

# Special Interest Badges

Archery  
Orienteering  
Wilderness Experience  
World Scouting  
Languages  
Tidy Towns

Mountain Biking  
Patrol Camp Leadership  
Sailing Adventure

Personal Fitness  
Painting & Art  
Community Radio  
World Cultures  
Navigation

Music  
Dancing  
Good Turn  
Gardening  
Photography  
Nature Study  
Recycling  
Swimming  
Cooking  
Farming  
Crafts  
Soccer

Any subject or interest you like can become a Special Interest Badge



You design your own badge for what you are interested in

# Any subject or interest can be used to develop a Special Interest Badge

## There are five Special Interest Badge areas

### Skills

This can be any new personal skill e.g. technical, mechanical, music, drama, arts & crafts

### Adventure

This should be an adventure journey that includes something completely new i.e. a new location, new method of travel, etc

### Physical

This can include any physical pursuit, activity or sport

### Community

Being involved in your community. This could be a service type project and you should create a plan that outlines what you will do and who will benefit.

### Environment

This can be any project that improves the environment in any way.



Adventure



Physical



Community



Skills



Environment



Special Interest Badges 'Bar'

- Whatever subject or interest you pick must be linked to one of the Special Interest Badge areas.
- A Scout may achieve recognition for the same Special Interest Badge Area up to three times in any one Section. You are awarded the badge the first time you do a Special Interest Badge and a 'bar' for each of the others in this Special Interest Badge area.
- You have to chance to do 15 badges in each Section
- The Scout keeps a badge until it is replaced by an equivalent in the next Section.
- Special Interest badges have different colour combinations for each Section.



# Choosing a subject or interest

Below are some suggested subjects that have been aligned with the Special Interest Badge areas. There are many more ideas that can be included. No matter what subject or interest you choose it will fall into one of the areas, sometimes it will fall into two or even three areas.

Community Involvement	Personal Skill	Physical Recreation	Adventure Journey	Environment
Good Turn / Service	Photography	Archery	Cycling Expedition	Ethical living
World Cultures & Ways of Living	Entertaining	Orienteering	Wilderness Experience	Eco-energy
World Scouting	Film/video production	Athletics	Horseback Expedition	Organic Gardening
Guide / Interpreter	Home repairs	Ball Games	Sailing Adventure	Weather Watch
Heritage	Information technology	Climbing Wall	Canoe Adventure	Animal welfare
Health Awareness	Music & Dance	Gymnastics	Bivvy Adventure	Conservation
Representation	Painting / Art	Water Safety	Camp Leadership	Nature Study
Tidy Towns	Crafts / Sculptor	Personal Fitness	Back Packing	Carbon footprint
Disability Awareness	Cooking	Swimming	Journey in a Strange Land	Environmental Audit
Active Citizenship	Motors	Martial Arts	Mountain Journey	Recycling
Faith & Beliefs	Navigator	Triathlon	Extended Hiking Expedition	Food Production
Community Radio	Observer / Tracker	Caving	Exploring	Naturalist
Current Affairs	Leadership / Mentoring	Snorkeling / SCUBA	Camping	Sustainable Building
Campaigning	Public Speaking	Mountain Biking	Nature Study Expedition	River Care
Languages	Archeology	Body Surfing	Photography Safari	Local Beautification
Surveys	Creative Writing	Canoeing	Treasure Quest	Tidy Towns
Interculturalism	Farming	Rock Climbing	Overseas Project	Nature Reserve

# Creating your Special Interest Badge



**Step 1** - Pick your subject or interest

**Step 2** - Decide what Special Interest Area your subject or interest falls into.

**Step 3** - Design your challenge in consultation with your Scouter or Mentor

**Step 4** - Complete the challenge in agreed time

**Step 5** - Wear the badge with pride

## The Challenge

When designing your badge it should :-

- Challenge you to learn new skills or develop existing ones
- Help to increase your knowledge of the particular area
- Contain a practical element which will benefit others.

A template is provided on the next page to allow you to set out your plan, which Personal Challenges you can undertake during the Special Interest Badge, and to help you look back at what you have achieved.

