

Mr. D's Merit Badge Review

as of 6/29/2016

BSA #	Merit Badge	#Rqmnts	Difficulty	Duration	Prereqs	Comments
15	AMERICAN BUSINESS	6	Hard	3 Months	none	Would go great with school economics course. What makes this "hard" is running a business for 3 months, otherwise it is easy to medium.
17	AMERICAN CULTURES	5	Medium	1-3 Months	none	Duration is mostly logistics - this one takes some planning.
16	AMERICAN HERITAGE	6+	Medium	2-3 Months	none	Would go great with an American History class. A fair bit of planning and reporting required.
121	AMERICAN LABOR	9	Medium	1 Month	none	Good companion to American Business MB, requires a bit of writing and research, but nothing too difficult.
18	ANIMAL SCIENCE	6	Easy	1 Month	none	Some planning and visits, but most information is in an encyclopedia or library book.
158	ANIMATION (NEW)	5	Easy	2 Weeks	none	Good introduction to the topic. There are a bunch of resources available on the web. The hardest part of this merit badge might be finding a counselor.
132	ARCHAEOLOGY	11	Hard	2-5 Months	none	Very involved. Need to do research, reports, presentations and visits. Jurassic Park and Indiana Jones movies won't count as requirements, but they will help make it more interesting.
19	ARCHERY	5	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Skill required! But fun to learn and do. Good summer camp badge.
20	ARCHITECTURE	5	Medium	1 Month	none	Lots of cool PC tools to help, involves interviews. Be sure to ask the architects why they almost always under estimate the cost! Pamphlet combined with Landscape Architecture in 2009.
21	ART	5	Easy	1 Week	none	Good first merit badge - they don't get any easier than this ... fun too.
22	ASTRONOMY	9+	Medium	1-2 Months	none	Fairly involved and requires planning. Good camp or troop badge. So is Pluto a planet?
23	ATHLETICS	6	Medium	1-3 Months	none	A scout is physically fit ... and this newly updated badge will prove it. Takes some planning and scheduled events.
127	AUTOMOTIVE MAINTENANCE	12+	Hard	2-5 Months	15-16ish	This will be invaluable later (when you need to get that thingy to stop making that noise, etc.), but not of much interest until around driving age. Revamped in 2009.
25	AVIATION	5	Medium	1-3 Months	none	Some of this is in you Webelos book! Revisions make this a solid "medium" and does require some planning and project work.
26	BACKPACKING	11+	Medium	3 Months	Some First Aid	Not difficult, but time consuming. Good start possible at summer camp.
27	BASKETRY	3	Easy	1-3 Days	none	As easy as they get!
29	BIRD STUDY	8	Medium	1-12 Weeks	none	Lots to study, but not too involved.
32	BUGLING	6	Medium	3 Months	none	Good one for brass players in band, but most can learn a bugle. 3 months of bugling required.
1	CAMPING (E)	10+	Medium	1-2 Years	none	Most requirements are simple, but to get in all the campouts takes time. Keep track of all campouts and around 1st Class or Star should have most done. Rewritten in 2006, although not much changed.
33	CANOEING	10+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	First Aid	First Aid will cover CPR and other first aid issues and 1st Class requires basic swimming skills. Otherwise, enjoy the ride!
34	CHEMISTRY	7+	Medium	2-8 Weeks	Science in School	A good one to do with High School Chemistry or Science class.
147	CHESS	6+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	A good introductory badge requiring you to learn the basics and some history of the game, but overall it never says you have to be good at playing the game <g>!
2	CITIZENSHIP - Community (E)	8+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	A good one to do with Jr. High or High School government class. Eagle Required.
3	CITIZENSHIP - Nation (E)	8+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	A good one to do with Jr. High or High School government class. Eagle Required.
4	CITIZENSHIP - World (E)	7+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Rewritten in 2006 and seems easier, but overall is still a "medium" rating. Again a good one to do with Jr. High or High School government class. Eagle Required.
