

# Communications



## Merit badge requirements

1. Do ONE of the following:
  - a. For one day, keep a log in which you describe your communication activities. Keep track of the time and different ways you spend communicating, such as talking person-to-person, listening to your teachers or the radio, watching television, reading books, and other print media, and communicating online. Discuss with your counselor what your log reveals about the importance of communication in your life. Think of ways to improve your communications skills.

## Communications Log

### DATE:

Ways to Communicate	Person-to-Person	Listing to Teacher/Public Speech	Small Group	TV/Print Media/Radio	E-Mail/Correspondence	Telephone
Time:						
6am-7am						
7am-8am						
8am-9am						
9am-10am						
10am-11am						
11am-12pm						
12pm-1pm						
1pm-2pm						
2pm-3pm						
3pm-4pm						
4pm-5pm						
5pm-6pm						
6pm-7pm						
7pm-8pm						
8pm-9pm						
9pm-10pm						
10pm-11pm						
11pm-12am						

- b. For three days, keep a journal of your listening experiences. Identify one example of each of the following, and discuss with your counselor when you have listened to:
  1. Obtain information (**News, Research, Asking Questions, School, etc.**)
  2. A persuasive argument (**Answering Questions, Stating Opinion, Disagreements, etc.**)

3. Appreciate or enjoy something (**Saying Thank You**)
4. Understand someone's feelings (**Person-to-Person, Empathizing, Listening, etc.**)
- c. In a small-group setting, meet with other scouts or with friends. Have them share personal stories about significant events in their lives that affected them in some way. Take note of how each scout participates in the group discussion and how effective each one is in telling his story. Report what you have learned to your counselor about the differences you observed in effective communication.

The tasks of leading a group discussion differ from the responsibilities of other members. Instead of joining the conversation you must hold yourself slightly apart. Quietly keep the group on topic, and support and encourage each person to convey experiences in a supportive, active listening atmosphere that promotes mutual respect.

You also must lead by example. Make sure each person is allowed to speak and be heard without interruption. All communication in a small-group discussion should be directed toward the group leader. Think of yourself as a part referee, part coach, and part impartial observer.

Another duty of the leader is to make sure that no one dominates the conversation. On the flip side, pay particular attention to quiet individuals who may be shy or feel less confident speaking in public. Encourage them with a smile and a positive word.

### **NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION**

- Eye Contact-looking directly at the person with whom you are communicating.
- Facial expressions-conveying your mood and feelings, such as happiness, sadness, agreement, anger.
- Gestures, posture, or body movement-emphasizing a point by, for instance, leaning forward or nodding in agreement.
- Use of space-standing or sitting close enough to communicate effectively with others
- Appearance-wearing clean, neat clothing that is appropriate for the occasion.

### **GUIDELINES FOR LEADING A SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION**

- Begin the discussion by introducing the topic or task and the format of the discussion. For example, "We will discuss the problem of school graffiti and ways to stop it."
  - Moderate the discussion
    1. Control excessive talkers and draw out quiet members.
    2. Guide the group through the discussion format. Do not let solutions be discussed until the problem has been discussed fully.
    3. Keep the group focused on the topic or task.
    4. Encourage members to express different opinions
    5. Help all group members to compromise.
    6. Avoid talking too much.
    7. Watch the time to make sure the group completes the discussion or task.
  - Close the discussion by summarizing the main points and the conclusions that were reached.
- d. List as many ways as you can think of to communicate with others (face-to-face, by telephone, letter, e-mail, fax). For each type of communication discuss with your counselor an instance when that method might not be appropriate or effective.

Thank You note (Waiting any longer than two weeks to send a thank-you note is not polite), Formal Letter (Only for formal business), Telephone Calls (Not good if you are worried the person will forget important details of your conversation), Face-to-Face (Not always possible because of time or distance issues), Letters (Not speedy), Email (Most communication is non-verbal this limits email also email is not as personal as a letter), Fax (Not many people use faxes for anything other than business use)

2. Do ONE of the following:

- a. Think of a creative way to describe yourself, using, for example, a collage, short story or autobiography, drawing or series of photographs, or a song or skit. Using the aid you created, make a presentation to your counselor about yourself.

