



### American Heritage Merit Badge Workbook

Date Started \_\_\_\_\_

Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_

#### Scout Information

Scout Name \_\_\_\_\_ Troop # \_\_\_\_\_

Scoutmaster's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Scout Master Phone \_\_\_\_\_

#### Instructor Information

Instructor Name \_\_\_\_\_

#### Counselor Information

Merit Badge Counselor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Appointment to Meet with Counselor Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

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Purpose of Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Appointment to Meet with Counselor Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of Meeting \_\_\_\_\_



Dear Scout,

Welcome to Constitution Week Scout Night.

We have prepared this Merit Badge Workbook to help you understand and fulfill the requirements for the American Heritage Merit Badge. Remember that this workbook is just a tool to help you earn the merit badge. There will be things that you will write in this workbook that will satisfy a requirement of the merit badge. However, it's very important to understand that merely attending and participating in this class does not fulfill the requirements where you must discuss, tell, show, or demonstrate your knowledge about citizenship to your personal merit badge counselor, the only person that can sign your blue card.

Your Merit Badge Instructor tonight is very well qualified to teach the subject material and to answer any questions that you have with regard to the information covered in class. But it is very important that you understand that your Instructor is NOT your Merit Badge Counselor for this merit badge. You will need to seek out a merit badge counselor with the help of your Scoutmaster. You probably already know the person that will be your approved counselor.

In order to earn the American Heritage Merit Badge, you must actually and personally complete each requirement to the satisfaction of your Merit Badge Counselor.

Your job tonight is to pay attention to the discussion of the material, to carefully fill in the blanks, make notes, participate in the discussion, and to learn the concepts presented so that you can take your completed study guide home with you better prepared to discuss, explain, and demonstrate your knowledge of what it means to be a good citizen in your nation with your Merit Badge Counselor.

This merit badge is one of the required merit badges to earn your Eagle Rank Award. This is because it is very important to understand the concepts that you will learn by earning this merit badge.

If you apply yourself over the next couple months, not only will you be able to pass off all the requirements for the merit badge, but you'll also learn a great deal about America and how you can make contributions to make it a better place for everyone.

OK, if you are ready, let's begin this journey to understanding American Heritage.

Workbook prepared by:

Dwayne Farnsworth  
Constitution Week USA



# Requirements

Done

- 1. Read the Declaration of Independence. Pay close attention to the section that begins with “We hold these truths to be self-evident” and ends with “to provide new Guards for their future security. “ Rewrite that section in your own words, making it as easy to understand as possible. Then, share your writing with your merit badge counselor and discuss the importance of the Declaration to all Americans.
  
- 2. Do TWO of the following:
  - a) Select two individuals from American history, one a political leader (a president, senator, etc.) and the other a private citizen (a writer, religious leader, etc.). Find out about each person’s accomplishments and compare the contributions each has made to America’s heritage.
  - b) With your counselor’s approval, choose an organization that has promoted some type of positive change in American society. Find out why the organization believed this change was necessary and how it helped to accomplish the change. Discuss how this organization is related to events or situations from America’s past.
  - c) With your counselor’s approval, interview two veterans of the U.S. military. Find out what their experiences were like. Ask the veterans what they believe they accomplished.
  - d) With your counselor’s approval, interview three people in your community of different ages and occupations. Ask these people what America means to them, what they think is special about this country, and what American traditions they feel are important to preserve.
  
- 3. Do each of the following:
  - a) Select a topic that is currently in the news. Describe to your counselor what is happening. Explain how today’s events are related to or affected by the events and values of America’s past.
  - b) For each of the following, describe its adoption, tell about any changes since its adoption, and explain how each one continues to influence Americans today: the flag, the Pledge of Allegiance, the seal, the motto, and the national anthem.
  - c) Research your family’s history. Find out how various events and situations in American history affected your family. Share what you find with your counselor. Tell why your family came to America.
  
- 4. Do TWO of the following:
  - a) Explain what is meant by the National Register of Historic Places. Describe how a property becomes eligible for listing. Make a map of your local area, marking the points of historical interest. Tell about any National Register properties in your area. Share the map with your counselor, and describe the historical points you have indicated.
  - b) Research an event of historical importance that took place in or near your area. If possible, visit the place. Tell your counselor about the event and how it affected local history. Describe how the area looked then and what it now looks like.
  - c) Find out when, why, and how your town or neighborhood started, and what ethnic, national, or racial groups played a part. Find out how the area has changed over the past 50 years and try to explain why.
  - d) Take an active part in a program about an event or person in American history. Report to your counselor about the program, the part you took, and the subject.
  - e) Visit a historic trail or walk in your area. After your visit, share with your counselor what you have learned. Discuss the importance of this location and explain why you think it might qualify for National Register listing.



# Requirements

Done

- 5. Do ONE of the following:
  - a) Watch two motion pictures (with the approval and permission of your counselor and parent) that are set in some period of American history. Describe to your counselor how accurate each film is with regard to the historical events depicted and also with regard to the way the characters are portrayed.
  - b) Read a biography (with your counselor's approval) of someone who has made a contribution to America's heritage. Tell some things you admire about this individual and some things you do not admire. Explain why you think this person has made a positive or a negative contribution to America's heritage.
  - c) Listen to recordings of popular songs from various periods of American history. Share five of these songs with your counselor, and describe how each song reflects the way people felt about the period in which it was popular. If a recording is not available, have a copy of the lyrics.
  