133	CLIMBING	12+	Medium	1-12 Weeks	none	Some knots and climbing required. Good one for summer camp or high adventure campout.
35	COIN COLLECTING	10+	Medium	1-12 Weeks	none	Apparently the zealots were not content with 4 requirements, now there are 10. Helps to already have a collection started.
128	COLLECTIONS	9+	Medium	1-12 Weeks	none	Could do in conjunction with coin collecting ... or drier lent ... or even something useful! Fun for us packrats!
5	COMMUNICATION (E)	9	Easy	1-4 Weeks	none	Good summer camp or merit badge trail activity ... I'd tell you more, but that's your job!
137	COMPOSITE MATERIALS	6+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Seems like a good introduction to the topic without going nuts! A good current materials technology to learn about.
38	COOKING (E)	8+	Medium	1-8 Weeks	none	Need to do some planning and cooking, but fairly easy. This bumped up to medium because it doubled in reqs in '02. Updated in '16.
131	CRIME PREVENTION	9+	Medium	4-12 Weeks	none	Lot of trips/visits to plan, so this one will take some time.
39	CYCLING (E Opt)	9+	Medium	3-6 Months	none	Lots of bike rides required for this one. Plan to do it over a year or so. (Eagle Required - or swimming or hiking).
40	DENTISTRY	7+	Medium	2-6 Weeks	teeth	Easy-to-medium. My dentist would love this one, yours might too! Do your brush your tongue? Floss?
154	DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY	9	Medium	2-4 Weeks	none	Easy-to-medium. Much of this will be things the computer savvy teenager is already familiar with, but provides a good overall view of the medium. More of a challenge if limited exposure to computers, programs and apps.
60	DISABILITIES AWARENESS	7	Medium	3 Months	none	While the political correctness is abundant, this is a merit badge to be proud of. Possibly a life/perspective-changing effort. Recently rewritten.
41	DOG CARE	10	Medium	2 Months	Helps to have a dog	A good one to do if you have a dog or like animals. If you don't have a dog, you might be able to take care of someone else's for the badge.
42	DRAFTING	7+	Medium	1-8 Weeks	none	Shades of my old mechanical drawing class from high school! Rewritten in 2009 pretty much requiring access to a CAD system and drawing tools. Might as well do the architecture badge while you're at it.

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43	ELECTRICITY	11+	Medium	1-2 Weeks	none	Can get most of the information from books at the library. Rated medium because it requires two small projects and has over 10 requirements.
44	ELECTRONICS	6	Medium	1-2 Weeks	none	Goes well with electricity, project intensive and requires some math. Perfect if you are taking it in school anyway!
6	EMERGENCY PREP. (E Opt)	9+	Medium	1-6 Weeks	First Aid	This or Lifesaving is Eagle Required. This badge is a goes well right after First Aid and Pioneering.
45	ENERGY	8	Medium	3-6 Weeks	Jr/Sr High Science	This is best done in conjunction with a school science class and requires oral and written reports.
46	ENGINEERING	9+	Medium	1-2 Months	none	Another badge prepared by zealots! You'll know a lot about engineering and get to do some visits and hands-on projects. Learn why most engineers should be required to take the communications merit badge!
134	ENTREPRENEURSHIP	6+	Hard	3 Months	none	This badge was probably prepared by consultants (like a zealot only with no stake in the outcome)! Does require you to start a business, good joint badge with American Business.
7	ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE (E Opt)	6+	Medium	1-8 Weeks	none	Eagle Required (or Sustainability). Rewritten to be a bit less zealous, which is good. An important badge, of course! A good one to do at Summer Camp.
129	FAMILY LIFE (E)	7	Easy	3 Months	none	Earn brownie points at home! A simple enough merit badge, but it does require some discipline. 90 days is a must for requirement 3.
