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# Tough Scout Challenge

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## Time Available

10-30 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

## Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the concept of the Tough Scout Challenge and the situational leadership challenge.
2. Describe the use of the Tough Scout Challenge as the interpatrol activity portion of a troop meeting.
3. Help develop activities and find resources for a future Tough Scout Challenge.

## Suggested Presenter(s)

The ideal presenter is a Scoutmaster or assistant Scoutmaster who has experience in youth leader training and has completed the Fundamentals of Training, the Trainers EDGE, and, ideally, the Wood Badge course. Experience with COPE or other challenge activities that can be done at the unit level is also desirable.

## Presentation Method

The presentation should include a description of the Tough Scout Challenge and the situational leadership challenge, and how these activity models can help develop youth leaders and foster patrol-level team development.

The discussion should be followed by a sample Tough Scout Challenge that is presented to and completed by the Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters at roundtable.

Handouts listing different Tough Scout Challenge ideas based on local resources should be provided to all participants.

## BSA Reference Materials

- *Belay On*, No. 430-500
- Troop Meeting Plan, [www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34425.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34425.pdf)

## Community Resources and Materials

- “Are You Tougher Than a Boy Scout?” (National Geographic Channel series), <http://channel.national-geographic.com/are-you-tougher-than-a-boy-scout/>
- <http://toughscout.com> (National Geographic website that supports Boy Scout recruiting)

## Presentation Content

- The Tough Scout Challenge concept is intended to capitalize on the National Geographic Channel series “Are You Tougher Than a Boy Scout?”
- The TV show can serve as inspiration for local unit and district events that challenge youth to demonstrate mental and physical fitness, character strength, leadership skills, teamwork, and planning.
- The Tough Scout Challenge is based on the concept of situational leadership—a scenario in which there are several potential solutions but none that are clearly “right” or “wrong.” Situational leadership challenges have been used in other leadership development arenas with great success due to the flexibility of the process.
  - The overall intent of the Tough Scout Challenge is to build stronger teams and develop more effective Scouting leaders.
  - The Tough Scout Challenge can be incorporated into district and council events, and used to develop patrol and troop teamwork and unity.
- The BSA “low COPE” program can serve as a starting point for developing a Tough Scout Challenge. Appropriate obstacle courses may also allow Scouts to test their knowledge and capabilities while working as a team. Every attempt should be made to incorporate Scouting skills.
- In a troop meeting setting, the Tough Scout Challenge should fit the planned completion time of 15 minutes for an interpatrol activity. This makes the “game time” of the troop meeting a useful leadership development and team-building experience.
- Longer format challenges could be used for a campout event or a district camporee.
- Keep the equipment required for each challenge to a minimum so all patrols can attempt the challenge at the same time. If this is not possible, the patrol attempting the challenge should do so in a location where other patrols cannot observe them; this way, each patrol can develop a unique strategy for addressing the task.
  - Each patrol must complete the challenge according to standards you provide. There should be no specific “right” or “wrong” way to complete the task, and in some cases, the task will not be completed successfully. The challenge should be a controlled opportunity for patrol leaders and other youth leaders to exercise leadership methods and skills, and to develop problem-solving and team-leading strategies.

- Once the Tough Scout Challenge is completed—or the time limit has been reached—the patrols should be reassembled and a post-activity review should be conducted. In this review, you should:
  - Reveal the intent of the challenge.
  - Allow each patrol leader to explain how his patrol addressed the challenge.
  - Share information and feedback to help develop leadership.
- If time allows, roundtable participants can break into small teams and create sample Tough Scout Challenges to share with the whole group. Give each team a particular Scout skill to build their challenge around—but remind them that challenges are not just about skill, but also about leadership, preparation, and decision-making.

## Troop Guide and Instructor Roles

### Time Available

10-30 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

### Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the importance and purposes of the troop guide and instructor positions, and the differences between them.
2. Understand the responsibilities of each position.
3. Work with their senior patrol leaders to help troop guides and instructors be more effective in their roles.

### Suggested Presenter(s)

A unit leader who has experience working with troop guides and instructors in the intended manner would be an effective presenter. The district training chair could be another presenter.

### Presentation Method

The presentation should include the position-specific duties of the troop guide and the troop instructor. Discuss the role each of them plays in unit operations and as a friend to new Scouts. As an example, highlight the role of a troop guide in a Wood Badge course to put it in a context that participants will recognize. Have unit leaders share their experiences using troop guides and instructors, and discuss tips for better performance by Scouts who serve in those positions.

### BSA Reference Materials

- *Senior Patrol Leader Handbook*, No. 32501
- Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops: Position Description Cards, No. 30521
- *Troop Leader Guidebook*, No. 33009

### Presentation Content

- Leadership development is one of the eight methods of Scouting.

- Troop guides and instructors are key unit leaders when properly selected and trained. Knowing and properly implementing the roles of the troop guide and troop instructor will help them achieve the desired results in their positions of responsibility.
- Scouts whose outside schedules may keep them from attending meetings and outings and performing their duties should not be selected as troop guides and instructors.
- Qualities of a good troop guide or instructor:
  - Sets a good example.
  - Wears the Scout uniform correctly and enthusiastically.
  - Lives by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
  - Shows Scout spirit by attending as many unit events and meetings as he can.

### Troop Instructor

- Responsibilities of a troop instructor:
  - Teaches basic Scouting skills in troops and patrols.
  - Teaches outdoor skills to new Scouts so they can earn First Class in the first year. (Advancement is one of the eight methods of Scouting.)
  - Teaches outdoor skills to new Scouts so they can perform better on outings. (Outdoor programs is one of the eight methods of Scouting.)
- To prepare well in advance for each teaching assignment, a troop instructor should refresh his memory by studying carefully the skill to be taught, using BSA resources such as the *Boy Scout Handbook*, *Fieldbook*, *Program Features for Troops, Teams, and Crews*, and merit badge pamphlets. He should write an instructional plan to ensure he teaches the subject thoroughly and doesn't leave out useful material. He must make sure to have all the necessary supplies ("Be Prepared").