

**TROOP 1, Portsmouth
Advancement Guidelines and
Preparing for Eagle Boards
J. Silvia, 8/5/02**

This document is a compilation that is useful for Scoutmasters, Assistant Scoutmasters, Junior Leaders, Board of Review members, as well as Scouts preparing for their Board of Review – especially the Eagle Board. It is a compilation of old and modern BSA resources from many sources and some 28 years of experience with Eagle Scout and other rank Boards of Review. The original was actually written by David B. D. Braman and John J. B. Silvia, Jr., in 1976 just after major changes had taken place with District Board of Reviews. Some excellent information from Bill Nelson, former Advancement Chairman for Troop 1 Portsmouth was added in this revision and I have and will continued to add, subtract, and evolve this document to keep it current and useful.

Remember, the Board is one of the most important interviews you will ever have. Every minute you spend in advance will pay back tenfold!

Quick reminder: You had better know the Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan, and Outdoor Code better than ever before in your life! I can't believe how many candidates I've seen who got stuck on these-- WOW! What a bad way to start!

Also, be in complete AND CORRECT uniform. Get a uniform inspection sheet (available from your unit or Council office) and check. Also have your Scoutmaster inspect. It's worth it...you're an Eagle candidate! Be sure you know what you did to earn the badges displayed on your uniform, and the parts and symbols of the badges themselves (especially the all the parts of the First Class Scout badge).

Know your Scout Basics and First Aid. Every Board of Review I have ever encountered will ask some questions about basic Scout skills and knowledge, and First Aid – especially Hurry Cases!

Finally, pay attention to the types of questions in the document below, and think through how you might concisely answer them ahead of time. This will serve as a great drill or set of “study questions”. Although you may be asked entirely different questions on your board, this review will be super valuable and a great preparation.

Eagle Board of Review Guidelines

The Board of Review for an Eagle candidate is composed of at least three but not more than six members. These members do not have to be registered in Scouting, but they must have an understanding of the importance and purpose of the Eagle Board of Review. One member serves as Chairman. Unit leaders, assistant unit leaders, relatives or guardians may not serve as members of a Scout's Board of Review. At least one

District advancement representative must be a member of the Eagle Board of Review if the review is conducted at a unit level. A Scout may request a District Board of Review which will consist of members of the District Advancement Committee and/or District members who have an understanding of the importance of the Eagle Board of Review. In no case should a relative or guardian of the candidate attend the review, either as a participant or observer. The contents of the Board of Review are confidential and the proceedings are not to be disclosed to any person who is not a member of the Board of Review.

The Board members need to convene prior to interviewing the candidate (15 to 30 minutes.) The purpose of meeting before the actual interview is to:

1. Review the prospective Eagle Scout's application.
2. Read his reference letters and other important documents.
3. Become familiar with his service project by assessing his final report and any available pictures.
4. Review these guidelines to help formulate pertinent questions.

During this initial meeting, the Chairman makes sure everyone is introduced to one another, sees that everyone has an opportunity to review all the paperwork and determines that all understand the goals of this Board, which are:

1. The Board determines that the Eagle project was successfully carried out.
 - a. Did the candidate demonstrate leadership?
 - b. Did he indeed direct the project himself, rather than do all the work himself or allow someone else to direct the project?
 - c. Was the project of value to the institution, school or community group?
 - d. Who from the benefiting group may be contacted to verify the value of the project?
 - e. Did the project follow the plan, or were modifications necessary to complete it – what did the candidate learn from making the modifications?
2. The Board should be assured of the candidate's participation in and understanding of the Scouting program.
3. A thorough discussion of his successes and experiences in Scouting must take place.

As the documents are making the rounds, the Chairman should add any relevant data of which he is aware.

The following guidelines must be kept in mind during the questioning of the scout:

1. Although before the late 1970's the Board of Reviews for Star, Life, and Eagle was a total, complete and detailed "Final Re-examination" and competency test of every piece of knowledge, skill and badge that the candidate had earned, the current format has changed.

