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Summertime and Scouting go together like ice cream and apple pie. BSA skills lead the way for terrific warm-weather adventures in town and on the trail.

Summer also brings patriotic holidays with parades and picnics honoring our country. Take this month's Be Prepared Flag Quiz, then show your pride in America as the nation's banner passes by.



## ***PREDICTING WEATHER THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY***

Will it be sunny for your family barbeque? Should a Scout softball game or soccer match be postponed because of the threat of rain?

A hundred years ago, the first edition of the *Boy Scout Handbook* offered weather prediction guidelines such as these:

*When the grass is dry at night  
Look for rain before the light.*

*When the grass is dry at morning light  
Look for rain before the night.*

These rhymes held some truth--moisture wrung out of the air as dew can't fall as rain--but today's Scouts rely on news reports and the Internet for accurate predictions of conditions for the days ahead.

Of course, that's not possible when backcountry adventures take you far from computers, televisions, and radios. Then what you see in the sky can help you decide whether to keep going with your activities or dive into your tent just ahead of a rainstorm.

The shapes of clouds are good indicators of weather to come. For example, thin and wispy *cirrus clouds* indicate stable weather. So do *cumulus clouds* that look like big fluffy cotton balls. Keep an eye on them, though. Afternoon heat can swell them into *cumulonimbus* thunderheads bearing lightning, hail, and heavy rain.

Check out the *BSA Fieldbook* for a modern-day discussion of clouds and many ways to predict the weather. Cub Scouts earning the Weather Belt Loop and Pin can also learn basic weather-watching skills.

The current edition of the *Boy Scout Handbook* explains some of the old weather signs this way:

### ***Signs of Fair Weather***

Expect pleasant weather when you see some of these signs:

- "Red sky at night, sailor's delight." The dust particles in the dry air of tomorrow's weather produce a glowing red sunset.
- "Swallows flying way up high mean there's no rain in the sky." Swallows are birds that catch and eat flying insects. In the high air pressure that comes with fair weather, insects may be carried aloft by air currents.
- "If smoke goes high, no rain comes by." Campfire smoke rises straight up when there is no wind. Still air is generally stable and won't move moisture into an area.

### ***Signs of Stormy Weather***

The following signs suggest bad weather is on the way:

- "Red sky at morning, sailor take warning." Dry, dusty air is moving away from you toward the east. Clouds and moist air may be coming in from the west.
- "Swallows flying near the ground mean a storm will come around." The low air pressure that pulls in stormy weather causes insects to fly close to the ground on heavy, moist wings. Swallows feeding on them will follow.
- "If smoke hangs low, watch out for a blow." Low air pressure can prevent campfire smoke from rising very high.

Whether it's a sporting event, a picnic, or a hike, take along an extra layer of clothing in case the weather doesn't turn out as predicted.

The Cub Scout Nylon Jacket and Boy Scout Jac-Shirt offer comfort on cool summer evenings.

For more information on predicting weather, consult Chapter 30, "Monitoring Weather," of the *BSA Fieldbook, Fourth Edition*.



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## ***PLANNING A DAY HIKE***

Hiking with friends and family is always a summer highlight. Prepare for every hike by writing down a trip plan that answers six easy questions--*Where, When, Who, Why, What, and How.*

- ***WHERE*** are you going?  
Think about your destination and the route to reach it.
- ***WHEN*** will you return?  
Make a reasonable prediction of when you will be back, and then be sure to return on time. Adults who know your plans can take steps to come to your aid if you are very long overdue.
- ***WHO*** is going with you?  
Adventures are always enjoyable when shared with others. Safer, too.
- ***WHY*** are you going?  
Planning to see new country, practice map and compass skills, or reach a distant hilltop? Even if the purpose of a hike is simply to walk for the sheer joy of walking, knowing why you are going will help you be fully prepared.
- ***WHAT*** are you taking?  
The Scout Basic Essentials should go on every Scout outing, including hikes. You can find a discussion of the essentials in the *Boy Scout Handbook* and the *Fieldbook*.

### **The Scout Basic Essentials**

- Pocketknife
- First aid kit
- Extra clothing
- Rain gear
- Water bottle
- Flashlight
- Trail food
- Matches and fire starters
- Sun protection

\_\_\_ Map and compass

- **HOW** will you respect the land?  
The BSA has adopted Leave No Trace as an effective way to care for the landscapes where Scouting activities take place.