You can use another method to document your Special Interest Badge e.g. poster, diary, email, social networking website etc.

Check out how some Scouts have designed their Special Interest Badge later on in this document.

Which Special Interest Area are you going to work on?

What is your project? Describe what you want to do and the steps to get there

What do you hope to achieve doing this badge? How will you know you are finished?

Which Personal Challenges will this help you with?

At the end: How did your plan go? What did you learn from it?

## Special Interest Badge Design template



Planned Start Date:

Planned Finish Date:

Signed (youth member):

Signed (Mentor):



## Sample Projects: Active citizenship

*Alice is a 16 year old Venture Scout. She is concerned about the town's litter, particularly on the lane to her house where people dump illegally in the river. An independent candidate for the upcoming local elections is promising to tackle these issues. Alice is considering getting involved in the candidate's campaign.*

The project that Alice has agreed is:

- Alice will find out more about the illegal dumping and why people feel compelled to dump in the river. Alice will explore the general environmental issues so she will be knowledgeable enough to join the campaign.
- Alice will learn about canvassing skills, body language, vote tallying in count centre, map reading etc.
- Alice will join the local candidate's campaign to highlight local environmental issues and thus become an active citizen.



## Sample Projects: Archery

*Niamh is a 16 year old Venture Scout. Her father is in the local archery club and she has gone with him a number of times and has learnt how to shoot an arrow. After seeing the Olympic Games she wants to try entering a competition to show how good she is.*

The project that Niamh has agreed is:

- Talk to the local Archery Club about competitions you can join and ask for advice as to what you should do.
- Get some expert training for your technique so that it will enhance your shooting.
- Enter an Irish Amateur Archery Association (IAAA) competition and do your best.





## Sample Projects: Information Technology

*Emily is a newly-elected national Venture Scout Representative. She is thinking of new ways to let Venture Scouts around the country know about what is happening. She would like to produce a web-based magazine.*

The project that Emily has agreed is:

- Conduct a needs assessment survey of the Venture Scouts Emily represents to ascertain if there is demand of a web-based magazine.
- Undertake computer training on designing software and uploading to the internet.
- Collect articles, photographs and author items on subjects of interest to Venture Scouts.
- Finish and upload the magazine, taking feedback on how to improve for the next issue.



## Sample Projects: Conservation

*James is a 16 year old Venture Scout in a Sea Scout Group. He has been on a number of overnight sailing trips where water had to be rationed and the crew had to be conscious of things they used and to conserve. He wants to know if his Team can run a simulated activity like this on land.*

The project, agreed by James's Team is:

- Go on a camp to see how much things are taken for granted and do a survey of how much of each thing they use.
- Run a second camp where they put what they find into action and ration out the things they took for granted like water etc...
- Go to the Cub Scout meeting to tell them about what they learnt and what it was like and how similar it could be to living in a developing country.





## Sample Projects: Faith & Beliefs

*Niall is a 15 year old Venture Scout. He is fascinated with Native Americans and the use of totems. He wants to learn more about the importance of spirits in Native American culture.*

The project that Niall has agreed with his Team is:

- Do a web search about the different totems and their meaning. Find out why each person had a totem.
- Find out about the different spiritual beliefs of the Native Americans and the importance of nature to them.
- Share your findings with your Team and run a camp on a Native American theme.



## Sample Projects: Good Turn / Service

*Alan is a 15 year old Venture Scout. He attends many sporting events and would like to get even closer to the action. He is thinking of joining the first aid teams at these events. He thinks it will also be good experience for him as he would like to study medicine after school.*

The project that Alan has agreed is:

- Attend a first aid course run by Order of Malta, St. Johns Ambulance, Red Cross etc.
- Share the knowledge with the other Venture Scouts in a 2 hour introduction to first aid.
- Attend a number of sporting events as a first-aider and keep a log of the experience.