The best way to start any project is to first create an outline, pinpointing the event or events you plan to describe. It is a good idea to keep a light touch when describing yourself. Be humble, and do not be afraid to poke fun at yourself a little. This also is a good way to break the ice when you are asked to speak in public.

b. Choose a concept, product, or service in which you have great confidence. Build a sales plan based on its good points. Try to persuade the counselor to agree with, use, or buy your concept, product or service. After your sales talk, discuss with your counselor how persuasive you were.

1. **Get the audience's attention.** Convince the audience that what you have to say is important.
2. **Highlight a need.** Explain the problem or need and persuade the audience that a solution is in order.
3. **Propose a solution.** Use supporting evidence to convince the audience of the appropriateness of your solution and why they need what you have.
4. **Help the audience visualize the solution.** Show them what happens when they take your advice and what happens when they don't.

3. Write a five-minute speech. Give it at a meeting of a group.

1. **Introduction** (Short story, joke, quote, attention getting activity, thesis statement)
2. **Body** (Main points of argument)
3. **Conclusion** (Summary, Solution, Encouragement, Call To Action)

- *Tell them what you are going to tell them*
- *Tell them*
- *Tell them what you told them*

4. Interview someone you know fairly well, like, or respect because of his or her position, talent, career or life experiences. Listen actively to learn as much as you can about the person. Then prepare and deliver to your counselor an introduction of the person as though this person were to be a guest speaker, and include reasons why the audience would want to hear this person speak. Show how you would call to invite this person to speak.

- What is your full name and professional title?
- What do you enjoy doing (other than subject)
- What are your duties?
- What do you like best (about the subject)?
- What are the most difficult challenges (on subject)?
- What special training or was required (on subject)?

5. Attend a public meeting (city council, school board, debate) approved by your counselor where several points of view are given on a single issue. Practice active listening skills and take careful notes of each point of view. Present an objective report that includes all points of view that were expressed, and share this with your counselor.

During the meeting, think of your self as an impartial observer. Withhold judgment about what people are saying-do not form your own opinion about the subject under discussion. In other words, do not try to instantly analyze and categorize what is being said or allow yourself to become one-sided in your thinking. Simply record what various people say about the proposal and listen actively to the discussion without participating.

If there is a great controversy or debate over an issue-report what all sides of the controversy said and what, if any, action the council took. Do not state your own opinion in your report. Stick to the facts and record a variety of viewpoints and the outcome or any compromise that may have been reached among the parties.

6. With your counselor's approval, develop a plan to teach a skill or inform someone about something. Prepare teaching aids for your plan. Carry out your plan. With your counselor, determine whether the person has learned what you intended.

**EDGE Method (part of youth leadership training)**

1. **Explain**

2. **Demonstrate**
3. **Guide**
4. **Enable**

7. Do ONE of the following:

a. Write to the editor of a magazine or your local newspaper to express your opinion or share information on any subject you choose. Send your message by fax, email or regular mail.

**Transcript-Bulletin address for Letters to the Editor or Opinion section:  
tbp@tooeletranscript.com**

b. Create a Web page for your scout troop, school, or other organization. Include at least one article and one photograph or illustration, and one link to some other web page that would be helpful to someone who visits the web page you have created. It is not necessary to post your web page to the internet, but if you decide to do so, you must first share it with your parents and counselor and get their permission.

**freewebs.com allows you to create and post a web page for free. It has a wizard to assist in building your own page. Our Order of the Arrow chapter has a page they created and posted there.**

c. Use desktop publishing to produce a newsletter, brochure, flier or other printed material for your scout troop, class at school, or other group. Include at least one article and one photograph or illustration.

**In WORD:**

1. **File, Page Setup, Landscape**
2. **Format, Columns, Three**
3. **Insert, Break, Page Break (do this at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> column to create the back side of the brochure on the next page)**

8. Plan a troop court of honor or campfire program. Have the patrol leaders' council approve it, then write the script and prepare the program. Serve as master of ceremonies.

9. Learn about opportunities in the field of communication. Choose one career in which you are interested and discuss with your counselor the major responsibilities of that position and the qualifications, education, and preparation it requires.

*Source: 2007 Boy Scout Requirements (33215)*