- 6. Discuss with your counselor the career opportunities in American heritage. Pick one that interests you and explain how to prepare for this career. Discuss what education and training are required for this care.



## Requirement 1

READ the Declaration of Independence. Pay close attention to the section that begins with “We hold these truths to be self-evident” and ends with “to provide new Guards for their future security.” Rewrite that section in your own words, making it as easy to understand as possible.

# *The Declaration of Independence*

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America

When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

**We hold these \_\_\_\_\_ to be \_\_\_\_\_, that all men are \_\_\_\_\_ equal, that they are endowed by their \_\_\_\_\_ with certain unalienable \_\_\_\_\_, that among these are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.**

Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

**Key Words:** Truths Self-Evident Created Creator Rights Life Liberty



# *The Declaration of Independence*

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected, whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefit of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies



# *The Declaration of Independence*

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & Perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these united Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States, that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.



Rewrite the selected reading (bolded words on page 5) from the Declaration of Independence in your own words, making it as easy to understand as possible

Lined writing area for rewriting the Declaration of Independence.

Share your writing with your merit badge counselor and discuss the importance of the Declaration to all Americans.

**Requirement 2**

DO TWO of the following

2a) Select two individuals from American history, one a political leader (a president, senator, etc.) and the other a private citizen (a writer, religious leader, etc.). Find out about each person's accomplishments and compare the contributions each has made to America's heritage.

Political Leader Chosen \_\_\_\_\_

Accomplishments / Contribution to American Heritage \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Private Citizen Chosen \_\_\_\_\_

Accomplishments / Contribution to American Heritage \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





**Requirement 2** (continued)

2b) With your counselor's approval, choose an organization that has promoted some type of positive change in American society. Find out why the organization believed this change was necessary and how it helped to accomplish the change. Discuss how this organization is related to events or situations from America's past.

Organization Chosen \_\_\_\_\_

Year Started \_\_\_\_\_

What They Changed \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Why They Wanted Change \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How They Changed It \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How We are Affected by this Change Today \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2c) With your counselor's approval, interview two veterans of the U.S. military. Find out what their experiences were like. Ask the veterans what they believe they accomplished.

**First Interviewee's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Their Experiences and what they feel they believe they Accomplished  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Second Interviewee's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Their Experiences and what they feel they believe they Accomplished  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Requirement 2** (continued)

2d) With your counselor's approval, interview three people in your community of different ages and occupations. Ask these people what America means to them, what they think is special about this country, and what American traditions they feel are important to preserve.

**First Interviewee's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

What does America mean to them \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do they think is special about America \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which American traditions do they feel are important to preserve \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Second Interviewee's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

What does America mean to them \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do they think is special about America \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which American traditions do they feel are important to preserve \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Third Interviewee's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

What does America mean to them \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do they think is special about America \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which American traditions do they feel are important to preserve \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Requirement 3**

DO TWO of the following

3a) Select a topic that is currently in the news. Describe to your counselor what is happening. Explain how today's events are related to or affected by the events and values of America's past.

Topic in the News: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

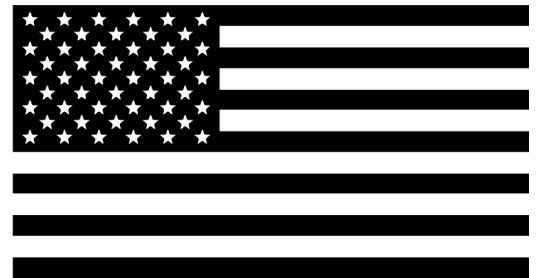
How is this related to / affected by America's past? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3b) For each of the following, describe its adoption, tell about any changes since its adoption, and explain how each one continues to influence Americans today: the flag, the Pledge of Allegiance, the seal, the motto, and the national anthem.

**The American Flag**

Our current flag is not the same as the original flag that was approved by the Continental Congress in 1777. The original flag represented the 13 original colonies with 13 stars and stripes. The current flag has 13 stripes representing the original colonies, and 50 stars for the current number of states.



Year Adopted \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Adoption \_\_\_\_\_

Why it is Still Influential \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**The Pledge of Allegiance**

In 1892 the pledge was published as "I pledge allegiance to my flag and the Republic for which it stands; one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all". In 1924 the phrase "my flag" was replaced with "the flag of the United States of America". It became an official pledge in 1942, but was added to again in 1954, adding the words "under God". Who knows, it may even be changed again in the future to represent the current sentiment of the American voice!

Year Adopted \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Adoption \_\_\_\_\_

Why it is Still Influential \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## The American Seal

Our seal was adopted in 1782 after years of interpretation and change. It represents the country's core values and beliefs. It consists of the American Bald Eagle holding an olive branch in one talon, and 13 arrows in the other representing peace and war. It also has the Latin words, E Pluribus Unum, which mean "Out of Many, One".



