need. They can show you how to search the internet using web directories or search engines.

Web directories organize information by dividing it into topics and subtopics. Directories usually have categories such as arts, computers, entertainment, health, news, recreation, science, and society. If you are looking for general information on a broad topic, start with a web directory. A directory is like a table of contents or a subject outline for a huge book. Directories usually display far fewer results than a search engine will, but most of the suggested pages will directly relate to the information you are seeking.

To use a search engine to locate information, type in keywords, the main words that identify your subject. For example, you might enter the keywords “Hubble Space Telescope” or “Loch Ness monster” or “Appalachian Trail.” The search engine then displays information about, and links to, various websites that deal with your subject. Depending on the keywords you use, the search engine may turn up sites that have nothing to do with your subject. Even so, a search engine may work better than a directory if you are looking for certain details or specific information. A search engine is like a giant index that lists every important word from millions of webpages.

See the resources section of this pamphlet to find some web directories and search engines you can use to get started exploring the internet. Just ahead there's more information about using the internet, plus tips for online safety, in the section "Reading on the Internet."

Getting the Facts

For requirement 3, the goal of your reading was pleasure. You read for fun.

You will also have fun, of course, with your reading for requirement 5. But what you are mainly after now is information. To get it, you may dip into various sources, reading parts of them but not reading them all cover to cover. You wouldn't read an entire guidebook about national parks if you're only interested in the part about the Everglades. You wouldn't need to read every article in a magazine to get the one story in it about your chosen topic.

On the other hand, you have to pay attention when you are reading for information. Take time to be sure you understand what you are reading. Ask yourself:

- What key ideas and specific facts have I learned from this article (or page, paragraph, chapter, etc.)?
- Do I understand these ideas and what they mean?
- Do they answer my questions about this subject?

Reread any part that is not clear to you. Take notes to help you keep track of what you understand and what you don't, and to identify which of your questions have been answered and which have not. Something you read may raise new questions, sending you off to other resources in search of the answers.



Complete
requirement 5
by discussing with
your counselor
what you have
learned from your
reading about the
world around you.

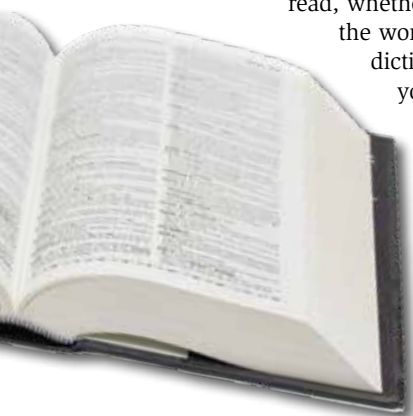
Reading is for fun and for discovery. As you think about your reading for requirements 3 and 5—what’s alike about it and what’s different—you will better understand how powerful and all-purpose the skill of reading is. Whether you are looking to gather facts quickly, find out how to do something, amuse yourself on a rainy day, or lose yourself in a fabulous adventure, you can do it because you’re a reader who knows how to read for different reasons.

The Power of Words

Mark Twain remarked: “A powerful agent is the right word. Whenever we come upon one of those intensely right words in a book or a newspaper the resulting effect is physical as well as spiritual, and electrically prompt.”

Language is rich with “intensely right words.” As you read, whether for pleasure or to get information, be aware of the words. If you find one you don’t know, look it up in a dictionary or *thesaurus*. Keep a “cool words” list. When you come across an interesting new word or a catchy saying or phrase, add it to your list.

You will discover that as your vocabulary grows, reading will become easier and more fun. You will understand more of what you read, and you’ll be comfortable reading material written for any age group.



“A vocabulary is
for catching.”

—Winston Churchill,
British statesman

The name may sound like a prehistoric giant reptile, but a *thesaurus* is not a type of dinosaur. It’s a dictionary that lists *synonyms* (words that mean the same thing or have similar meaning) and *antonyms* (words that have opposite meanings).

Fill in the Blanks

You probably have spent time filling out forms for school, for Scouting, for camp, and for other activities. It is important to be able to read written instructions and follow them closely, whether you're ordering a magazine subscription or completing a medical history. If you make a mistake, your magazines may go to the wrong address, or you might get the wrong medical treatment.

You may be filling out a paper form from a mail-order catalog, magazine, or other printed item such as a sales flyer, or you may need to fill out an online order form. Whether in print or online, always make sure to complete the order form carefully and accurately.

If you need to fill out an online form, be sure to review the "Tips for Online Safety" in the next chapter. Never shop online or do anything that costs money, unless you have your parent or guardian's permission to do so. Do not actually place the order unless your parent or guardian says it is OK.





