

Troop Government Handbook



A GIRL SCOUT LEADER'S GUIDE TO TROOP GOVERNMENT

Troop Government Handbook

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Troop Government Overview

(Daisy Circle, Brownie Ring, Town Meeting)

One of the unique characteristics of Girl Scouting is the focus on the girl/adult partnership, which is about girls and adults working together cooperatively to set and accomplish troop goals. A major component of the girl/adult partnership is troop government, which is a structured way for girls to govern and manage their Girl Scout troop discussions and decisions as part of the girl-led process. All forms of troop government establish an orderly way for adults to guide girls as they express opinions, share ideas, and play an active part in figuring out the what, where, when, and how of their activities while learning how to work together toward shared goals. When the girls feel their opinions are heard and valued, they are more likely to participate more fully in the troop. Troop government is a great way for the girls to learn skills like cooperation, communication, responsibility, independence, and leadership. It is also the best way to help girls learn how to manage their troop business.

Like all things in Girl Scouts, troop government is progressive, with skills building upon each other. As the girls get older, the leaders take more of a backseat as girls take on more of the responsibility of running their troop and eventually decide which form of government they will use. Every Girl Scout grade level is capable of using one of the five basic forms of troop government.

	Girl Scout Daisy Circle	Girl Scout Brownie Ring	Town Meeting
Government form used by:	Girl Scout Daisies	Girls Scout Brownies	Girl Scout Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, & Ambassadors
Government type:	Adult led government with girl input.	Self-government with adult guidance.	Democratic Government
Leadership type:	Adult led	Girl as "Ring Leader" with adult guidance.	Girl moderator with possible officers .
Planning:	Either/or decision making with adult planning/ implementation and adult led evaluation.	Simple brainstorming with reality checks and discussion for decision making. Girls may research/plan/evaluate with adult assistance. Adults will most likely. execute plans	Girls brainstorm, discuss, research, decide, plan, execute, and evaluate with adult guidance at younger levels as necessary.
Procedures:	Adults will establish procedures such as use of a "talking buddy" for girls to give input.	Adults will work with the girls to establish procedures such as use of a "talking buddy" to brainstorm/discuss ideas.	Girls will decide on procedures for discussing ideas, voting on decisions, and making/executing plans as a group while being supervised by troop leaders.

	Girl Scout Daisy Circle	Girl Scout Brownie Ring	Town Meeting
Regular Responsibility Delegation:	Simple kaper charts created by adults with girl input when possible.	Girls organize and delegate responsibilities through kaper charts with adult guidance.	Girls will create a kaper chart for main responsibilities and decide how that kaper chart will best be utilized.
Additional Responsibility Delegation:	"It" and "Other" bag or "other" designation on kaper chart.	"It" and "Other" bag or "other" designation on kaper chart.	Girls will decide together how additional responsibilities may be designated.
Budgeting:	Adult responsibility. Have girls earn financial literacy leaves to introduce them to the basics and have conversations about how much their activities may cost.	Adult responsibility. Girls should find out about the costs of activities as part of their idea research. Help them understand where troop money comes from and ALL the ways it is used.	Responsibility for troop finances can be part of the troop kaper chart, and can be rotated between girls or can be a long term position. Girls should know how much money the troop has at all times and should actively be creating a troop budget and deciding how that money is used.
This form of government works well for:	Girls at the Daisy level who are just learning the basics of group processes and self-government.	Girls at the Brownie level who are progressively developing the skills to plan with adults.	Small troops; girls who need more practice with self-governing before moving on to a more advanced form of government.
Benefits for girls:	Development of basic human relation skills.	Development of brainstorming/researching/discussion skills.	Development of skills to competently lead discussions and vote on a
Adult Actions:	Give girls choices to choose from, ask their families (and the girls) what they like to do, research ideas, plan/ implement girls' ideas based on interests/abilities of the girls, help girls evaluate, provide direct supervision at all times.	Ask girls their interests and encourage new ideas screening as necessary, work with them to research ideas and plan, implement the girls' ideas based on their decisions/abilities, help girls evaluate, provide supervision at all times.	Guide the girls only as necessary. Take a step back and let them lead but make sure you are providing encouragement and helping to keep them focused until they can do that on their own. Be a mentor/advisor rather than a leader.



Troop Government Overview

(Executive Board, Patrol System)

	Executive Board	Patrol System
Government form used by:	Girl Scout Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, & Ambassadors	Girl Scout Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, & Ambassadors
Government type:	Representative Government	Representative Government
Leadership type:	Girl officers.	Girl Patrol Leaders with possible officers.
Planning:	Girls brainstorm, discuss, research, decide, plan, execute, and evaluate with adult guidance at younger levels as necessary.	Girls brainstorm, discuss, research, decide, plan, execute, and evaluate within their patrols with adult guidance at younger levels as necessary.
Procedures:	Officers will make troop decisions and plans together with the troop leaders based on input from the troop as a whole.	Patrol leaders will make decisions and plans together with the troop leaders based on input from each patrol.
Regular Responsibility Delegation:	Most tasks will be the responsibility of the officers according to their role description.	Patrol leaders (and officers, if used) will be voted on by their patrol. Each patrol will create a kaper chart for tasks within the patrol and the Honor Board may create a kaper chart for whole troop kapers if necessary.
Additional Responsibility Delegation:	Additional responsibilities may be designated to girls by the troop officers using a kaper chart if desired.	Additional responsibilities may be designated to girls by their patrol leader.
Budgeting:	The troop treasurer (girl officer) will be progressively responsible for troop financial records, including a troop budget. Girls should know how much money the troop has at all times and should actively be deciding how that money is used.	Responsibility for troop finances can be part of the troop kaper chart and be rotated between patrols or can be the responsibility of one girl in each patrol or one girl for the whole troop. Girls should know how much money the troop has at all times and should actively be creating a budget and deciding how that money is used.

	Executive Board	Patrol System
This form of government works well for:	Girls who are ready for a more advanced representative form of government but who do not have a large enough troop to support multiple patrols.	Large troops with girls who are progressively ready for a more advanced representative form of government.
Benefits for girls:	Development of cooperation and decision-making skills based on others' opinions.	Development of skills to competently lead discussions and help make decisions based on others' opinions.
Adult Actions:	Meet with the officers regularly to guide them in creating the troop plans as necessary. Ensure that all girls are given the opportunity to serve in an officer role throughout the year. Be a mentor/advisor rather than a leader.	Meet with the patrol leaders regularly to guide them in creating troop plans as necessary. Let the girls fail and make mistakes as long as their safety is not at risk. Be a mentor/advisor rather than a leader.



