MERIT BADGE SERIES







JOURNALISM











BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

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Requirements

1. Explain what freedom of the press is and how the First Amendment guarantees that you can voice your opinion. In your discussion, tell how to distinguish between fact and opinion, and explain the terms *libel, slander, defamation, fair comment and criticism, public figure, privacy,* and *malice.* Discuss how these matters relate to ethics in journalism.

2. Do either A OR B:
   a. Newspaper and magazine journalism
      (1) All on the same day, read a local newspaper, a national newspaper, a newsmagazine, and (with your parent's permission) an online news source. From each source, clip, read, and compare a story about the same event. Tell your counselor how long each story is and how fair and accurate the stories are in presenting different points of view. Tell how each source handled the story differently, depending on its purpose or audience.
      (2) Visit a newspaper or magazine office. Ask for a tour of the various divisions (editorial, business, and printing). During your tour, talk to an executive from the business side about management's relations with reporters, editors, and photographers and what makes a "good" newspaper or magazine.

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b. Radio and television journalism

(1) All on the same day, watch a local and national network newscast, listen to a radio newscast, and (with your parent's permission) view a national broadcast news source online. List the different news items and features presented, the different elements used, and the time in minutes and seconds and the online space devoted to each story. Compare the story lists and discuss whether the stories are fair and accurate. Explain why different news outlets treated the stories differently and/or presented a different point of view.

(2) Visit a radio or television station. Ask for a tour of the various departments, concentrating on those related to news broadcasts. During your tour, talk to the station manager or other station management executive about station operations, particularly how management and the news staff work together, and what makes a "good" station. If possible, go with a reporter to cover a news event.



3. Discuss the differences between a hard news story and a feature story. Explain what is the "five W's and H." Then do ONE of the following:

    a. Choose a current or an unusual event of interest to you, and write either a hard news article OR a feature article about the event. Gear the article for print OR audio OR video journalism. Share your article with your counselor.

    b. With your parent's permission and counselor's approval, interview someone in your community who is influential because of his or her leadership, talent, career, or life experiences. Then present to your counselor either a written or oral report telling what you learned about this person.

    c. With your parent's permission and counselor's approval, read an autobiography written by a journalist you want to learn more about. Write an article that tells what you learned about this person and the contributions this person has made to the field of journalism.

    d. Attend a Scouting event and write a 200-word article (feature or hard news) about the event. Use either the inverted pyramid style or the chronological style. Review the article with your counselor, then submit it to your community newspaper or BSA local council or district newsletter for consideration.

4. Attend a public event and do ONE of the following:

    a. Write two newspaper articles about the event, one using the inverted pyramid style and one using the chronological style.

    b. Using a radio or television broadcasting style, write a news story, a feature story, and a critical review of the event.

    c. Take a series of photographs to help tell the story of the event in pictures. Include news photos and feature photos in your presentation. Write a brief synopsis of the event as well as captions for your photos.

5. Find out about three career opportunities in journalism. Pick one and find out the education, training, and experience required for this profession. Discuss this with your counselor, and explain why this profession might interest you.

Journalism Resources

Scouting Literature

Cinematography, Communications, Computers, Graphic Arts, Law, Photography, Public Speaking, Radio, and *Theater* merit badge pamphlets

For more information about Scouting-related resources, visit the BSA's online retail catalog (with your parent's permission) at *http://www.scoutstuff.org.*

Books

Brooks, Brian S., James L. Pinson, and Jack Z. Sissors. *The Art of Editing,* 8th ed. Allyn & Bacon, 2005.

Cappon, Rene J. *The Associated Press Guide to News Writing,* 2nd ed. Associated Press, 1991.

Craig, Steve. *Sports Writing: A Beginner's Guide*. Discover Writing Press, 2002.

Ferguson, Donald L. *Opportunities in Journalism Careers*. McGraw-Hill, 2001.

Foust, James C. *Online Journalism: Principles and Practices of News for the Web*. Holcomb Hathaway, 2005.

Gibbs, Cheryl K., and Tom Warhover. *Getting the Whole Story: Reporting and Writing the News*. Guilford Press, 2002.

Gillmor, Dan. *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People*. O'Reilly, 2004.

Goldberg, Jan. *Careers in Journalism*. McGraw-Hill, 3rd ed., 2005.

Gormly, Eric K. *Writing and Producing Television News*. Blackwell Pub., 2004.

Hewitt, Hugh. *Blog: Understanding the Information Reformation That's Changing Your World*. Nelson Business, 2005.

Hohenberg, John. *Foreign Correspondence: The Great Reporters and Their Times*. Syracuse University Press, 1995.

Kalbfeld, Brad. *Associated Press Broadcast News Handbook*. McGraw-Hill, 2001.

Sloan, W. David (editor). *American Journalism: History, Principles, Practices*. McFarland & Company, 2002.

Organizations and Web Sites

American Society of Journalists and Authors
1501 Broadway, Suite 302
New York, NY 10036
Web site: *http://www.asja.org*

American Society of Magazine Editors
Web site: *http://www.magazine.org*

Broadcast Education Association
Web site: *http://www.beaweb.org*

Freedom Forum First Amendment Center
Web site:
http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org

Media Law Guide
The Freedom of Information Center
133 Neff Annex
University of Missouri–Columbia
Columbia, MO 65211
Web site: *http://foi.missouri.edu*

National Association of Broadcasters
1771 N Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
Web site: *http://www.nab.org*

National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting Inc.
Web site: *http://www.nicar.org*

The Poynter Institute
Web site: *http://www.poynteronline.org*

Society of Professional Journalists
Eugene S. Pulliam National Journalism Center
3909 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46208
Web site: *http://www.spj.org*

Student Media Sourcebook
National Scholastic Press Association
Associated Collegiate Press
2221 University Ave. SE, Suite 121
Minneapolis, MN 55414
Web site: *http://studentpress.journ.umn.edu/sourcebook*

Student Press Law Center
Web site:
http://www.splc.org/legalresearch.asp

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