48	FARM MECHANICS	7+	Medium	1-6 Weeks	none	If you live on a farm this is a breeze! If not, your camp ranger or a local farmer would appreciate your projects on this one.
49	FINGERPRINTING	5	Easy	1 Week	none	You can probably pick up a finger printing kit from your local police department ... and convince network TV to do a CSI spin-off for your home town.
50	FIRE SAFETY	12+	Medium	3 Weeks	none	Pyros ... this is the one for you - please! Not hard, but lots of stuff to do, explain, and demonstrate and includes a visit to the fire department.
8	FIRST AID (E)	7+	Hard	1 - 4 Weeks	none	You must know Tenderfoot, 2nd and 1st Class first aid for this, but it's a good way to kill 4 birds with one stone (okay, wound 4 birds and then fix them up). Requires learning and demonstrating CPR. Good one to do before many other badges!
51	FISH AND WILDLIFE MGMT	8	Medium	1 - 4 Weeks	none	Good Summer Camp badge.
52	FISHING	9	Medium	1 - ? Weeks	none	Time to complete this is mostly dependent on how quickly you can catch two fish. Scout fishermen are exempt from "trustworthy" only in reporting the size of the fish that got away (simply because it's tradition!)
136	FLY FISHING	10	Medium	1 - ? Weeks	none	Why are there 10 requirements here and only 9 for Fishing you ask? Good question. If you do both together that would make sense, but this does have some special skills needed!
54	FORESTRY	7+	Hard	1 - 8 Weeks	none	This is a good Summer Camp badge. It requires several "collections"/identifications of plants, trees and shrubs.
151	GAME DESIGN	8	Medium	1-8 Weeks	none	Game design as in sports, board/card/role-play games, video games and etc. (aka broad definition). If you like games, this is a fun one and a good introduction to design issues, etc.
55	GARDENING	8	Medium	2 Months	none	Just need to watch your garden grow ... and a few other things! It just got promoted to "medium" due to a few new requirements, but is still a very straight-forward MB.
56	GENEALOGY	9	Medium	2-4 Weeks	none	The revision brings this badge down a notch from the over-zealous category. It is now more in-line with an introduction to the topic, albeit involved. It should be an interesting badge to do.
145	GEOCACHING	9	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	This looks like a pretty fun merit badge. Orienteering skills would help make this more meaningful but not required per se. Some geocaching equipment will be needed but your counselor or camp may have this available.
58	GEOLOGY	5+	Medium	1-16 Weeks	none	If you are a rock hound ... this is for you. Totally rewritten in 2006, it is now a more reasonable introduction. Still involved, but one you are more likely to tackle, rock-hound or not.
59	GOLF	8	Easy	1-4 Weeks	none	This is definitely a fun one, play golf and earn a badge!
122	GRAPHIC ARTS	7+	Medium	2-4 Weeks	none	Good intro to graphic arts and includes a field trip.
61	HIKING (E Opt)	7	Medium	1-4 Weeks	1st Class First Aid	Eagle alternate badge (swimming or cycling). This is a good one to do over a longer period of time based on troop hikes/events.
62	HOME REPAIRS	6+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Make the folks happy by becoming Mr. Fix-it. I'm for this one!!! Thrift vs. the money pit (a house)!
63	HORSEMANSHIP	11	Medium	2 Months	Helps to have a horse	A good one to do if you have a horse or like animals. You even get to be "in harmony" with your horse. You could be the next horse whisperer!
64	INDIAN LORE	4+	Easy	1 Week	none	Could go well with history. This is a nice introductory level approach to the topic. Kudos to the authors.
65	INSECT STUDY	11	Hard	1-3 Months	none	If your school biology class still requires an insect collection, this will be a natural, otherwise the bug collection could be a show stopper. Has definite summer camp possibilities!
144	INVENTING	9	Medium	2-12 Weeks	none	Looks like a good introductory type badge. Expect to design your own invention and build a prototype.