## Sample Projects: Nature Study

*Ruth is a 15 year old Venture Scout. She recently saw a television programme highlighting endangered animals in Ireland. She is concerned that we will lose so many beautiful creatures. Ruth would like to raise awareness about endangered animals in Ireland and contribute to preventing their extinction.*

- Ruth will pick 2 animals, the red squirrel and the corncrake, and explore the reasons why these animals are endangered in Ireland.
- Ruth will learn basic tracking skills to try to view these animals in the wild.
- Ruth wants to write letters to national newspapers and she wants to get a slot on local radio's student hour to highlight the issue.



## Sample Projects: Orienteering

*Peter has been hiking for years as a Scout. He knows his map and compass skills and is a good navigator. Peter is also very competitive and takes part in a number of sports in his spare time. Recently, he has been involved in helping out at a county orienteering event and after talking to one of the organisers- orienteering is to be his new sport!*

The project that Peter has agreed is:

- Peter is to join a local orienteering club and compete in an orienteering competition.
- Peter is to devise and set up an exercise routine / fitness plan to improve his competitive edge and general fitness levels.
- Peter is to take part in a number of different types of orienteering events - Mountain bike orienteering, night orienteering event, marker and time trials events etc. and fully discovery the sport of orienteering.
- Peter is to assist the County Programme Team in course setting at a County orienteering event.





## Sample Projects: Photography

*Kevin is interested in wildlife photography. He recently came across a programme for young people with an interest in wildlife photography Kevin needs to build up his experience before he applies to the programme.*

The project that Kevin has agreed is:

- Kevin has attended beginner and intermediate photography courses. He will attend an advanced course to enhance his skills to the level needed for the programme.
- Kevin will take photos of wildlife in his local area and present his photography in an exhibition in the local library.
- Find out about the methods of wildlife photography in the field and coping with the challenges posed by working in developing countries.
- Kevin will take a wide variety of photographs to be included in his portfolio to apply for the programme and then apply for the programme. If he is successful in the other aspects of this Special Interest Badge he will have a very good chance of getting on the programme.



## Sample Projects: Navigator

*Jacob is a Venture Scout in a Sea Scout Group. He is well used to sailing but has never plotted a course at sea. He really needs to know how to use a marine compass and navigational charts.*

The project that Jacob has agreed is:

- Talk to your Scouter, or an agreed mentor, about going on a navigational course.
- Go out on the water with an experienced sailor to see how he plots a course and is able to follow it.
- With the help of your Scouter or agreed mentor plot out a course in restricted water and follow the course.





## Sample Projects: Wilderness Experience

*Sean has been into hillwalking for some time. His walking adventures have generally been in low lying mountain areas and he now wants to explore further afield. Backwoods and survival are his next favourite things about Scouting. After discussion with his Scouter he has decided that he needs to be in real wilderness areas. His experience to date has been in 'safe' locations with help near at hand.*

The project that Sean has agreed is:

- Sean is to take part in a Mountain Adventure Challenge (MPC/ Sionnach) in a mountain range away from his local area.
- Sean is to make a survival kit containing items that will be of real value to him if he finds himself in difficulty.
- Sean is to make a personal first aid kit and learn how to deal with first aid situations.
- Sean is to make a bivvy sheet and camp overnight with another Venture Scout(s) in a wilderness area close to a stream and forest.
- Sean is to create a photo album of his wilderness experiences showing wild places, dramatic sunsets and cloud formations, wild food, fauna and wildlife.



## Sample Projects: World Cultures & Ways of Living

*Matt has just joined Venture Scouts. He recently spent his holidays with his family in Kenya. He spent so much time on wildlife safari that he never really got to experience the culture of the many tribes in Kenya. He would like to make up for this now.*

The project that Mark has agreed is:

- Pick 3 of the tribal cultures present in Kenya (Masai, Kikuyu and Luo are three of the biggest and most well-known) and learn about the unique aspects of their culture.
- Try living like the Masai for a weekend camp. You will have to build huts from cattle dung (or mud) and straw, drink only hot milk (you can try putting cow's blood in it if you like!) and eat only lamb or beef. The campfire must include Masai dancing, which Matt can teach the others.
- The remote tribes of Kenya are among the poorest people in the world. This is despite Kenya being relatively prosperous and possessing considerable economic potential. Matt will find out why these tribes remain poor and if he can do anything about it.