Girl/adult planning and Troop Business

The form of government your troop uses will generally be implemented during the business portion of your troop meeting. A Girl Scout troop belongs to all its members. It is not only every troop member's privilege but her duty to take part in the government of the troop. You will really see the three processes come to life as girls lead the way and get hands-on experience in the planning, decision-making, and fun in their troop while learning to cooperate with others.

At every level of Girl Scouts, the girls will use this time to:

- Complete housekeeping tasks such as taking attendance and collecting dues/paperwork.
- Discuss/make troop decisions.
- Choose awards and how to earn them.
- Plan activities/ceremonies.
- Solve problems.
- Evaluate troop experiences for future planning.

Successful girl/adult planning

As a Girl Scout leader, it is your responsibility to guide the girls in effectively using the appropriate form of troop government. No matter which form of troop government the girls are utilizing, you can use these 6 steps for successful girl/adult planning within troop government:

1. Leader Preparation

- Remember, good ideas are important to troop government, and they can come from anywhere: program resources, your experiences/interests, the girls' experiences/interests, and more.
- Review grade-level program resource materials such as *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* and the Volunteer Toolkit for ideas to give the girls to start the planning process.
- Review the online Event Calendar for council events, service unit events, and programs that the girls might be interested in attending.
- Think about how the girls could get involved in the council's or service unit's community service projects.
- Evaluate the girls' previous experiences in Girl Scouting, other interests, and special needs.
- Ask the girls what their interests are. Compile a master list of ideas (have a "Dream Box" or binder to keep all ideas) in case girls need suggestions.
- You may want to create a very vague general year plan for the girls to add specifics to.
- Make sure the girls have everything they need to complete troop business, such as an attendance roster and dues record.
- It would be a good idea to have a box dedicated to troop government supplies.

2. Go to the Girls

- Give the girls the program resources to look through, pointing out several activities or badges in which they may be interested or assigning specific parts for each girl.
- Provide information about service unit, council, and community events.
- If they're ready for it, allow the girls to brainstorm other possible activities based on their knowledge, interests, and experiences.
- For younger girls, you may want to have just a couple of options for them to choose from instead of giving them access to all the materials, which could be overwhelming.
- Make sure notes are taken of all the girls' discussions, so they have a record for reference. At the younger levels, an adult will do this, but the girls can take over once they are capable.

3. Help girls pick activities and make a plan

- Facilitate discussion among the girls about the activities they have listed to help them narrow down their options. They (or you, if the girls are Daisies) may need to do some research as part of this process.
 - Girls should ensure that the activities they are planning:
 - Are appropriate for the age/skill of the troop. Are the girls physically, intellectually, and emotionally ready for the activity?
 - Challenge them enough to encourage growth but are not so challenging as to cause unnecessary frustration.
 - Introduce them to new experiences. They may want to stick with what they know.



- Give them opportunities to develop intellectual skills, as well as a chance to run around and play.
- Make sure you (or the girls) know their scheduling needs, including school activities, family obligations, and/or religious holidays.
- If the girls are at the age of doing the majority of the planning themselves, you can guide them as necessary by asking these questions:
 - What activities are we interested in doing this year? Awards? Events? Trips? Service Projects?
 - Why do we want/not want to do this activity?
 - If an Award, what are the steps we need to complete?
 - What supplies or materials do we need? Do we have the supplies? Can they be brought from home?
 - How long will it take?
 - How much will it cost? Where will this money come from?
 - What extra help will we need? Where do we get that help?
 - What do we need to go on this activity?
 - Where can we do this? How will we get there?
 - How long will it last?
 - Does it fit into the overall goals of the troop for the year?
 - What did we learn the last time we did a similar activity?
 - Have other troops done this activity before? What can we find out from them?
 - Does this support the Girl Scout Leadership Experience?
- Let the girls decide which activities they would like to do using their form of troop government.
 - Don't limit the girls' choices when they are interested in something which you are not interested in or capable of doing. Help them figure out how they can make it work.
- Work with the girls within their system of government to create a tentative plan of events for the year based on their discussions. (This will be done mostly by the leaders at the Daisy and Brownie Levels)
- Help the girls establish short- and long-term goals that support the plan. (Daisies and Brownies need to focus on short-term goals)

4. Communicate the troop's plan, if necessary

- Communicate with parents and troop helpers about the troop's plan.
- Parents may offer insight into a topic of a badge; for example, when working on the simple meals badge, you may find out one of your parents is a chef who could offer their expertise.



- Listen to reactions and suggestions (they may think of conflicts/issues that both you and the girls missed).
- Give appropriate timelines and schedules for the plan.
- Secure the necessary support and assistance the troop will need.

5. Carry out the plan

- Make sure the girls are involved as much as their age permits in carrying out the plan!
- Once girls get to the Junior level or older, ask, ask, ask! How is the plan progressing? What have we completed? What still needs to be done? Are changes needed? What needs to be changed?
 - Help girls make necessary adjustments to the plan
 - Help girls add new ideas that may arise
 - Encourage girls to keep commitments, especially ones that impact others beyond the troop

6. Evaluate

- An important part of the “Girl Led” process is for girls to evaluate the activities in which they participate. Evaluation helps girls gain positive meaning from their experiences. By encouraging the girls to evaluate their activities, you will:
 - Give them an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings with other girls in a safe environment
 - Teach them to be inquisitive and to question their experiences
 - Enable them to be more successful in the future by applying what they have learned
 - Help them to achieve learning that lasts-lessons they will not forget when the activity is over
- There are resources available in each grade level training manual to help you help the girls with evaluating.

General Order of Troop Business

You can use these steps as a guideline for the business portion of your troop meetings. Your level of formality will depend on the age and preferences of your troop.