66	JOURNALISM	5	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	This is a nice introductory level approach and very useful for understanding what you read and hear in the news.
149	KAYAKING	8	Medium	1-4 Weeks	Swimmer	Similar to other boating badges, this requires knowledge of the equipment and demonstrating some skills, but is a lot of fun!
67	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	6	Easy	1 Week	none	This is fairly straightforward and a good intro to landscaping. Pamphlet combined with Architecture in 2009.
68	LAW	11	Medium	2 Weeks	none	I expected a high falutin set of requirements, but found these quite reasonable. A good intro.
69	LEATHERWORK	5	Easy	1 Week	none	Good camp badge in terms of having the materials you need, but can be done at home too.

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9	LIFESAIVING (E Opt)	15+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	Swimming MB, CPR	Good camp badge for pool, etc. This is Eagle required, but optional if Emergency Preparedness has been earned. A good one to do regardless. Updated in '16.
71	MAMMAL STUDY	5	Medium	1 Week	none	Has many options, some more time-consuming than others.
130	MEDICINE	10+	Hard	1 Month	none	Good introduction, but prepared by zealots. Lots of details in this one. Might be able to get into med school after this!
74	METALWORK	5+	Medium	1 Week	none	A good one to do in conjunction with metal shop. Access to proper tools is helpful. Should be able to forge the Tessaiga with these skills.
155	MINING IN SOCIETY	8+	Medium	1 Month	none	This seems like a good introduction to mining. Much of it is reading and internet searching. A few tasks might take some time to complete simply in finding tracking things/people down to talk to.
75	MODEL DESIGN AND BUILDING	6	Medium	2 Weeks	none	Project planning and model creation required, but a fun one.
76	MOTORBOATING	6+	Medium	1-6 Weeks	CPR	This is a good one to be an older scout, having 1st Class swimming requirements and CPR (via First Aid or other merit badges) - access to a motorboat is required.
126	MOVIEMAKING	4	Easy	1-4 Weeks	none	This one replaces cinematography because apparently it was easier to spell. This is a fairly easy one to do and getting even easier with many options for shooting a video.
77	MUSIC	4	Easy	1-6 Months	none	Don't let 6 months scare you off -- one option is being in a band or choir for that long. Good introduction to music.
78	NATURE	4+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Good summer camp or merit badge trail activity.
24	NUCLEAR SCIENCE	8	Medium	1-3 Months	none	Would go well with high school science. Not hard, but involves research and projects.
79	OCEANOGRAPHY	9	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Good in conjunction with high school biology, good selection of options to choose from.
80	ORIENTEERING	10+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Might be better to be 2nd Class or above, but not essential. You'll know map reading and compass use well after earning this one! Still as a male you may only ask for directions as a last resort!
81	PAINTING	8	Easy	1-2 Weeks	none	An easy one, but useful none-the-less. You do not have to paint the counselor's house!
10	PERSONAL FITNESS (E)	9+	Medium	3 Months	none	Eagle required. This'll get you in shape!
11	PERSONAL MANAGEMENT (E)	10+	Medium	3 Months	none	Eagle required. This is medium because it requires planning and discipline, but provides good life skills!
82	PETS	4+	Easy	4 Months	none	Easier than Dog and Horse MBs, but you need 4 months of pet care to earn it.
83	PHOTOGRAPHY	5	Easy	2-4 Weeks	none	Rewritten in '06 and '13 and updated in '16, this badge is now more of a general introduction to the subject. Should be an easy one to complete. Help to save the world from selfies - take this badge! ;)
84	PIONEERING	10	Medium	1 Week	none	Good scout weekend or summer camp badge. Helps to earn this one on your way to Emergency Preparedness and after First Aid (or rank-level First Aid). If you like camp gadgets, you like this!
85	PLANT SCIENCE	7+	Hard	1-3 Months	none	Good companion to gardening MB. Does require growing some plants, hence 1-3 Months. The 2006 rewrite move this into the difficult and "created by zealots" category. It's more like 15 requirements than 7.
