

Communication Merit Badge

Historic Huntley & Huntley Meadows Park

The Communication merit badge is a 4 hour session. Scouts should bring a snack and plenty of water. Please no red liquids.

What to bring:

- Signed Blue card, pen and pencil
- Snacks and water
- **Preworks, which will be listed in Red.**

What is Prework? Merit Badges in general are not designed to be completed in an afternoon; there is some work the scouts need to do outside of the workshop to complete the badge. We call this **prework**. We suggest completing prework prior to the badge program date, but realize this is not always practical or possible. In these cases we will, if requested, sign partial cards and accept the assignments after the program. We ask that you bring/send back all the work and the blue card together in order to sign off on the blue card all at once.

Important information about how to prepare for a merit badge program at Huntley Meadows Park.

Parents, please review the content of a merit badge prior to registering your scout: some badges may be challenging for younger scouts. Also, the class discussions are more interesting if scouts review *all* the requirements for the badge before the program. The chances of your scout completing all the work for the badge increases dramatically when he is properly motivated and the badge content is age-appropriate.

Merit badges are not designed to be completed in a day and require independent work on the part of the scout outside of the workshop. We call this PREWORK. We suggest this is done prior to the badge program date, but we realize this is not always practical or possible, in these cases we will sign partial cards and accept the assignments after the program.

Merit badge programs can be from 3 to 5 hours long, so be sure to pack a snack and water for your scout and that he is dressed appropriately for being outdoors for some or all of the program.

Though not required, Scout workbooks are very useful and we prefer that scouts use the workbook during the program. Workbooks can be found at:

http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Merit_Badge_Worksheets .

About blue cards: WE DO NOT HAVE BLUE CARDS. Please bring an *authorized* blue card with you to the program. **Your troop scout master should be consulted prior to attending any merit badge program and he or she will sign the front of the card.**

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 teachers, listening to the radio or podcasts, watching television, using social media, reading books and other print media, and using any electronic communication device. Discuss with your counselor what your log reveals about the importance of communication in your life. Think of ways to improve your communication skills.
- (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
 2. Be persuaded
 3. Appreciate or enjoy something
 4. Understand someone's feelings
- (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 effectively each Scout communicates their story. Report what you have learned to your counselor about the differences you observed in effective communication.
- (d) List as many ways as you can think of to communicate with others (face-to-face, by telephone, letter, email, text messages, social media, and so on). For each type of communication, discuss with your counselor an instance when that method might not be appropriate or effective.

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.
- (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.

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

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.

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. Prepare an objective report that includes all points of view that were expressed, and share this with your counselor.

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.

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.
- (b) Create a web page or blog of special interest to you (for instance, your troop or crew, a hobby, or a sport). Include at least three articles or entries and one photograph or illustration, and one link to some other web page or blog that would be helpful to someone who visits the web page or blog you have created. *It is not necessary to post your web page or blog to the Internet, but if you decide to do so, you must first share it with your parents and counselor and get their permission.*
- (c) Use desktop publishing to produce a newsletter, brochure, flier, or other printed material for your troop or crew, class at school, or other group. Include at least one article and one photograph or illustration.

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

9. Find out about three career opportunities in communication. 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.

Parents

Merit badges are supposed to be done with the buddy system. *We highly recommend that you attend the program with your scouts especially if they do not have a buddy*; the chances of your scout completing all the work for the badge during the allotted time increases dramatically when properly motivated. There is never a fee for adults and you are sure to learn something. Also, our policy is that the program will not proceed if there are not 2 or more adults present for the program especially those containing hikes. We will attempt to enlist adult volunteers from our center but this is not always possible so *prepare for the possibility that you may have to stay for the program and not just drop off your scout*. This will allow the instructor to concentrate more fully on the difficult task of imparting all the required information and assisting the scouts individually, if necessary, while other adults keep the atmosphere calm and productive.

If you have further questions, **please contact our senior interpreter Melodie at Melodie.Stehling@fairfaxcounty.gov or call the Huntley Meadows Visitor Center at 703-768-2525 and you will put you in contact with the appropriate counselor.**