- Call to order (troop leader or “girl in charge”)
- Attendance and collection of dues/paperwork
- Reading and approval of the minutes from the previous meeting (not necessary at the younger levels)
- Discussion of old business (wrapping up anything that was not decided at the previous meeting).
- Discussion of new business (discussion may need to be concluded at the next business meeting if time runs out).
- Reminders
- Adjournment



Preparing an agenda:

A good way to ensure staying focused and accomplishing necessary tasks during troop government is to follow a written agenda. In order for you (or the girls) to create a good working agenda for your troop's business, you/they should:

- Prepare the agenda early – do not wait until the last minute to think about what will be discussed. Input may need to be sought from other leaders/girls, so time needs to be allowed for that. There is a sample agenda available at the end of this manual.
- Clearly define the meeting objective – whether the girls will be picking an award to earn, planning a service project, or brainstorming ideas for an event, the goal of the business meeting needs to be clearly outlined so everyone knows what they are trying to accomplish.
- Seek input – at the younger levels, the agenda will be created by the troop leaders, so they all should be in communication with each other about what that agenda will look like. At the older levels, girls will start to create the agenda themselves, so they should either seek input from other girls or from the troop leaders.
- Prioritize agenda items – make sure that the most important items are being covered first in case the girls start running out of time. It's a good idea to break items down into smaller key points as well to help keep the discussion focused.
- List agenda topics as questions – this allows for more specificity and a clearer understanding of what needs to be discussed.
- Allow adequate time – especially when the girls are younger. You don't want to spend too much meeting time on business, so don't over plan what you're trying to accomplish at a business meeting, and if anything needs to be tabled until next time, so you can move on, so be it.
- Include other pertinent information – this could include things such as kapers, event/ deadline reminders, or anything else it would be important for the girls to know.
- Specify how members should prepare for the meeting – (older girls only). Having the girls send out the agenda in advance and encouraging the others to come ready with ideas/ discussion points may help to save meeting time in the long run and gives the girls a sense of personal responsibility.
- Identify the next steps – once the key points have been discussed/decided, spend a few minutes talking about what comes next, so you (or the girls) can be prepared for creating the next meeting's agenda.

Let's take a look at the different types of troop government in more detail.

Forms of Troop Government

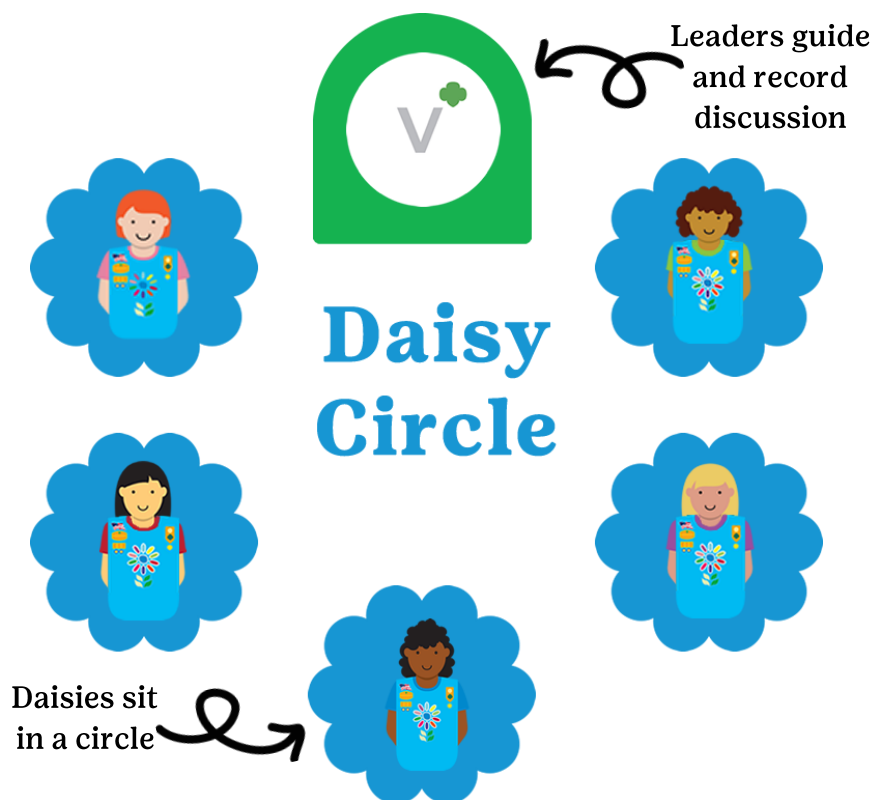
The traditional forms of Girl Scout Troop Government are:

- The Daisy Circle
- The Brownie Ring
- The Town Meeting
- The Executive Board
- The Patrol System



Daisy Circle

Girl Scout Daisies help make decisions about their troop in a Girl Scout Daisy circle. All the girls sit in a circle, so it's easy to see each other. This business part of a Daisy meeting will only last 5 to 10 minutes and should include general meeting business (taking attendance, collecting paperwork, etc.), discussing/making troop decisions, choosing awards and how to earn them, planning activities/ceremonies, and evaluating troop experiences for future planning. Leaders will be responsible for guiding and recording the discussion. Decisions are usually finalized by a majority vote.



Tips for the Daisy Circle:

- Give the girls two or three choices to pick from.
- Make sure no one girl dominates the conversation.
- Consider having a “talking buddy”, such as a stick or other prop, to dictate who is permitted to be talking.
- Use the Quiet Sign to refocus the girls when necessary (right hand up, everyone must do the same and become quiet).
- Girls may need to be given a set time limit, such as 30 seconds, for how long they may talk.
- Encourage girls to include things in their troop agreement, such as no putting down people or ideas.
- Leaders can model behavior by listening without criticism to girls and parents.
- To control the time spent on business at each troop meeting, sharing might need to be limited to just a few girls during each Daisy Circle, but make sure that eventually, every girl is given a chance to express her opinions.
- After Daisies are familiar with the process of the Daisy Circle, they can take turns being the discussion monitor by picking who's turn it is to speak, but make sure they are fair in this process.

The Daisy Circle in Action

Objective: Pick a badge to earn

1. Leader Preparation

- The girls decide they would like to earn a badge. Go through the VTK or badge pamphlets to see the Daisy badges available. Pick out a few badges (2 or 3) that would be doable for your troop based on available resources and the girls may be interested in earning. If you do not have the physical badge pamphlets, bring pictures or objects to the meeting to visually represent each badge.
- Make sure the girls have their attendance tracker to take attendance.

2. Go to the Girls

- Girls take attendance.
- Girls look through the badge pamphlets or you can talk to them about what each badge is about.

3. Help girls pick activities and make a plan

- Answer any of the questions girls may have.
- Have the girls vote on which badge they would like to earn.
 - Girls may vote by dropping a button or other small item into a cup with a picture of the badge they would like to earn or simply raise their hands.
- Girls may also vote on which activity choice they'd like to do for each step. Leader can put the badge into the troop's VTK year plan.



