

Troop 957 Rank Advancement Board of Review Instructions

Purpose of a Board of Review:

The members of a Board of Review should have the following objectives in mind:

- To make sure the Scout has completed the requirements for the rank.
- To see how good an experience the Scout is having in the unit.
- To encourage the Scout to progress further.

Additionally, the Board of Review provides "quality control" on advancement within the unit, it provides an opportunity for the Scout to develop and practice those skills needed in an interview situation, and it is an opportunity for the Scout to review his accomplishments.

The Board of Review is NOT a retest; the Scout has already been tested on the skills and activities required for the rank. However, the chairman of the Board of Review should ensure that all the requirements have been "signed off" in the Scout's handbook. Additionally, the chairman should ensure that leadership and merit badge records are consistent with the requirements for the rank.

The Board of Review is an opportunity to review of the Scout's attitudes, accomplishments and his acceptance of Scouting's ideals.

Composition of a Board of Review:

For all ranks (except Eagle) and Eagle palms, the Board of Review consists of three to six members of the Troop Committee. The Troop Advancement Chairperson typically acts as the chairperson of the Board of Review. Relatives or guardians may not serve as members of a Scout's Board of Review. Unit leaders (Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, Varsity Coach, Post Advisor, etc.) should not participate in a Board of Review unless absolutely necessary.

For the rank of Eagle, the Board of Review consists of three to six members drawn from Scouting and the community. The members of the Board of Review are selected by the District Advancement Committee; at least one member of the District Advancement Committee must be a member of the Board of Review for Eagle, and serves as chairperson of the Board of Review. Unit leaders from the Scout's unit, relatives, or guardians may not serve as members of a Scout's Board of Review for Eagle. A Board of Review for Eagle may contain members of the community who are not registered Scouters; however, they should be knowledgeable of the principles of Scouting. For example, a representative from a chartering organization, an adult Eagle Scout (even if not currently registered), or a religious leader are frequently asked to assist with an Eagle Board of Review. The Scout may request an individual to be a member of his Board of Review. As a general rule, no more than one member of an Eagle Board should be associated with the Scout's unit.

Mechanics of a Board of Review:

The Scout is introduced to the board by the Chairperson of the board. The Scout should be in full Class A uniform (including neckerchief and merit badge sash).

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The chairman of the Board of Review should ask the Scout to come to attention, and recite one or more of the following:

- The Scout Law
- The Scout Oath
- The Scout Motto
- The Scout Slogan
- The Outdoor Code

For the lower ranks, one or two (usually the Law and Oath) should be sufficient. For higher ranks, more may be expected. For Life candidates, all are required. One or two re-tries are appropriate, especially for younger Scouts, or if the Scout appears nervous.

The board members are invited to ask questions of the Scout. These should be open-ended, offering an opportunity for the Scout to speak about his opinions, experiences, activities, and accomplishments. Avoid questions which only require a simple one or two word answer. If an answer is too brief, follow up with a, "Why?" or, "How can that be done?" to expand the answer. The questions need not be restricted to Scouting topics; questions regarding home, church, school, work, athletics, etc. are all appropriate.

The time for a Board of Review should be from 15 to 45 minutes, with the shorter time for the lower ranks. When all members have had an opportunity to ask their questions, the Scout is excused from the room. The board members then consider whether the Scout is ready for the next rank; the board's decision must be unanimous. Once the decision is made, the Scout is invited back into the room, and the Chairperson informs the Scout of the board's decision. If the Scout is approved for the next rank, there are general congratulations and hand shakes all around, and the Scout is encouraged to continue advancing. If there are issues which prevent the Scout from advancing to the next rank, the board must detail the precise nature of the deficiencies. The Scout must be told specifically what must be done in order to be successful at the next Board of Review. Typically, an agreement is reached as to when the Scout may return for his subsequent Board of Review. The Chairperson must send a written follow up, to both the Scout and the Scoutmaster, regarding the deficiencies and the course of action needed to correct them.

Mechanics of a Board of Review for Eagle Rank

The mechanics of a Board of Review for Eagle are similar to all other Boards of Review, except that a Board of Review for Eagle is more in depth, and will probably last over 45 minutes. Additionally, the Eagle Scout Rank Application, Letters of Recommendation (minimum of 3) and Eagle Project Notebook must be present and reviewed by the board. Questions about these documents are appropriate, but the letters of recommendation are for the board's use only; any comments or questions about them should not reveal who wrote the letters. The letters are retained by the District Advancement Chairperson, and are never given to the Scout. After the application has been approved by National Eagle Board of Review and returned to the local council (typically 4-6 weeks), the letters of recommendation are destroyed.