The goal of the Board is no longer a complete and total re-test of the candidate. However, the Board should not be a "rubber stamp" approval process. Any question is fair game on the Board as long as it relates to Scouting and Scouting's goals. The Board should not fail a Scout if he misses a question or two, but in the end, the Board's decision must be unanimous and the appearance of the candidate before the Eagle Board of Review does not mean automatic attainment of the Eagle Rank.

2. The Board should attempt to determine the Scout's attitude toward and acceptance of Scouting's ideals
3. The Board should make sure that good standards of performance have been met in all phases of his life.
4. A thorough discussion of the Scout Oath and Scout Law is very appropriate and should be part of every Board of Review.
5. Be sure the candidate recognizes and understands the value of Scouting in his home, unit, school and community.
6. The Scout should be encouraged to talk – both quantitative and qualitative questions should be asked so the Board can get a well-rounded impression about the candidate and his attitude as well as his general Scouting knowledge.

Once the Scout's Eagle Application, service project paperwork, letters of recommendation and these guidelines are reviewed, the Scoutmaster is asked to bring in and introduce the candidate to the Board (as a courtesy the Board members should stand). The Scoutmaster can be invited to remain as an observer and may be called upon to clarify a point in question. The candidate is often asked to begin the Board by reciting the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

The interview process:

1. Ask him questions about Scout Basics:
 - a. Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan, Handshake, and Salute.
 - b. Parts of his uniform, badges he is wearing and how he earned them..
 - c. First Aid, especially: what is first aid, calling for help (911), and hurry cases.
 - d. Citizenship, rights and responsibilities of a citizen, respect for rights of others
 - e. Flag respect
 - f. Who is Baden Powell and history of Scouting
2. Ask him in-depth questions about his understanding and adherence to the Scout Oath and Scout Law: The Board should make sure that good standards have been met in all phases of the Scout's life. A good discussion about the Scout Oath and Scout Law

is in keeping with the purpose of the review, to make sure that the candidate recognizes and understands the value of Scouting in his home, unit, school and community.

- a. What is the hardest point of the Scout Law for him to live by - why?
 - b. What point of the Scout Law is the most important to him - why?
 - c. What does "Scouting Spirit" mean to him - why?
 - d. What do the various points of the Scout Law mean to him?
 - e. What values has Scouting taught him that he thinks others see in him - at home, in his unit, at school and/or in the community?
 - f. How does he live by the Scout Law and Oath?
 - g. What do the different points of the Scout Oath mean to him?
 - h. What does "duty to God" mean to him?
 - i. What does "duty to Country" mean to him?
 - j. How does he "help others at all times"?
 - k. How does he feel about wearing his uniform in public?
3. Ask him questions related to his Scouting experience:
- a. What leadership positions has he held?
 - b. What were his responsibilities in each position?
 - c. What leadership position does he hold now?
 - d. Ask him what he would do if a scout refused to comply and/or ignored a valid request he made in the performance of his duties.
 - e. Ask him about his troop's discipline policy and where he figures in it in his present leadership position.
 - f. Ask him how he might handle "hurry-up" first aid cases.
 - g. Ask him other questions related to merit badges he has earned (don't get too hung up on details since requirements are always changing. Best to find out what he learned while earning the badge).
 - h. Has he earned any merit badges that will help him in his choice of occupation?
 - i. What merit badge did he enjoy working on the most - why?
 - j. Conversely, which one did he enjoy working on the least - why?
 - k. Ask him what changes he might make in his unit.
 - l. If he earns his Eagle rank tonight, what does he intend to do to repay Scouting, his unit and its leaders?
 - m. Who has been the most influential person in his Scouting career?
 - n. Is there anything Scouting did not give him that he feels could be beneficial to the program to help other young men develop?
4. Ask him questions about his camping and outdoor experiences:
- a. What was his most enjoyable experience in Scouting?
 - b. Conversely, what was his least enjoyable experience?
 - c. How many summer camps has he attended and where?
 - d. What did he enjoy most about his summer camp experiences?
 - e. Has he attended any High Adventure camps (Mountainman, Philmont, or any Venture Outings) - where and what did he enjoy about them - describe the experiences.

