



Girl Scouts Trailblazer Program

Since the mid-1950s, Girl Scouts Trailblazers have had an extraordinary history in Girl Scouts. Participation in a Trailblazer Troop helps develop girls' trail-based skills like trail hiking, primitive camping, rock climbing, and Taking Action in parks and wild areas. A Trailblazer Troop gives older Girl Scouts the opportunity to challenge themselves to reach new goals while learning important skills.

Through **Girl-led** planning, Trailblazer Troops plan unique adventure excursions. Through **Cooperative Learning**, girls research options, pitch ideas, share experiences, and **Learn-By-Doing** by choosing a location, building a budget, planning packing lists, and then executing their adventure trip plans. To participate in a Trailblazer Troop, girls must be registered Cadettes, Seniors, or Ambassadors.

These pages contain a summary of GSUSA's guidelines for Trailblazer troop leaders and their Girl Scouts. Use this document in conjunction with GSUSA's [Girl Scout Trailblazers Twenty-First Century Guidelines](#).

Girl Scout Trailblazer Pin



To become a Girl Scout Trailblazer, girls will know and recite the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and, to earn the pin and enter the program officially, they must complete the first level of three out of five of concentrations: Hiking, Stewardship, Adventure Sports, Camping, and Survivorship.

Troop Leaders and caregivers can purchase the Trailblazer Pin from the GSMW shop online or in-person. Girl Scouts wear their Trailblazer Pin on the sash or vest with their membership pins.

Trailblazer Concentrations

Girls pick the type of Trailblazer Troop they want to be. There are five suggested concentration areas for Trailblazer troops to explore. Practicing outdoor skills while working on badges, Journeys, highest awards, and Take Action projects, girls can learn the skills they need to accomplish the steps for each concentration area. Girls can focus on one concentration area or all of them. The choice is theirs!

By completing the steps needed to earn the pin, girls get a "taste-test" of each concentration. After they try each concentration, the troop can discuss which concentration or concentrations they will pursue.

In the following pages, we describe each concentration. The steps required to become an official Trailblazer are highlighted in green. The troop should pick three of the highlighted steps to complete to earn their pin and Trailblazer title. Please email customer care@gsmw.org when your troop completes the three steps.

After girls complete the "first steps" of three different concentrations, they select one or more concentration to be their troop's focus. From there, every Journey, every cookie box sold, every Take Action Project, etc. is seen through the lens of the troop's specific Trailblazer concentration(s). For more information on how to engage in regular troop activities while completing requirements as a Trailblazer Troop, read pages 10-12 and pages 18-22 of the [Girl Scout Trailblazers Twenty-First Century Guidelines](#) document.





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Hiking:

- a. Learn about trail safety, how to choose routes that fit their abilities, and how to plan, prepare, and pack for hikes of minimal to moderate lengths and durations.
- b. Learn a variety of orienteering methods, including GPS, map and compass and/or star navigation; discover different hiking styles, such as snowshoeing or backpacking; and demonstrate proper gear maintenance and storage.
- c. Individually, each plan and lead a hike for her troop of moderate length that includes elevation changes and varied terrain, if possible. Before the hike, she will explain trail safety, how to pack appropriately, and proper nutrition planning, and she will describe the intended route, highlighting notable conditions. She should advise her troop on how to avoid and prepare for poor conditions that may arise. She should take the lead on the hike, ensuring that there are sufficient times to rehydrate and eat, that everyone is obeying trail regulations, and that they understand the route and navigation strategy. She may choose to have a focus for the hike that includes flora and fauna identification or wind pattern and cloud identification. After the hike she should lead her group in cleaning, repairing, and properly storing all gear used and debrief the experience.



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Stewardship:

- a. Learn about well-known or professional environmental stewards, the principles of Leave No Trace, and primary environmental conservation needs and efforts in their area.
- b. Participate in a trail cleanup, an environmental demonstration, or another environmentally focused event in their area.
- c. Individually, each plan and lead her own outdoor/environmental/high-adventure event. She may choose to identify an environmental issue, and opportunity to showcase, or another topic of her choosing. She should share her Trailblazer experience with younger Girl Scouts to support their learning of environmental stewardship.

Adventure Sport:

- a. Learn about safety, regulations, and gear and connect with professional or local athletes or leaders in an adventure sport of their choosing. They should compare it to two other adventure sports to consider what is similar and different about the sports. They may also consider interviewing someone who is knowledgeable in the sport. Different types of adventures sports may include rock climbing, trail running, mountain biking, snowboarding, dog sledding, and cross-country skiing.
- b. Try at least two adventure sports. As a troop, girls try these sports together or separately depending on their interest levels. If possible, they should schedule group or individual lessons. The troop should debrief on their collective experience.
- c. Individually, each set a goal in an adventure sport to achieve within a year. She should develop a plan for achieving the goal that potentially includes meeting with a coach, ongoing training, and advancement of skills. Upon achieving the goal, she should host events or opportunities to introduce the sport (and Trailblazers!) to younger girls.



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Camping:

- a. Learn about camping styles, such as car camping, backpacking, horseback camping, and canoe camping. They will learn about gear options for two styles that they'd like to explore. They should consider how the experiences and gear vary in different seasons or climates. They should learn about camping safety and regulations, how to obtain permits, and how to locate good camping sites.
- b. Learn about camp kitchens and cooking methods, food safety (including keeping it safe from animals), and best meal types for the various camping styles. They may build their own camp kitchen item and identify for which camping style(s) it is appropriate. Or, they may choose to learn about different camping shelter options, including tent types, maintained trail shelters, private or public cabins, pop-up trailers, natural shelters, hammocks with bug net and rain fly attachments, or conditions in which sleeping under the stars can be appropriate. They should be able to identify different styles and the intended uses for at least three important camping items, such as tents, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, packs, hydration containers, and footwear.
- c. Individually, each plan and lead at least two nights of camping (consecutive nights or separate trips) using different camping styles. She should designate duties for set up, meal prep, cleanup, and break down and plan and shop for all meals. Prior to the adventure, she should review safety, regulations, site selection, and forecasted weather. She may need to notify local park rangers or other authorities of their plans. After the trip, debrief and reflect on what she learned and how she wants to improve her adventure next time.

Survivorship

- a. Learn first aid and basic trail safety. This may include how to use natural resources as substitutes for splints, salves, food, or even shelter. They should learn about backcountry camping and interview someone knowledgeable in this activity.
- b. Learn about surviving in the wilderness in difficult conditions. This may include learning about local edible plants; how to prepare for exposure to extreme weather conditions, including heatstroke, hypothermia, and dehydration; how to build a natural shelter and other forms of emergency shelter; how to locate water; and ways to call for help without phone service.
- c. Individually, each plan and lead a backcountry camping trip. On this trip they may build natural shelters, try techniques for no-match fire building, demonstrate and explain proper use of emergency shelters, supplement their diets with well-researched edible plants, practice techniques for locating water sources and filtering/purifying the water; and explore natural/minimal equipment navigational techniques.