

Boards of Review: An Overview for All Ranks

(Adult Guide)

Purpose of Boards of Review

After a Scout has completed the requirements for any rank or Eagle Palm, he appears before a Board of Review. Its purpose is to determine the quality of his experience and decide whether he has fulfilled the requirements for the rank. If so, the Board not only approves his advancement or Palm but also encourages him to continue the quest for the next rank or Palm.

The review should take approximately 15 minutes, but not longer than 30 minutes.

If a Scout is to be reviewed for more than one rank, each rank should be treated as a separate Board of Review.

Wearing the Uniform—or Neat in Appearance

A Scout should be in full Class A uniform for any Board of Review. It should be as correct as possible, with the badges and insignia worn properly. A Scout is clean, and should come to a Board of Review being clean and neat in his overall appearance. However, a Scout should not be turned away from a Board because of an incomplete uniform. He should be reminded and encouraged to make every attempt to get a complete uniform prior to his next Board.

Conducting the Board of Review

Most adults would admit to nervousness if told they were to appear before a "Board of Review." Imagine how a boy must feel. A certain level of formality and meaningful questioning should exist, but it is important that the atmosphere be relaxed and that the review is conducted with the Scout Law in mind.

The BSA discourages mock, or practice, Boards of Review. "Practice" reviews may imply that Board members will ask predetermined questions or that the Scout will feel the Board is a "pass or fail" scenario. The Board of Review should not be something other than a positive experience. While Troop 20 does provide a question guide by rank, the aim is for unrehearsed, spontaneous conversation, questions, and answers revealing the Scout's character, citizenship, and personal fitness as it pertains to a certain rank.

Not a Retest or "Examination"

Though one reason for a Board of Review is to help assure the Scout did what he was supposed to do to meet the rank requirements, it shall become neither a retest or "examination," nor a challenge of his knowledge. In most cases it should, instead, be a celebration of accomplishment. Remember, it is more about the journey. A badge recognizes what a young man has done toward achieving the primary goal of personal growth. It is thus more about the learning *experience* than it is about the specific skills learned. A Scout must not be rejected at a Board of Review for reasons unrelated to advancement requirements. For example, he must not be rejected just because he did not bring his *Boy Scout Handbook* with him or because he was tardy for a Board of Review, but the reason for his tardiness may certainly be a topic for discussion.

What Should Be Discussed

During the Review, Board members should refer to the guide provided by Troop 20. However, it is just a guide. Board members may ask their own questions as long as it is related to Scouting and the rank for which the Scout is appearing. For example, a Scout may be asked where he learned his skills and who taught him, and what he gained from fulfilling selected requirements. The answers will reveal what he did for his rank. It can be determined, then, if this was what he was supposed to do. Discussion of how he has lived the Scout Oath and Scout Law in his home, unit, school, and community may be included. It is important to remember that it is a discussion. Do not judge or grade the Scout on his communication skills. Do not insist on perfection. A positive attitude is most important, and that a young man accepts Scouting's ideals and sets and meets good standards in his life.

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Board Members Must Agree Unanimously on Decisions to Approve

After the Board of Review the Scout is asked to wait outside the room or out of hearing range while the Board deliberates. To approve awarding a rank or Palm, the Board must agree unanimously. Every effort should be made to deliberate with careful consideration of each member's perspective, and in sufficient detail as to avoid factual misunderstanding. It is appropriate to call the candidate back if additional questions may provide clarification. Still, if any member dissents, the decision cannot be for approval. In the case of such disagreement, the Scout shall not be informed about the specifics of the conversations or any arguments taking place.

If the members agree a Scout is ready to advance, he is called in and congratulated.

In situations where one or more members of the Board are of an opinion the Scout should be rejected, they should discuss their reasoning with the Advancement Chair or Scoutmaster, who may be able to present a different perspective and prevent an uncomfortable or unfair scenario.