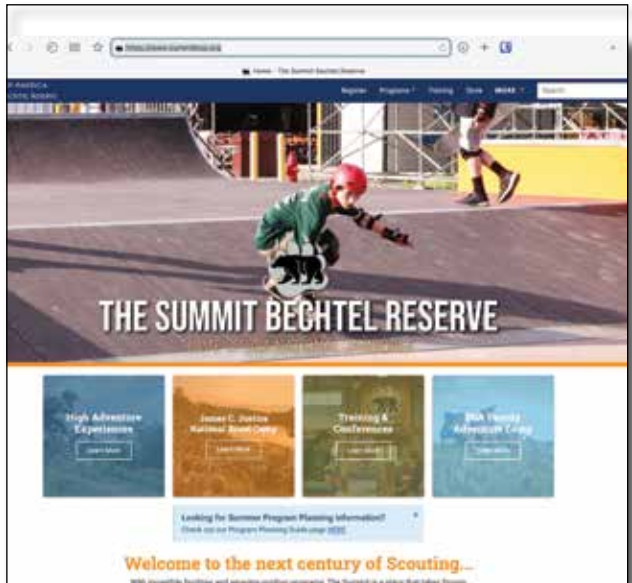
Reading on the Internet

People may talk about browsing online, visiting a webpage, surfing the net, or navigating the web, but what they really are doing is reading. The internet, for all its dazzling graphics, videos, click-to-play music, and other special effects, is made up mainly of things to read. When you are online, you are mostly reading.

URLs

If you have spent much time online, you probably already have some favorite websites. Maybe your troop or patrol has its own website. You might be a frequent visitor to the website of Scouting America at scouting.org, or the *Scout Life* site at scoutlife.org.

The “http” or “https” in web addresses stands for “*hypertext transfer protocol*.” It is the set of rules (the “*protocol*”) for exchanging text, images, sound, video, and other files on the World Wide Web (the “www” in the code). The next part of an address is the *domain name*. In the image above, <https://www.summitbsa.org>, “summitbsa.org” is the domain. The code “.org” specifies an organization. Other codes include “.com” (a commercial site), “.edu” (an educational site), “.gov” (a government site), and “.net” (a network). Most sites today can be reached with only the domain name, like summitbsa.org.



If you don't have internet access at home, you may find it at your local library, school, or community center.



Scout Life magazine has its own website, which can be found at scoutlife.org. There's also a mobile app.

The entire address is known as a *uniform resource locator*, or URL. When you type a URL (or just the domain name) into a web browser (or click on a link in a webpage you're viewing), the web browser takes you to the site (the "resource") located at the specified address. The World Wide Web's huge directories of URLs help internet users quickly find the addresses they want.

If you are using the internet as one of your sources to complete requirement 5, ask your parent or guardian, your counselor, or a librarian to help you find good websites that have the information you want. The resources section of this pamphlet also lists some useful web addresses.

Tips for Online Safety

On the internet, you can have fun, play games, and take care of business. You can find help with your hobbies and interests, learn all sorts of things, click your way to a wide world of instant information, and even read whole books.

Along with the convenience, though, comes some risk. When you are online, you need to be careful to guard your privacy and protect yourself from potentially harmful situations.

These tips will help you stay safe. Your parent, guardian, counselor, or librarian may talk with you about other rules for internet safety. When you are at a library, you may also ask a librarian for a copy of that particular library's internet rules.

1. Follow your family's rules for going online. Respect any limits on how long and how often you are allowed to be online and what sites you can visit. Do not visit areas that are off-limits. Just as there are places you don't go to in real life, there are places to avoid on the internet.
2. Protect your privacy. Never exchange emails or give out information such as your phone number, your address, your last name, where you go to school, or where your parents or guardians work, without first asking your parent or guardian's permission. Do not send anyone your picture or any photos unless you have your parent or guardian's permission.
3. Do not open emails or files you receive from people you don't know or trust. If you get something suspicious, trash it just as you would any other junk mail.
4. If you receive or discover any information that makes you uncomfortable, leave it and tell your parent or guardian. Do not respond to any message that is disturbing or hurtful.
5. Never agree to get together with someone you "meet" online, unless your parent or guardian approves of the meeting and goes with you.
6. Never share your password with anyone (even if they sound "official") other than your parents, guardians or other responsible adults in your family.
7. Never shop online unless you have permission to do so.
8. Do not believe everything you see or read online. Along with lots of great information, the internet has lots of junk. Learn to separate the useful from the worthless. Talk with your counselor or other experienced web user about ways to tell the difference.
9. Be a good online citizen. Do not do anything that harms others or is against the law.



Volunteering for Reading

For requirement 6, you are to give at least four hours of service to activities that involve reading to others, performing volunteer work at a library, or organizing a book swap or book drive. Talk with your counselor about the different kinds of volunteer service you might give.

Reading Aloud

Do you remember being read to when you were a little kid? Did you like it?