4. Communicate the troop's plan, if necessary

- Communicate with parents and troop helpers about the troop's plan to complete the badge if extra adult assistance or any additional supplies will be needed.

5. Carry out the plan

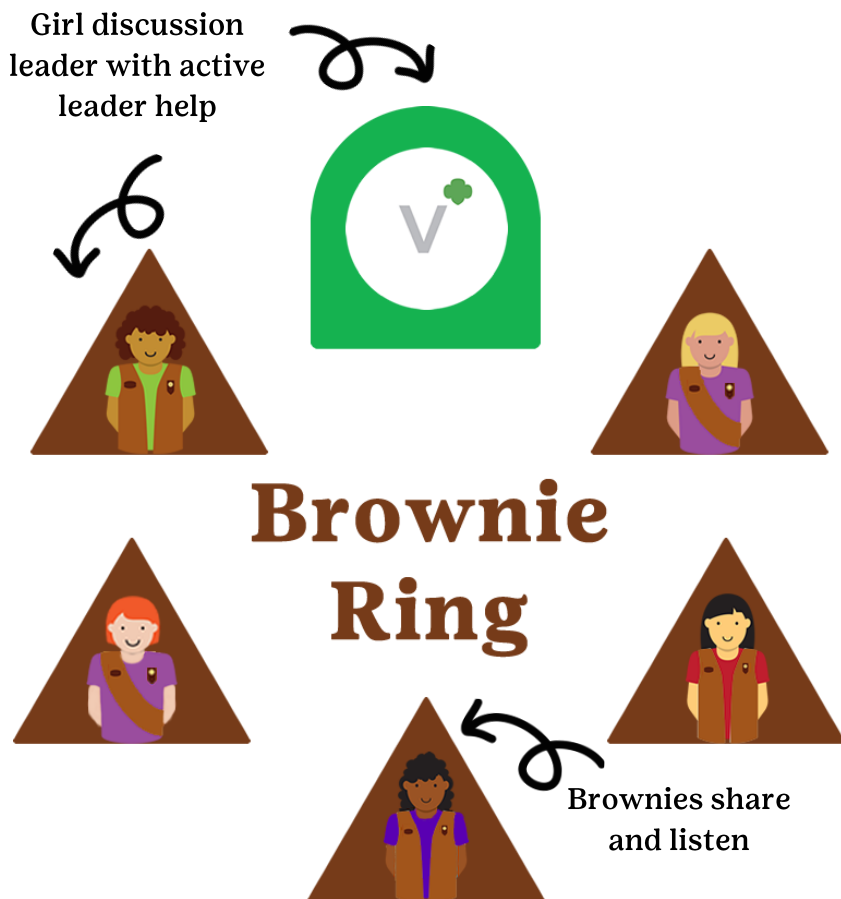
- Follow the VTK instructions (or your own plan if your using the printed badge pamphlets) for the girls to complete the steps of the badge.
- Make sure the girls are involved as much as possible in carrying out the plan!
 - Let them pass out/collect supplies, share stories, or whatever is appropriate.

6. Evaluate

- Once the girls complete their badge, make sure they receive their badge.
- At the next Daisy Circle, have them evaluate the experience to help you with future planning.



Brownie Ring



In Girl Scouts, every girl helps make the rules and has a turn doing the jobs that must be done at each meeting. Girl Scout Brownies make decisions and plan what they will do in a special way. It is called the Brownie Ring. All the girls sit in a circle or ring, so it's easy to see each other. The Girl Scout Brownie ring is very similar to the Daisy circle but expands the abilities of these now somewhat older girls. This business part of a Brownie meeting will usually last 10 to 20 minutes and should include general meeting business (taking attendance, collecting dues/paperwork, etc.), discussing/making troop decisions, choosing awards and how to earn them, planning activities/ceremonies, and evaluating troop experiences for future planning. Girls should begin to lead discussions and "brainstorm" ideas, but leaders will still need to be actively involved in the ring, including recording the discussion. Each girl should get a chance to share her opinion and be patient while listening to the opinions of the other girls. Decisions will still usually be finalized by a majority vote, which can be secret or open depending on the girls.

Tips for the Brownie ring:

- If girls are struggling with brainstorming, you can offer them ideas or suggestions to help spark the conversation.
- A ring leader may be designated to lead discussions, but make sure that all girls are given this leadership opportunity.
- Leaders will need to make sure no one girl dominates the conversation.

- Consider having a “talking buddy”, such as a stick or other prop, to dictate who is permitted to be talking.
- Girls can use the Girl Scout talking sign (place hand out on the floor/table in front of them) to indicate that they want to speak.
- Use the Quiet Sign to refocus the girls when necessary (right hand up, everyone must do the same and become quiet).
- Girls may need to be given a set time limit, such as 30 seconds, for how long they may talk.
- Encourage girls to include things in their troop agreement, such as no putting down people or ideas.
- Leaders can model behavior by listening without criticism to girls and parents.
- To control the time spent on business at each troop meeting, sharing might need to be limited to just a few girls during each Brownie Ring, but make sure that eventually, every girl is given a chance to express her opinions.

The Brownie Ring in action

Objective: Pick a badge to earn

1. Leader Preparation

- The girls decide they would like to earn a badge. Go through the VTK or badge pamphlets to see the Brownie badges available. Pick out ones that would be doable for your troop based on available resources. If you do not have the physical badge pamphlets, you will need to bring a laptop or tablet to the meeting so the girls may look at the badges on the VTK or Badge Explorer.
- Make sure the girls have their attendance tracker and dues record to take attendance and collect dues.

2. Go to the Girls

- Girls take attendance and collect dues.
- Give the girls the badge pamphlets to look through, pointing out several badges in which they may be interested. If you do not have the badge pamphlets available, the girls can look up badges in the VTK on a laptop, tablet, or cell phone.
- Conversely, you may have each girl look through a badge pamphlet and share what she learned about it with the other girls.

3. Help girls pick activities and make a plan

- Answer any of the questions girls may have about the badges or get the girls thinking about the planning process by asking them questions about the badges.
- Have the girls vote on which badge they would like to earn using their selected method of voting.
- Girls will need to then decide which activity choice they'd like to do for each step of the badge. This is another time you may need to ask the girls guiding questions to get them thinking about which step would work best for the troop.