- f. Ask him about his outdoor experiences in Scouting - campouts, 50 milers, etc.
 - g. Ask him what he remembers of the "Outdoor Code".
 - h. Ask him if he has staffed any summer camps - what did he learn from the experience and what did he enjoy about the experience.
5. Ask him about how he fits into our world and community:
- a. How does he keep himself informed and keep up with the news?
 - b. What is some current event in our world, nation, state, town and community?
 - c. What is going on in his school?
 - d. What else does he do in his life besides Scouting?
 - e. Does he hold other offices, honors, awards, and/or certifications?
 - f. How did he achieve them?
6. Ask him pertinent questions about his project. The Board should make sure that a good standard of performance has been met.
- a. What group benefited from his project?
 - b. How did he find out about the need?
 - c. Ask him to walk the Board through the project from beginning to end
 - i. The planning phase
 - ii. The organization of personnel
 - iii. Directing the project to completion
 - d. Did he have to contact any city, county or state officials for permits or to find out about ordinances, etc. - did the Citizenship in the Community Merit Badge help - how?
 - e. Once his project was approved, did he have to modify it - what did he learn from that experience?
 - f. Who did he get involved in helping him with his project - scouts, adults from his troop, members of the benefiting organization....?
 - g. Did he have any problems directing adults in their work - how did he feel about that?
 - h. In what ways does he feel he demonstrated leadership in this project?
 - i. Every scout feels his project was "special" - how is his project "special"?
 - j. Thirty years from now when someone else asks him what he did for his Eagle project, what will stand out in his mind - how will he answer that question?
7. Ask him about his plans for the future. The Board should attempt to determine the Scout's ideals and goals.
- a. Ask him about his plans for the future - college, Armed Forces, trade school,
 - b. How does he feel earning Eagle will help him in those plans?
 - c. When he turns 18, he assumes some new responsibilities - What are they? Sign up for the draft, register to vote and responsible for his actions in the eyes of the law.
 - d. What should an Eagle Scout be expected to do and what responsibilities does he think come with the rank?
 - e. What does he plan to do in scouting in the immediate and long range future?

THERE ARE NO "CANNED QUESTIONS". ALMOST ANY QUESTION IS FAIR ON A BOARD OF REVIEW. These are by no means the only questions that may be asked. They are merely examples to be used as a springboard to other questions and further discussion. Please do not assume that you are to ask only these questions and consider the interview complete. The interview should come to a natural conclusion as each board member runs out of questions.

There is not a set length of time for an Eagle Board of Review. However, 15 minutes is definitely too short and 2 hours is probably too long although sometimes a particular board of review will need some extra time. Each Scout is different. Some scouts have nice, crisp and concise answers on the tip of their tongue, others are nervous or shy and need extra time and creative questioning to get them to respond. This is what usually governs the length of the Board and adequate time should be taken so the Scout has a full opportunity to do his best.

After the review, the candidate and his unit leader leave the room while the board members discuss the acceptability of the candidate as an Eagle Scout. Because of the importance of the Eagle Scout Award, the decision of the Board of Review must be unanimous. If the candidate meets the requirements, he is asked to return and is informed that he will receive the Board's recommendation for the Eagle award. Immediately after the Board of Review and after the application has been appropriately signed, the application is turned into the Council Service Center. A photocopy of the application should be attached to an Advancement Form and submitted to the Council Service Center as well.

If the candidate is found unacceptable, he is asked to return and told the reasons for his failure to qualify during that session. A discussion should be held with him as to how he may meet the requirements within a given period. Should the applicant disagree with the decision, the appeal procedures should be explained to him (found in BSA's Advancement Guide publication). A follow-up letter must be sent to the Scout confirming the agreements reached on the action(s) necessary for the advancement. If the Scout chooses to appeal, provide the name and address of the person he is to contact.