86	PLUMBING	7	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Does require using a torch and solder, and some plumbing materials and equipment.
87	POTTERY	8	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	You might find a ceramic/pottery shop offering a course or your counselor providing resources to assist you in doing the projects.
153	PROGRAMMING	6	Easy	1-2 Weeks	none	I think the old computers merit badge is revamped by creating the digital technologies and programming merit badges. This is a very good and easy introduction to programming which most scouts will knock out easily.
89	PUBLIC HEALTH	8	Medium	1-2 Months	none	Requires a few visits, so you'll need some extra time for logistics. And remember to wash your hands!
90	PUBLIC SPEAKING	5	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Good to do in conjunction with a high school speech class, or possibly find a Toastmasters Club! A good skill to acquire. A close companion of the Communications MB.
91	PULP AND PAPER	8	Medium	2-6 Weeks	none	Requires some time to arrange a visit and carry-out your projects.
93	RADIO	9+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Almost zealot status, but fairly straight forward. Find a local ham (radio operator) if your counselor isn't one!
94	RAILROADING	8+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Good Merit Badge trail or local model RR club activity. Now has a spiffy new patch.
95	READING	4+	Easy	1-4 Weeks	none	Includes a good service project. The reading can likely be done in conjunction with school or sr. citizens home.
96	REPTILE AND AMPHIBIAN STUDY	10+	Medium	1 Month	none	Requires keep a reptile or amphibian for a month ... tell mom you have to for your badge. This does get a zealot award.
123	RIFLE SHOOTING	2+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Good Summer Camp badge. Options include rifle shooting, air rifle or black-powder rifle shooting.
146	ROBOTICS	7+	Medium	1-3 Months	none	Good introduction, but will require some expense and pretty involved. However, robots are pretty cool and there are kits to help. I don't believe you are allowed to fight them though ...
98	ROWING	11+	Medium	1 Week	CPR, Swim Test	Do this one after First Aid and 1st Class of swimming MB.
12	SAFETY	8	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Fairly easy with one project involved.
99	SALESMANSHIP	7	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	You are likely already a pro based on school and scout sales alone ... might as well earn the badge!
100	SCHOLARSHIP	5	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Good student or improving those grades, get credit with a MB. Does have some writing, interviewing and visits.
143	SCOUTING HERITAGE	8	Easy	1-8 Weeks	none	A good introspective introduction to scouting. Learn some history, dig up some Troop history, make a collection of scouting stuff, and talk to some old scouters and you have a merit badge. Might be able to do in conjunction with collecting.

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BSA #	Merit Badge	#Rqmnts	Difficulty	Duration	Prereqs	Comments
138	SCUBA DIVING	6+	Hard	2-4 Months	Swimming MB, CPR	This requires taking a full SCUBA training course (PADI's, or other, basic open water diver certification). Very fun, but time consuming and expensive. It is zealous (not an "intro to" badge), but you end up with an actual certification in the process.
101	SCULPTURE	3	Easy	1 Week	none	Play with clay, earn a badge! Probably have done this in art class at some time or another.
150	SEARCH AND RESCUE	10	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	While there aren't any pre-requisites, this MB follows nicely after first aid, emergency prep and/or life saving. It is more about the logistics of search and rescue and is a good introduction to it.
102	SHOTGUN SHOOTING	12+	Hard	1-8 Weeks	none	Might be good to do in conjunction with rifle shooting.
157	SIGNS, SIGNALS AND CODES (NEW)	10+	Medium	4-8 Weeks	none	This is a fairly involved merit badge with a lot of requirements. It covers Morse code and sign language among other things, so good to know, but could take some time!
103	SKATING	6+	Medium	1 Week	1st Class First Aid	Good basic intro on your choice of three types of skating, does require a demonstration of skill.
105	SMALL-BOAT SAILING	9+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	CPR	Good summer camp or park district badge. Take after canoeing and/or rowing badges.