- If you use the VTK, you can put the badge into the troop's VTK year plan. A materials list will be included as part of the plan.
- If you do not use the VTK, you will need to make your own plan using whichever method you prefer. You can have the girls help with making a list of needed supplies.

4. Communicate the troop's plan, if necessary

- Communicate with parents and troop helpers about the troop's plan to complete the badge if extra adult assistance or any additional supplies will be needed.

5. Carry out the plan

- Follow the VTK instructions (or your own plan if you're using the printed badge pamphlets) for the girls to complete the steps of the badge.
- Make sure the girls are involved as much as possible in carrying out the plan!
 - Let them pass out/collect supplies, give instructions for activities, read out loud, or whatever is appropriate.

6. Evaluate

- Once the girls complete their badge, make sure they receive their badge. They may want to plan a Court of Awards ceremony.
- Have them evaluate the experience to help with future planning. Talking about what they liked and didn't like may help them decide what they'd like to do when picking another badge or planning an outing.



If your troop chooses to, you might recite this poem when your Brownie ring is formed:

Round and round a roundabout, Take the hand of a Brownie Scout, Here we are in a Brownie Ring, Ready for almost anything!



Troop Government for Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors

As the girls get older, the troop leader acts increasingly as a facilitator, mentor, and/or advisor enabling girls to experience more opportunities for planning, decision-making, leading and, yes, even failing. The process of girl/adult planning will really begin to take shape because the girls have longer attention spans, are able to deal with more options, and are ready to take on more responsibility. Beginning at the Girl Scout Junior level, there are three forms of troop government that girls may choose from: the town meeting, the executive board, and the patrol system.

Each of these forms of troop government is formatted for helping girls play an active part in figuring out the what, where, when, and how of their activities while learning how to work together toward shared goals. This is also the time when girls will complete housekeeping tasks, such as collecting dues/paperwork and taking attendance.

The leader should explain all three forms of troop government and allow the girls to choose the one they would like to try first, keeping in mind that not all forms of troop government will work for every troop. The troop may decide to experiment with all three forms before deciding which one is the right fit, or they may end up creating their own form of government using a combination of each. Sometimes you find out by trial and error if a form of government will work for your troop. The first few meetings are not going to be perfect, and the discussions may not run as smoothly as you'd like, but the important thing is that you are helping the girls learn a form of leadership and cooperation. The type of government your troop uses may also depend on the size of the troop and maturity of the girls. Don't be afraid to help the girls make adjustments to their government as they learn from their mistakes and positive experiences. How decisions are made, how plans are created, and how troop tasks and responsibilities are divided with kaper charts may all depend on the form of government the troop uses.

As a Girl Scout adult, your role within Girl Scout troop government is to:

- Prepare by:
 - Providing the girls with all the necessary tools, such as an attendance roster, dues tracker, program materials, and calendar.
 - Devising a plan for the girls to access the Volunteer Toolkit to view program materials and the GSGLA online Event Calendar.
 - Providing printed program materials, if available.
 - Sharing communications about community events and service project opportunities.
- Guide by:
 - Offering a list of choices or asking guiding questions to kickstart brainstorming if needed.
 - Encouraging the girls to offer input and make suggestions.
 - Helping the girls establish and enforce procedures for their troop government.
 - Assisting the girls in staying focused on current business and managing their time.
 - Asking questions to push the girls to come up with solutions and only giving a sample solution when the girls are absolutely stuck.

- Helping the girls establish group expectations and consider the consequences of not following through with their commitments.
- Encourage by:
 - Pointing out examples of girls showing good leadership characteristics.
 - Reminding the girls that electing officers/assigning positions is not a popularity contest, but a selection based on the ability to do the job well.
 - Allowing girls to rotate their roles, so every girl gets a chance to gain and use new leadership skills.
 - Giving the girls a chance to participate and learn by doing.
 - Reminding the girls that they will have the opportunity to make decisions throughout the year.
 - Prompting the girls to create a yearly troop calendar at the beginning of each year.
- Get started by:
 - Letting girls get to know each other before jumping right into selecting a type of troop government if they are new to Girl Scouts.
 - Having the girls try each type of government to see which works best for them.
 - Listening to what the girls want to do and helping them make it happen the way they want.



- ◆ Ask the girls when do you want to meet.
- ◆ Ask the girls what do you want to do this year.
- ◆ Ask the girls, if you could create your best troop meeting ever, what would it look like.
- ◆ Ask the girls, how are you going to accomplish that goal.
- Helping the girls make decisions about how troop responsibilities will be accomplished.
 - ◆ Ask the girls if they want a formal or informal kaper chart.
 - ◆ Let the girls discuss and decide what kapers are needed.
 - ◆ Allow the girls to decide how kapers and troop government positions will be rotated.



Town Meeting

The town meeting consists of the entire troop participating directly in the discussion and decision-making process. This form of troop government is most effective with a small troop, but it can work in larger troops if the girls can stay on task. A girl moderator will guide all the girls as they discuss and determine troop business. Notes will need to be taken either by the moderator or another girl, so there is a record of all discussions. Decisions are finalized either through a system of voting or consensus, whichever the girls decide. This system is the most similar to a Daisy Circle or Brownie Ring and is a great way to transition older girls into a more advanced form of troop government.



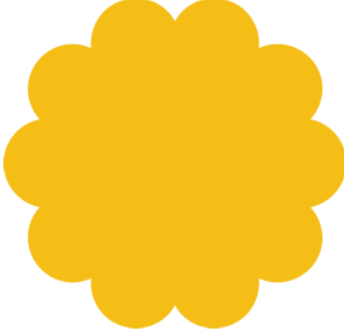
Tips for the Town Meeting:

- If girls are struggling with brainstorming, you can ask them guiding questions to help spark the conversation.
- When the girls are first starting out, an adult may want to assist the moderator until the girls are comfortable handling this role on their own.
- “Officer” positions, such as moderator, secretary, and treasurer, may be elected by the troop to serve a predetermined term, or these tasks may be rotated regularly as part of the troop kaper chart.
- Kaper charts may also include tasks such as cleanup supervisor, dues collector, friendship squeeze starter, opening ceremony, closing ceremony, attendance taker, or whatever else the girls deem necessary.
- Encourage the girls to establish a discussion process that allows for everyone to participate in an orderly fashion.
- The girl moderator can use the Quiet Sign to refocus the girls when necessary (right hand up, everyone must do the same and become quiet).