For many people, being read to is a favorite memory from childhood. If you have a little brother or sister, or if there are young kids in your neighborhood or your extended family, try reading aloud to them and see how quickly you become their favorite big brother. Chances are, you'll have even more fun than they will.

Reading aloud is a different skill from reading to yourself. To keep from losing your audience, you must read slowly. If you're normally a fast talker, you may have to slow down your reading so much that—to your own ears, at least—you sound draggy. Don't worry. You won't sound draggy to your listeners. They will follow the story much better if you go slowly, say every word, read with enthusiasm, and insert a few pauses for dramatic effect.

Reading aloud takes practice. Before you read to an audience (of one listener or many), practice the material you have chosen. Be sure you can pronounce all the words, including the characters' names. Know where to put the pauses. Remember to read aloud the title and the name of the author (and the illustrator, if there is one). This reminds your listeners where books come from—authors write them!

Your counselor can help you match your interests and abilities to the needs of people in your community. Be sure to get your parent or guardian's permission for your chosen service activity.

Reading aloud is a skill that can bring lifetime enjoyment.

People of all ages enjoy hearing stories from books read aloud. Many bookstores, libraries, book discussion clubs, and other community groups host public readings where book lovers read aloud from their favorites.

You might take the “read aloud” idea to a hospital, an extended-care facility, or a local senior citizens’ home or community center. Read to one or more of the patients or residents. Maybe other members of your patrol or troop could take part and make this reading service project a community Good Turn.



Try this: If you have a tape recorder, record yourself reading a couple of paragraphs from a book you know well. Read fast and without spirit, like you were trying to finish quickly. Listen to the playback.

Now reread the same paragraphs. But this time, slow down. Put feeling into the words. Vary the pace of your reading. Pause to add suspense or a sense of anticipation. Don’t just read the sentences—perform them. Pretend you are an actor putting on a show for an audience. Match your tone of voice and the expression on your face to the story you are reading.

Listen to the playback of your second reading. Which version would you rather hear? Which version do you think your listeners would like better?

Volunteering in a Library

Another way to fulfill requirement 6 is to volunteer in your school or public library. Working in the library will help you become familiar with how books are classified and arranged and make it easier for you to find books. You also will discover other resources available in your library, which might include CDs and DVDs, audiobooks, maps, photo collections, genealogy and local history collections, and computers.

As a library volunteer you might

- Mend and cover books.
- Sort materials.
- Return books to their proper places on the shelves.
- Make or update displays, bulletin boards, or scrapbooks.
- Make signs, posters, and other artwork.
- Clip newspaper articles for local history files.
- Stuff envelopes for bulk mailings.
- Help set up or clean up for book sales and other special events.
- Help in the children's area with crafts and other activities.
- Assist with programs.
- Guide younger students in finding library resources to help with homework assignments.

Your school or public library probably has many positions open for young-adult volunteers. Just ask. Most librarians are happy to train their volunteer assistants. Experience is usually not necessary, although computer skills are helpful for some library positions.

Create a Little Free Library

Little Free Library is the world's largest book-sharing movement. It consists of book-sharing boxes that provide 24/7 access to books. Studies show that the more books in or near the home, the more likely a child will learn and love to read—but that most children living in poverty have no books to call their own. Through this program millions of books are exchanged each year, free of charge, increasing access to books for readers of all ages and backgrounds. Go to go.scoutlife.org/LFL for details.

Working in a library is a fun way to meet people. Volunteers at public libraries might range in age from 12 to past 90, and they come from all walks of life. One thing most of them have in common is a love of reading.

Reading Resources

Scouting Literature

Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys; Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls; Fieldbook; Stories for Around the Campfire; More Stories for Around the Campfire

With your parent or guardian's permission, visit Scouting America's official retail site, **scoutshop.org**, for a complete list of merit badge pamphlets and other helpful Scouting materials and supplies.

Book Lists

Book lists or reading lists are put together every year by readers, librarians, and others who know books. Your school or public library will have lists to get you started. Many lists are published on the web; the internet address of some are given here. Also ask your librarian or teacher for a list of books that have won (or are competing for) your state's awards for children's and young adult books.

American Library Association: Best Books for Young Adults

ala.org/yalsa/booklists/bbya

Education World: Summer Reading Lists

educationworld.com/summer_reading

International Literacy Association Reading Lists

literacyworldwide.org/get-resources/reading-lists

Newbery Medal Winners and Honor Books

ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/newberymedal/newberymedal

TeachersFirst.com: 100 Best Books

teachersfirst.com/100books.cfm

Young Adult Books Central

yabookscentral.com

Little Free Libraries

How to create a library:

littlefreelibrary.org/starting-a-little-free-library-boy-scout-success-stories

Little Free Library Eagle Scout project:

littlefreelibrary.org/2019/07/library-build-case-study-eagle-scout-project/

Scout Life magazine building plans:

go.scoutlife.org/LFL

Books Online

Many classic books are available online for no charge. Several websites have free e-books (electronic books) that you can read on a computer or print out to read later. The websites listed here offer hundreds of e-books.

