

Advancement in Scouting

When one thinks of Scouting, one of the first things that comes to mind is the Eagle Scout award. But how, exactly, does Advancement interact with the Aims and Methods of Scouting?

Advancement and the Aims of Scouting

Scouting has three Aims: Character, Citizenship, and Fitness. The advancement program of the Boy Scouts of America fulfills these aims by offering youth a program that develops citizenship (e.g. Citizenship in the Nation merit badge), promotes fitness (e.g. Personal Fitness Tenderfoot rank requirement), and instills character (e.g. “Live the Scout Oath, Law, Motto, and Slogan in your everyday life” rank requirement). By giving him a series of surmountable goals, the Scout is given a challenge to develop in character, citizenship, and fitness.

Advancement and the Methods of Scouting

Scouting’s Aims are delivered by eight methods, one of which is Advancement. Each method cannot stand alone; rather, they all interact with one another. The other Methods of Scouting are:

1. **Ideals**—The Ideals are the Scout Oath, Law, Motto, and Slogan, the Cub Scout Promise, the Law of the Pack, the Venturing Oath and Code, and so on. Advancement requires Scouts to live these values in their everyday lives.
2. **Patrols**—The patrol method is an integral part of Scouting. Advancement encourages Scouts to do things with their Patrol, as well as their Troop. Patrol identification is also important to the Tenderfoot rank advancement.
3. **Outdoors**—Much of the Advancement program is outdoor based. Merit Badges, such as Camping, Cooking, Wilderness Survival, Orienteering, and Pioneering, as well as Rank requirements (“Take a 5 mile hike...”) require interaction with the Great Outdoors.
4. **Adult Association**—A Scout cannot earn a Merit Badge or Rank (i.e. Advance) until he has completed a Board of Review, conducted by adults from within the Troop. Adults also serve as Merit Badge counselors, and in the important roles of Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters.
5. **Personal Growth**—The Advancement program encourages scouts to set personal, surmountable goals, and then helps them achieve them. This results in the growth of the individual.
6. **Leadership Development**—To achieve the Eagle Rank, a Scout must serve in a leadership position for six months and develop and give leadership to a major service project. To achieve the Star and Life ranks, a Scout must serve in a leadership position within the troop. Venturing advancement requires the completion of a leadership course.
7. **Uniform**—Wearing the uniform properly is an advancement requirement, and a Scout’s personal advancement can be displayed on his uniform.

**Scouting is not entirely about advancement.
It is about using advancement to build better people.**