- Girls may need to designate a time limit for each person speaking, such as one minute, to allow everyone a chance to speak.
- To control the time spent on business at each troop meeting, girls might need to limit how many girls are permitted to share during each meeting, but make sure that they are eventually giving every girl a chance to express her opinions.
- Encourage girls to include things in their troop agreement such as listen to others attentively, and no putting down people or ideas.
- Leaders can model behavior by listening without criticism to girls and parents.

Kaper Chart example
for Town Meeting



Discussion Moinitor	Troop 12345	Note Taker
LaTasha	Kaper Chart	Rebecca
Dues/ Paperwork		Attendance
Aila		Camila
Snack		Cleanup
Kaya		Everyone

The Town Meeting in Action

Objective: Pick a badge to earn

1. Leader Preparation

- The girls decide they would like to earn a badge. Gather badge pamphlets for the girls to look through. If you do not have the physical badge pamphlets, you will need to bring a laptop or tablet to the meeting, so the girls may look at the badges on the VTK or Badge Explorer.
- Make sure the girls have their attendance tracker and dues record to take attendance and collect dues.

2. Go to the Girls

- Girls take attendance and collect dues.
- Give the girls the badge pamphlets to look through, pointing out several badges in which they may be interested if necessary. If you do not have the badge pamphlets available, the girls can look up badges in the VTK on a laptop, tablet, or cell phone.
- Conversely, you may have each girl look through a badge pamphlet and share what she learned about it with the other girls.



3. Girls pick activities and make a plan

- Answer any of the questions girls may have about the badges or help them find the answers. Get the girls thinking about the planning process by asking them questions about the badges, if necessary.
- Have the girls vote on which badge they would like to earn using their selected method of voting.
- Girls will then need to decide which activity choice they'd like to do for each step of the badge. This is another time you may need to ask the girls guiding questions to get them thinking about which step would work best for the troop.
- If your troop uses the VTK, they can put the badge into the troop's VTK year plan. A materials list will be included as part of the plan. The girls will need to decide who will do which part of the meetings.
- If the troop does not use the VTK, the girls will need to make their own plan using whichever method they prefer making sure they are deciding who will do which part of the meeting. The girls will also need to make a list of needed supplies and decide if any additional assistance will be necessary.

4. Communicate the troop's plan, if necessary

- Communicate with parents and troop helpers about the troop's plan to complete the badge if extra adult assistance or any additional supplies will be needed. If girls are Cadette or older, they may be in charge of communicating the troop's plan with their parents and arranging for extra helpers as necessary.

5. Carry out the plan

- Girls should follow the VTK instructions (or their own plan if they're using the printed badge pamphlets) in order to complete the steps of the badge with adult assistance only as necessary.
- Make sure the girls are involved as much as possible in carrying out the plan!
 - Adults should monitor for safety and assist only as necessary.

6. Evaluate

- Once the girls complete their badge, make sure they receive their badge. They may want to plan a Court of Awards ceremony.
- Have them evaluate the experience to help with future planning. Talking about what they liked and didn't like may help them decide what they'd like to do when next picking a badge or planning an outing.



Executive Board



The executive board consists of one leadership team of "officers" who make the decisions for the troop. The Executive Board can be effective with any size troop but works especially well for medium-sized troops. In a smaller troop, you may end up with every girl being an officer, in which case, they'd be governing more like the town meeting system of government with more formalized positions. In a larger troop, it may be challenging for every girl to feel like her thoughts are being heard and taken into consideration. The board's main responsibility is to plan and coordinate activities and events based on the needs and interests of the troop. The executive board gathers ideas from all the members of the troop and then meets as a group to make the final decision. Some method needs to be devised for the troop members to give input to the Executive Board. The board involves all troop members in carrying out plans.

Executive Board

Executive Board Officers

The executive board usually has a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Other officers can be added if the girls decide it's necessary. They may want to have fewer officers and increase the responsibilities of each person or add additional officers to help divide out responsibilities. Some of the officers your troop may consider are:

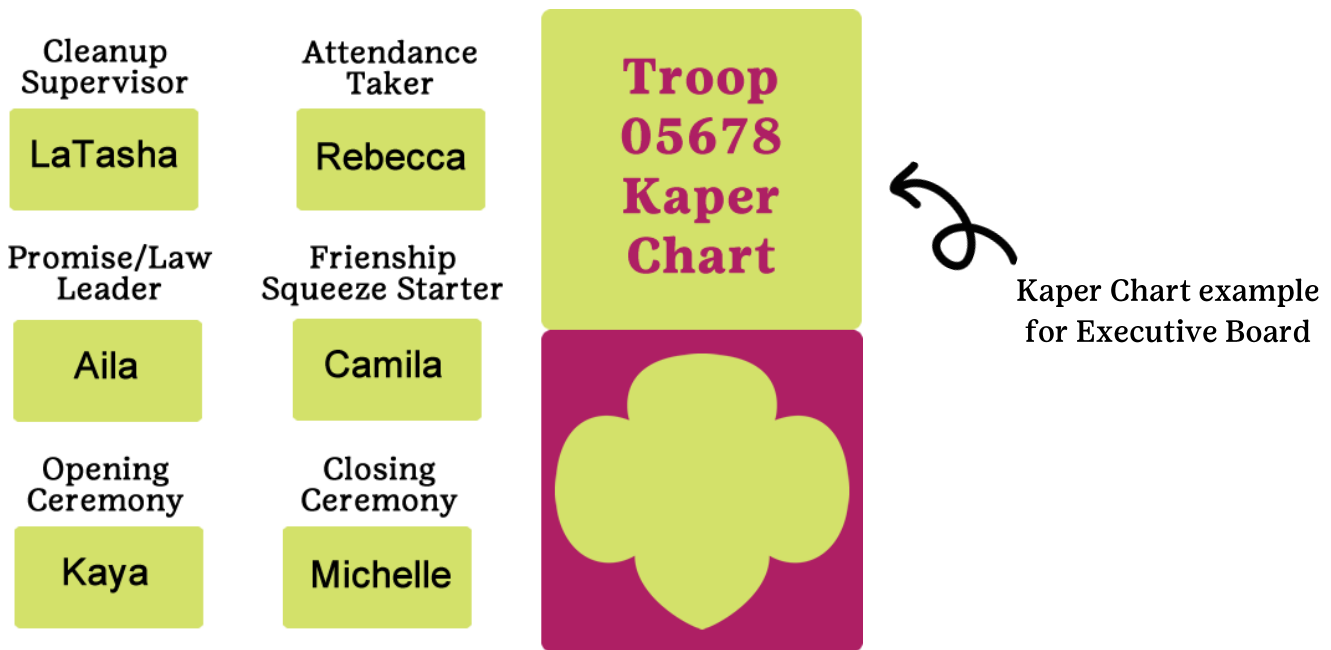
- **President:** Leads business portion of troop meetings. Presides over the executive board. Mentors new troop officers. Oversees schedule of events and appoints others as necessary. Approves troop communications. May attend Service Unit meetings with the troop leaders.
- **Vice president:** Acts for the president upon request or in her absence. Serves as a chair as necessary.
- **Secretary:** Records and reads minutes of troop business and executive board meetings. May keep a complete, up-to-date membership list if there is no membership chair.