Year Adopted \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Adoption \_\_\_\_\_

Why it is Still Influential \_\_\_\_\_

## The American Motto

E Pluribus Unum ("from many, one") had been adopted by an Act of Congress in 1782 as the motto for the Seal of the United States and had been used on coins and paper money since 1795. The modern motto of the United States of America, as established in a 1956 law signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, is In God we trust.

*In God  
We Trust*

Year Adopted \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Adoption \_\_\_\_\_

Why it is Still Influential \_\_\_\_\_

## The American National Anthem

"The Star Spangled Banner" was written in 1814 when the United States was at war with Great Britain. It was penned by a lawyer named Francis Scott Key while aboard a British Ship in the harbor while the British fired upon Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland. When the dawn arose with the "Stars and Stripes" still flying over the fort, Francis Scott Key was inspired to pen the words as a poem that were later set to music and became our national anthem.

Year Adopted \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Adoption \_\_\_\_\_

Why it is Still Influential \_\_\_\_\_



**Requirement 3 (continued)**

3c) Research your family’s history. Find out how various events and situations in American history affected your family. Share what you find with your counselor. Tell why your family came to America.

**www.Ancestry.com**

**www.Familysearch.org/family-trees**

Summary of What You Have Learned

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Why did your family come to America?

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Share what you have learned about your family’s history with your counselor



## Requirement 4

DO TWO of the following

4a) Explain what is meant by the National Register of Historic Places. Describe how a property becomes eligible for listing.

The National Park Service administers the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the official Federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. National Register properties have significance to the history of their community state, or the nation.

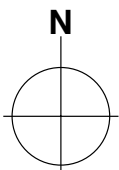
What does the National Register of Historic Places Do? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How does a property become eligible for listing? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Make a map of your local area, marking the points of historical interest.  
Tell about any National Register properties in your area.



Share the map with your counselor, and describe the historical points you have indicated.

**Requirement 4 (continued)**

4b) Research an event of historical importance that took place in or near your area. If possible, visit the place. Describe how the area looked then and what it now looks like.

Historical Event \_\_\_\_\_

What Happened? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Year of Event \_\_\_\_\_

Were you able to visit the location? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe what the area looked like \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tell your counselor about the event and how it affected local history.

4c) Find out when, why, and how your town or neighborhood started, and what ethnic, national, or racial groups played a part. Find out how the area has changed over the past 50 years and try to explain why.

Town / Neighborhood \_\_\_\_\_

How did your city / town start? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How did ethnic / national / racial group play a part? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How has it changed in 50 years? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4d) Take an active part in a program about an event or person in American history. Report to your counselor about the program, the part you took, and the subject.

Program \_\_\_\_\_

Part you took \_\_\_\_\_

Talked with counselor

e) Visit a historic trail or walk in your area. After your visit, share with your counselor what you have learned. Discuss the importance of this location and explain why you think it might qualify for National Register listing.

Talked with counselor



## Requirement 5

Do ONE of the Following

5a) Watch two motion pictures (with the approval and permission of your counselor and parent) that are set in some period of American history. Describe to your counselor how accurate each film is with regard to the historical events depicted and also with regard to the way the characters are portrayed.

Wise movie selection is important. Some movies that have been approved by merit badge counselors in the past include those on the list below.

### IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE

While all of these movies have been used in other American Heritage classes before, scouts, parents, and counselors vary and may find some of these choices not to their approval. Please review the movie rating and summary carefully prior to selecting one of these movies or a movie of your choice.

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| The Crossing       | The Grapes of Wrath |
| Gettysburg         | Warm Springs        |
| Gone With The Wind | Casablanca          |
| The Searchers      | Midway              |
| High Noon          | Twelve O'Clock High |
| Fort Apache        | The Right Stuff     |
| Hester Street      | Apollo 13           |

Scouts will find that most Counselors will accept one of these listed movies for completion of this requirement. Remember that there are 100's of other movies that will also qualify for this requirement. Be sure to get prior approval from the merit badge counselor before selecting the movies to view.

Scouts should make thorough notes after reviewing the movies in order to aid them in their later discussion with their Merit Badge Counselor.

First Movie Selected \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes From Movie:**

Second Movie Selected \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes From Movie:**

### Movie Approvals

Counselor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date Approved \_\_\_\_\_





### Requirement 5 (continued)

5b) Read a biography (with your counselor's approval) of someone who has made a contribution to America's heritage. Discuss with your counselor some things you admire about this individual and some things you do not admire. Explain why you think this person has made a positive or a negative contribution to America's heritage.

#### Notes:

Discussed with counselor

5c) Listen to recordings of popular songs from various periods of American history. Share five of these songs with your counselor, and describe how each song reflects the way people felt about the period in which it was popular. If a recording is not available, have a copy of the lyrics available.

#### Notes:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Shared with counselor

### Requirement 6

Discuss with your counselor the career opportunities in American heritage. Pick one that interests you and explain how to prepare for this career. Discuss what education and training are required for this care.

#### Career opportunity in American Heritage:

#### How to prepare for this career:

Discussed with counselor