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The Nature of the Questions :

Refer to the cheat sheets for typical Board of Review questions for each rank. The questions for the lower ranks are simpler and generally deal with factual information about the Scout's participation in his unit, and his approach to applying the skills he has learned toward earning the next rank. The questions for the higher ranks are less factual, and generally seek to aid understanding of how Scouting is becoming an integral part of the Scout's life. Remember: it is not the point of a Board of Review to retest the Scout. If a Scout appears nervous or anxious about the Board of Review, it might be appropriate to ask one or two questions from the list for a lower rank, to help "break the ice" and establish some rapport.

For each rank, there is a question about advancing to the next rank. The purpose of this question is to encourage advancement, but it should not be asked in a way that pressures the Scout. *[Note: If the Board of Review is for the Life rank, and the Scout is at or near his 17th birthday, some pressure towards Eagle may be in order. At the very least, be certain that the Scout realizes that his time is running out.]*

For higher ranks, there is a question from The Boy Scout Handbook about basic Scouting history. For Order of the Arrow members, there are questions about the role of OA within Scouting. More questions are provided than can typically be accommodated in the time suggested. The Board of Review will need to select the questions which are appropriate for the particular Scout and his experiences.

These questions are intended to only serve as a guide. Units should freely add to, or remove from, these lists as they feel appropriate.

Reminders for the Board of Review

1. The rank cheat sheets contain sample questions that may be used by a Board of Review. The board will not necessarily use all of these questions, but following this format will assist them in determining if a Scout is prepared for advancement.
2. Before the interview begins the Board should take the time to review the Scout's handbook; this way they too can formulate their own questions. The Scout should be assured that what is said during the review is between the Scout and the Board and will not be repeated outside of that forum! Information gathered during the reviews should be used to help improve Troop management.
3. The Board can take this opportunity to give the Scout a "once over" on his uniform. This is a chance for the Scout to show pride in his uniform and in the patches he has earned. This is not meant to be a formal uniform inspection, but it should be used as another opportunity to make certain that the uniform is worn correctly. This inspection is NOT to be used as criteria for passing the Board of Review.
4. There is not a right or wrong answer to any of the questions. They are a tool. The Troop Committee's first responsibility is to make certain that the Scout UNDERSTANDS what he has achieved with his PENDING rank advancement and the additional responsibilities that the Scout will assume as he grows within the Troop. One of the greatest needs of boys is confidence (in advancing the Scout builds that confidence). You want the Scout to walk away from the Board knowing what he has achieved is something very worth while. Make it a pleasant experience for him and the Board.

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5. The Board of Review is not just a question and answer period. The Board does not re-test the candidate. Rather, the Board should attempt to determine the Scout's attitude and his acceptance of Scouting's ideals. A discussion of the Scout Oath and Law is in keeping with the purpose of the review, to make certain that the candidate recognizes and understands the value of Scouting in his home, unit, school, and community. The Board should remember that the Scout advancing to Tenderfoot or Second Class will not have the same kind of answers as a Scout trying to advance to the rank of Life or Eagle. During the review, each member of the board must form a judgment concerning the Scout's qualifications.
 - Has the scout accomplished the tasks that are required? *[This is not a review of the requirements but of the experiences the scout had in completing these tasks]*
 - What sort of experience is he having in the Troop and within his Patrol?
 - Is he ready for advancement and the responsibilities that come with it?
 - Where does he plan to go from here? Encourage him to verbally set goals.
6. If the Scout is not actively participating in his review, or appears to have little or no interest in the questions being asked, the Board is obligated to inform the Scout that he will need to come back at a later date when he is truly prepared. If the Scout does not pass the Board of Review for any reason, the Board is required to specify to the Scout exactly why he did not pass. The Board must list explicit reasonably obtainable goals for the Scout to pass. A written copy of these goals should be given to the Scout and the Committee Chairman at the conclusion of the Board.
7. Advancement accommodates three (3) aims in Scouting:
 - participating citizenship
 - growth in moral strength and character
 - and mental and physical development.

There are four (4) steps to advancement in Scouting:

- The Boy Scout learns by DOING.
 - The Scout is tested. (Troop Policies and Procedures)
 - The Scout is reviewed. (Board of Review)
 - The Scout is recognized. (Court of Honor)
8. General practice is to make every reasonable consideration for the Scout, provided the requirements as stated in the Boy Scout Handbook are completed to the satisfaction of a Trained Scout Leader.