The Online Books Page

digital.library.upenn.edu/books

Project Gutenberg

gutenberg.org

Magazines

Readers your age can choose from many magazines published especially for you. Some of these magazines also publish stories and articles written by young people. Check your school or public library for these and other magazines.

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scoutlife.org

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Cricket (ages 9 to 14)

1751 Pinnacle Drive, Suite 600
McLean, VA 22102
703-885-3400
cricketmedia.com

Kids Discover

192 Lexington Ave., Suite 1003
New York, NY 10016-6913
212-677-4457
kidsdiscover.com

Skipping Stones

P.O. Box 3939
Eugene, OR 97403
541-342-4956
skippingstones.org

Stone Soup: The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists

P.O. Box 83
Santa Cruz, CA 95063
800-447-4569
stonesoup.com

Newspapers

Ask your merit badge counselor or a librarian to help you find newspaper articles on subjects that interest you. Below is one website that contains online newspaper indexes. Your librarian can show you how to search for articles using this or other indexes.

Refdesk.com

refdesk.com/paper.html

Reference Books

Check the reference section of your school or public library for these and many other useful reference books.

Barron's Profiles of American Colleges.

Barron's Educational Series, annual.

Books in Print. Bowker, annual.

Contemporary Authors. Gale, annual.

Current Biography. H.W. Wilson, annual.

Guinness World Records. Bantam Books, annual.

Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature.

H.W. Wilson, annual.

Subject Guide to Books in Print.

Bowker, annual.

Subject Guide to Children's Books in Print.

Bowker, annual.

Organizations and Websites

Ask your counselor, parent or guardian, or librarian to recommend web-related guides, directories, and search engines that are good for internet users your age.

Bookshare

bookshare.org

Internet Search Engines for Kids

ivyjoy.com/rayne/kidssearch.html

Literacy Programs

Hundreds of organizations promote literacy. Here are a few of the major programs. Through them you may find local opportunities.

National Literacy Directory

nld.org

American Foundation for the Blind

1401 South Clark St., Suite 730

Arlington, VA 22202

800-232-5463

afb.org

The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy

516 N. Adams St.

Tallahassee, FL 32301

850-562-5300

barbarabush.org

Read Across America

National Education Association

1201 16th St., NW

Washington, DC 20036-3290

202-833-4000

readacrossamerica.org

Bookshare has signed a memorandum of mutual support with Scouting America that emphasizes an ongoing relationship to provide Scouts and their leaders access to an electronic library of key Scouting publications. Individuals with disabilities can have resources like the Scouts BSA handbook and dozens of merit badge pamphlets at their fingertips—on their PCs, smartphones, and e-readers via audiobooks, or can hear books being read as words are highlighted on a screen. These resources can even be accessed using a Braille “reader”—a display that can be hooked up to a computer to generate a Braille translation.

For more about Bookshare and its agreement with Scouting America, go to blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2011/09/28/bookshare-bsa-open-a-new-chapter.

Reading Is Fundamental Inc.

750 First St., NE, Suite 920
Washington, DC 20002
877-743-7323
rif.org

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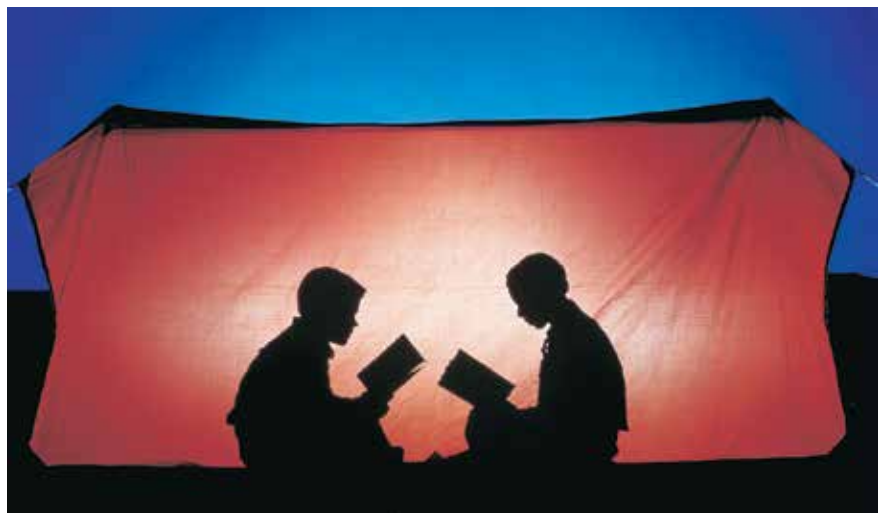


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