- **Treasurer:** With the adult Troop Treasurer's guidance, receives all troop funds, including dues, donations, fees, and all money earning project funds. Maintains an accurate record of all troop financial transactions and bank account information. May complete the troop's annual finance report.
- **Troop Historian:** Keeps a picture book and memories of all troop activities
- **Membership Chair:** Welcomes new members, maintains membership list, encourages members to update their contact information, may solicit new members
- **Communications Chair:** Writes/edits communications, including troop newsletter. Maintains troop website/social media, if appropriate.
- **Program Chair:** Leads the planning and organizing of awards/events, appointing others to tasks as necessary. May create groups/patrols for the planning and execution of awards/events.
- **Transportation Chair:** Arranges transportation for troop activities & events.
- **Equipment Manager:** In charge of troop equipment, makes out lists of equipment needed for meetings/events, and is responsible for troop flag if one exists.

Tips for the Executive Board:

- The Executive Board may meet during the regular troop meetings or separately.
- If girls are struggling with brainstorming or coming to a decision, you can ask them guiding questions to help spark the conversation.
- When the girls are first starting, an adult may want to assist the officers in their positions until the girls are comfortable handling them on their own.
- The length of time in a leadership position should be limited to give other girls the opportunity to lead.
- Officer positions may be elected by the troop to serve a predetermined term or rotated regularly as part of the troop kaper chart.
- Each officer should know what the responsibilities of her role are.
- Kaper charts may include tasks that are not part of an officer's role, such as cleanup supervisor, promise/law leader, friendship squeeze starter, opening ceremony, closing ceremony, attendance taker, or whatever else the girls deem necessary.
- Troop members can give input to the executive board through organized discussions, a suggestion box at troop meetings, or another system the girls decide on.
- Girls may need to designate a time limit for each person speaking, such as one minute, to allow everyone a chance to speak.
- If the executive board prefers to hold discussion to receive troop input, they might need to limit how many girls are permitted to share during each discussion, to control the time spent on business at the troop meeting, but they need to make sure that they are eventually giving every girl a chance to express her opinions.
- Encourage girls to include things in their troop agreement such as listen to others attentively, and no putting down people or ideas.
- Leaders can model behavior by listening without criticism to girls and parents.





The Executive Board in Action

Objective: Pick a badge to earn

1. Leader Preparation

- The girls decide they would like to earn a badge. Gather badge pamphlets for the girls to look through. If you do not have the physical badge pamphlets, you will need to bring laptops or tablets to the meeting, so the girls may look at the badges on the VTK or Badge Explorer.
- Make sure the girls have their attendance tracker and dues record to take attendance and collect dues.

2. Go to the Girls

- Girls take attendance and collect dues.
- Give the girls the badge pamphlets to look through, pointing out several badges in which they may be interested if necessary. If you do not have the badge pamphlets available, the girls can look up badges in the VTK on a laptop, tablet, or cell phone.
- Conversely, each girl may look through a specific badge pamphlet and share what she learned about it with the other girls or girls may look through badges on their own at home and share what they learned with the other girls.

3. Girls pick activities and make a plan

- Answer any of the questions girls may have about the badges or help them find the answers. Get the girls thinking about the planning process by asking them questions about the badges.
- The Executive Board will receive input from the girls on which badge they would like to earn by holding a discussion or accepting suggestions.
- The Executive Board will decide which badge the troop will earn based on input from the troop.



- The Executive Board will need to then decide which activity choice the troop will do for each step of the badge based on input from the troop and available resources, or the Program Chair may assign a girl or girls to take on the task. Depending on their experience, you may need to ask the girls guiding questions to get them thinking about which step would work best for the troop.
- The Program Chair will appoint a girl(s) to plan out the details of the badge.
 - If your troop uses the VTK, they can put the badge into the troop's VTK year plan. A materials list will be included as part of the plan. They will also need to decide who will do which part of the meetings and if any additional assistance will be necessary.
 - If the troop does not use the VTK, the girls will need to make their own plan using whichever method they prefer making sure they are deciding who will do which part of the meetings. The girls will also need to make a list of needed supplies and decide if any additional assistance will be necessary.

4. Communicate the troop's plan, if necessary

- Communicate with parents and troop helpers about the troop's plan to complete the badge if extra adult assistance or any additional supplies will be needed. If girls are Cadette or older, the Communications Chair will be in charge of communicating the troop's plan with parents and arranging for extra helpers as necessary.

5. Carry out the plan

- Girls in charge of the badge plan should follow the VTK instructions (or their own plan if they're using the printed badge pamphlets) in order to complete the steps of the badge with adult assistance only as necessary.
- Make sure the girls are involved as much as possible in carrying out the plan!
 - Adults should monitor for safety and assist only as necessary.