135	SNOW SPORTS	15	Medium	1-4 Weeks	1st Class First Aid	A fun badge, but requires study and skill, so this may take awhile to complete. Was called Skiing MB which better describes it. Updated in 2016.
106	SOIL AND WATER CONS.	7+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Good Summer Camp or merit badge trail project, but can do any time.
107	SPACE EXPLORATION	8	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	You get to shoot a model rocket - gotta like that!
13	SPORTS	5	Medium	1 Month	1st Class First Aid	Requires participation in 2 sports. Should be a simple one for boys already doing recreational or school sports.
108	STAMP COLLECTING	8+	Medium	1 Month	none	If you like stamps and/or collecting, this is a good one. Think of stamps as trading or gaming cards!
109	SURVEYING	8	Medium	1 Week	none	Good basic intro to surveying. Your counselor, city manager/engineering dept., local college, etc. are all likely to have equipment and time to help you with this one.
153	SUSTAINABILITY (E Opt)	6+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Eagle Required (or Environmental Sciences). This is 15 tasks disguised as 6 requirements and involves mostly planning and research and very little "hands-on." Politically correct and full of good intentions (and easier), I'd still recommend ES for a more meaningful experience.
14	SWIMMING (E Opt)	10+	Medium	1 Week	CPR, 1st Class Swim Test	An eagle required badge (or cycling or hiking). I recommend this one, if physically able, even if you don't like to swim. It's an important life skill, even if just for safety.
110	TEXTILE	6	Easy	1 Week	none	Good introduction to textiles and the industry.
111	THEATER	6+	Medium	1 Week	none	Good one if you are involved in school Muse or Theater productions. This can be fun for campfires as well!
112	TRAFFIC SAFETY	5	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Requires a project related to traffic safety, but a good one to do before or during driver's training!
113	TRUCK TRANSPORTATION	10	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	The 2006 rewrite brings this down to level of a good introduction to the industry.
114	VETERINARY MEDICINE	6+	Medium	1 Month	none	Rewritten in 2006 and is a bit less intense now. A good badge for animal lovers.
115	WATERSPORTS (waterskiing)	7	Medium	1-4 Weeks	CPR	A fun badge, just made easier. Does require some demonstration of basic skills. Access to equipment is important - which your counselor usually has access to. Sometimes local park districts have programs that might assist with many or all requirements.
116	WEATHER	10	Medium	1 Week	none	While there are several requirements, the fall in the easy category. Does require a 5 minute talk.
148	WELDING	7+	Medium	1-2 Months	none	A good introduction into many of the basic skills of welding. Will require some access to equipment, but overall seems pretty straightforward.
125	WHITEWATER	14	Hard	1-4 Weeks	CPR, Canoeing	This one is hard by virtue of the number of requirements and pre-requisites. Designed by zealots, but at least it was mostly for safety reasons.
117	WILDERNESS SURVIVAL	12	Medium	1-4 Weeks	1st Class First Aid	Fun, useful, but fairly involved. A good summer camp badge, but can be done in conjunction with campouts.
118	WOOD CARVING	7	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Fun and only rated "medium" because two carvings are required ... watch your fingers!
119	WOODWORK	7+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Requires a visit and a project or two, but if you like to make things out of wood ... this is for you.
E = 12 Eagle Required Merit Badges						
E Opt. = Eagle Required Merit Badge with an option (Emerg. Prep. or Lifesaving; Swimming, Hiking or Cycling; Environ. Science or Sustainability)						
Red = new since last posted						
Tips: you might be able to do some interviews over the internet or via e-mail.						
notes: 10 or more requirements generally means a badge is a more recent badge and/or the authors were, shall we say, a tad bit over-zealous.						
+ means that there are multi-part requirements, sometimes so many you wonder why they just didn't number them.						
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Not all revised MB have been identified although all changes have been reviewed. Always use the latest requirements.						