

Stem for Badges: Signs Signals and Codes

Thank you for signing up for my merit badge. Requirements 7 and 10 are time consuming. We ran short on time with this badge last year. In order to be able to dedicate more time to the funner (yeah, it's a word...) requirements, some work will need to be done ahead of November 2nd. Since time may be limited, you need to make sure you have the requirements listed below completed BEFORE class. There may not be enough time for you to do them during class, which may result in your merit badge not being fully completed by the end of class.

For the Morse code, ASL, braille and semaphore requirements, you DO NOT need to become proficient at any level with these. Don't panic!! With the links provided, you should be able to complete the requirements. We will go into more depth during class. These methods of communication require lots of time and practice to become good at them. That is beyond the scope of this merit badge. The intent of this merit badge is to have you become familiar with the concepts.

Merit badge overview:

<https://www.scouting.org/merit-badges/signs-signals-and-codes/>

Merit badge booklet:

[https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/Merit Badge ReqandRes/SignsSignals and Codes.pdf](https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/Merit%20Badge%20ReqandRes/SignsSignals%20and%20Codes.pdf)

There are links to resources at the end of this booklet, but many are outdated or no longer active. The owner of the websites may have changed, click with caution. I provided some known good links with the requirements below.

Worksheet (optional):

<http://usscouts.org/mb/worksheets/Signs-Signals-and-Codes.pdf>

This is not required, but you are welcome to use it for note taking.

You only need to do the part of the requirement that I list before the class. If a requirement is not listed below, we will do it as a group. Be prepared to take part in group discussions.

Requirement 3a: Look over Morse code. On a piece of paper, write out your name in Morse code. Then write out a 6-10 word message in Morse code. DO NOT write out your name (in letters) or your decoded message on the paper. We will be trading papers and decoding each other's messages. Don't give it away for them. Also, leave room for them to write down the message that they decoded.

Here is a Morse code cheatsheet: <https://www.codebug.org.uk/learn/step/540/morse-code-alphabet/>

Requirement 3b: This is probably the toughest requirement. Try your best... Look over ASL. Again, just be familiar with it. Practice signing your name and a 6-10 word message (keep it simple). We will be doing this together in class. Go slowly with your message, none of us are experts (including me).

The web links in the booklet are not great. The Signing Savvy site requires you to create an account in order to view most of the content. I do not recommend doing this.

Here is a good link for words and phrases: <https://www.startasl.com/asl-dictionary/>

This is a good site of individual words. Hint: You can right-click on a word and select open in a new tab. Do this for all the words in your sentence to quickly see all the videos.

<https://www.handspeak.com/>

The ASL alphabet: <https://deafchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/ASL-Alphabet-ASDC.pdf>

Requirement 4: Look over semaphore. Practice sending your name and a message. We will use flags in class, but for now you can just hold your arms out in the various positions to get the hang of it.

https://www.usmcmuseum.com/uploads/6/0/3/6/60364049/nmmc_semaphore_flag_booklet_final_1.pdf

Requirement 5: Look over braille. On a piece of paper spell out your name and write a 6-10 word message in braille. Draw the dots on your paper in pencil, do not poke holes or create bumps. Also do not write your decoded message or name on the paper since we will be decoding each other's messages. You can do this on the same paper as your Morse code, just leave room for someone to decode it.

https://media.rnib.org.uk/documents/ks1_braille_alphabet.pdf

Requirement 7: We will do this as a group.... but there's a catch... The area around Owens College is a open grass field. There are no sticks, rocks, etc to make trail markers. Please gather and bring enough supplies to make 2-3 trail markers. These can be sticks and rocks, or something you would find in nature along a trail. You want something that stands out. I would limit the rocks to 2 for stacking since you will have to carry them. Keep in mind that you will be placing these in grass, so whatever you use will need to be large enough to see from a short distance. About 12-18" for sticks, and about baseball-softball sized for rocks. Bring a bag to help you carry them out to the field.

https://www.sandiegofamily.com/images/article-organizer/yr-2022/05_May_22/Trail_Signs.png

Requirement 8: Select 3 different activities (not all sports) and be prepared to demonstrate 5 signals for each.

Requirement 9: Come up with a symbol of your own, draw it big on a full size piece of paper so that others can see it. Be creative, and put some thought into this. Make it a fun symbol.

Requirement 10: Make up your own secret code. It doesn't have to be letters and numbers. You can use symbols. Be creative and come up with something strange, just as long as someone is able to decode it.

Check out this page for some unusual ideas: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pigpen_cipher

This site also has tons of examples: <https://deciphersxyz.wordpress.com/ciphers/>

Write a 25 word message using this code on a piece of paper. On the same sheet (or another one), write your code key. Do not write the decoded message on the paper. We will be (hopefully) decoding each other's messages.

If there is time, I will have some other messages for you to decode.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at tom@theleingangs.com (Please have a parent/guardian email me, per Scouting rules)

See you on November 2nd!

Tom Leingang

12 11 2 3 25 11 4 24 16 25 18 23 21 6 24 3 25 24 5 9 19 4 18 23 11