### ***The Principles of Leave No Trace***

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors



Share your written plan with Scout leaders or other responsible adults. They might have suggestions for making your hike even more enjoyable. They will also be able to support you before, during, and after your hike.

For more information on hiking, consult Chapter 4, "Planning a Trek," of the *BSA Fieldbook, Fourth Edition*.

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## **ASSEMBLING A FIRST AID KIT**

With first aid supplies in your day pack you can treat scratches, blisters, and other minor injuries of summer. You'll also be ready to lend a hand in more serious emergencies.

Pre-made kits from the BSA are ideal for individual use and for supplying a family or Scout unit with the medical supplies they might need.



You can also assemble a first aid kit of your own. Put like items into small, re-sealable plastic bags, then stow all the bags in a larger bag or a plastic container with a secure lid.

The Boy Scout Handbook recommends that personal first aid kits include:

___ Adhesive bandages	6
___ Sterile gauze pads, 4-by-4-inch	2
___ Adhesive tape	1 small roll
___ Moleskin, 3-by-6-inch	1
___ Soap or alcohol-based hand sanitizing gel	1 small bar or travel-sized bottle
___ Antibiotic ointment (Bacitracin)	1 small tube
___ Scissors	1 pair
___ Tweezers	1 pair
___ Disposable non-latex gloves*	1 pair
___ Mouth-barrier device for rescue breathing	1
___ Pencil and paper	1

\* Use medical gloves from your first aid kit to protect yourself whenever first aid emergencies involve blood or other body fluids.

For more information about first aid, consult the *Boy Scout Handbook*.

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## UNITED STATES FLAG QUIZ

Honoring the flag shows respect for the symbol of our nation. Test your knowledge with the following quiz. For more on flag etiquette, see the Boy Scout Handbook or go online and check out the United States Flag Code.

- Question:** What should I do when an American flag goes by in a parade?  
**Answer:** When in uniform, use the Scout salute. Otherwise, place your right hand over your heart.
- Question:** Is flag burning ever allowed?  
**Answer:** A national flag that is worn beyond repair may be burned in a fire. The ceremony should be

conducted with dignity and respect, and the flag burned completely to ashes.

3. **Question:** Can the flag be flown outside at night?

**Answer:** While it is customary to fly the flag between sunrise and sunset, it can be displayed at night if it is properly lit.

4. **Question:** Can I wear an American flag as a clothing item?

**Answer:** Not the flag itself. Flag designs can be including in clothing patterns.

5. **Question:** In 1910 when the Boy Scouts of America was founded, how many stars were on the American Flag?

**Answer:** Forty-six. (New Mexico, Arizona, Alaska, and Hawaii were not yet states.)

6. **Question:** How do you fold the flag into that triangle shape?

**Answer:** According to the Boy Scout Handbook, "Two people holding the flag at waist-level between them fold the flag in half lengthwise and then again in half lengthwise, keeping the blue field on the outside. While one person holds the flag by the blue field, the other makes a triangular fold in the opposite end. Continue folding the flag in triangles until only the blue field is visible."

7. **Question:** A flag over a street should be hung with the blue field in which direction?

**Answer:** The blue field is toward the east over a north-south street, or toward the north above an east-west street.

8. **Question:** When should the flag fly at half staff?

**Answer:** A flag at half-staff shows sorrow following a national tragedy or the death of a president or other national or state figure, and to honor those who have sacrificed their lives for their country.

9. **Question:** Which way is a flag displayed on a wall?

**Answer:** The blue field goes to the flag's own right. (To your left as you look at it.)

10. **Question:** Where should a flag on a staff placed on a stage?

**Answer:** To the flag's own right. (On the left side of the stage as the audience sees it.) Any other flags on staffs are placed on the right side of the stage, as viewed by the audience.

11. **Bonus Question:** Why do the flag patches sewn on the right sleeves of BSA uniform shirts appear to be flying in the opposite direction as those sewn on the right sleeves of many U.S. military uniforms?

**Answer:** Following the guidelines of the United States Flag Code, the flag patch on a Scout uniform shirt sleeve is placed with the blue field to the flag's own right. Flag patches on military uniforms fall under Department of the Army regulations stating that "When worn on the right sleeve, it is considered proper to reverse the design so that the union is at the observer's right to suggest that the flag is flying in the breeze as the wearer moves forward." In other words, the blue field is to the flag's own left.

For more information about flags, see the *Your Flag* book, No. 33188A.