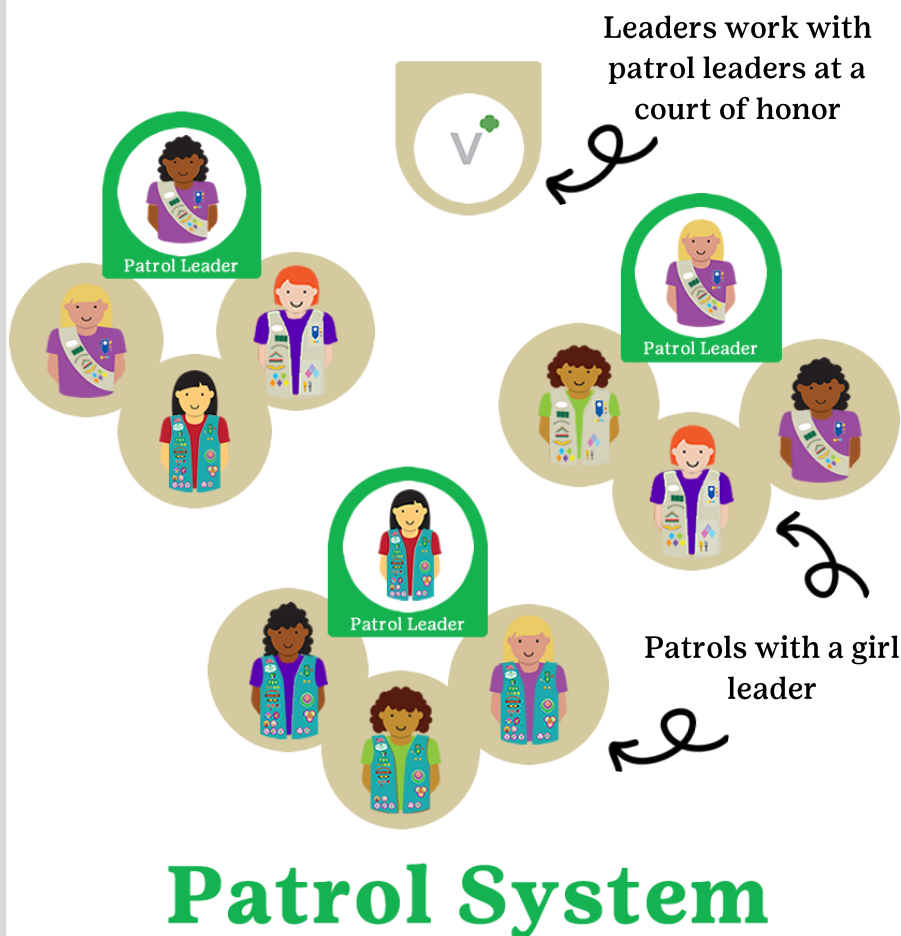
6. Evaluate

- Once the girls complete their badge, make sure they receive their badge. They may want to plan a Court of Awards ceremony.
- Have them evaluate the experience to help with future planning. Talking about what they liked and didn't like may help them decide what they'd like to do when next picking a badge or planning an outing.



Patrol System

The patrol system is the most versatile of the systems of government. The troop is divided into smaller units called patrols to make discussion and decision-making easier. The patrol system works well with larger troops where there are adequate girls to divide into multiple patrols. Each patrol has a patrol leader responsible for running the patrol meetings. Patrol leaders, officers, and adult volunteers should come together to discuss troop matters and make group decisions at a court of honor. Every patrol member has a voice in the court of honor through the patrol leader. Each patrol will have a discussion and come to a decision for their patrol, and their patrol leader will take their decision back to the court of honor where the final decision will be discussed/made for the troop.



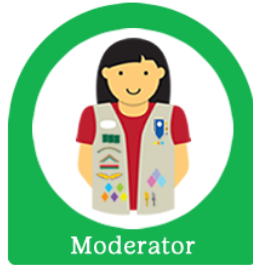
Patrol responsibilities:

Patrol members make plans and decisions for their patrol and share opinions on troop plans and decisions. All troop meeting business can be handled within each patrol including the recording of attendance and dues. If the court of honor assigns a task to a patrol, the patrol will decide who will be responsible for each part of that task.

Patrol leader responsibilities:

A good Patrol Leader considers her patrol ahead of herself and her troop ahead of her patrol and sees that her patrol has a share in making troop plans. The patrol leader makes sure all ideas from her patrol are shared with the court of honor and all ideas from the court of honor are shared with the troop members in her patrol. This is called "representative government" because all troop members share in troop plans through their patrol leader, who is their representative to the court of honor.

Patrol leaders come together for discussion, with leader guidance as needed



Moderator



Patrol Leader



Patrol Leader



Patrol Leader

Court of Honor

The court of honor is the heart of the troop. It makes possible a continuous flow of ideas to and from each patrol; it sorts out ideas, makes decisions, plans troop meetings, and decides what each patrol will be responsible for. The court of honor will ask for suggestions from each patrol and give the patrols suggestions to discuss/decide on. The court of honor meets on a regular basis for planning and discussion. Monthly meetings can be before a meeting, after a meeting or on an alternative day in order to plan for events the following month. A long meeting once or twice a year can be used for long-term planning of troop events and planning the troop yearly calendar. If the troop decides to have a troop moderator or president, she will generally preside over the court of honor meetings.

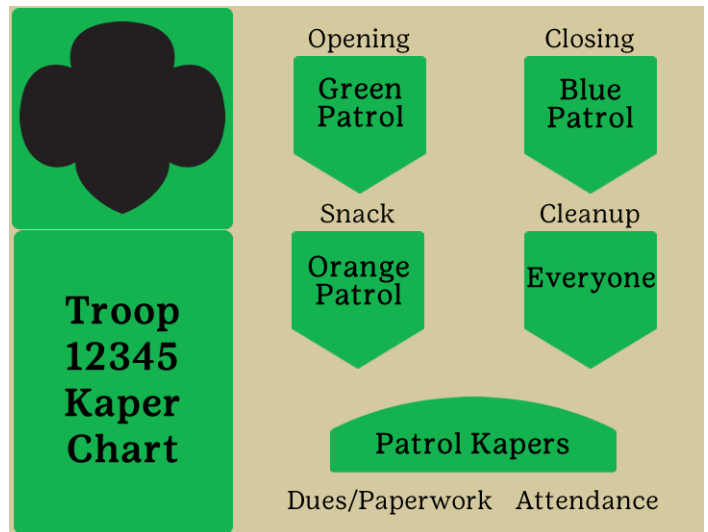
Tips for the Patrol System:

- Patrols of four to six girls are recommended, so that each girl gets a chance to participate and express her opinions.
- Patrols may want to choose a name for themselves such as the “Star Patrol” or “Purple Patrol”
- Patrol meetings generally occur during the business portion of the troop meeting.
- Each patrol should have a patrol notebook for recording patrol ideas, discussion, and decisions.
- The court of honor will need to decide when and how often to meet and who specifically will be included in the meetings.
- If the court of honor, or a patrol, is struggling with brainstorming/coming to a decision, you can ask them guiding questions to help spark the conversation.
- When the girls are first starting out, an adult may want to assist the patrol leaders in their positions until the girls are comfortable on their own.
- The length of time in leadership positions should be limited to give other girls the opportunity to lead.

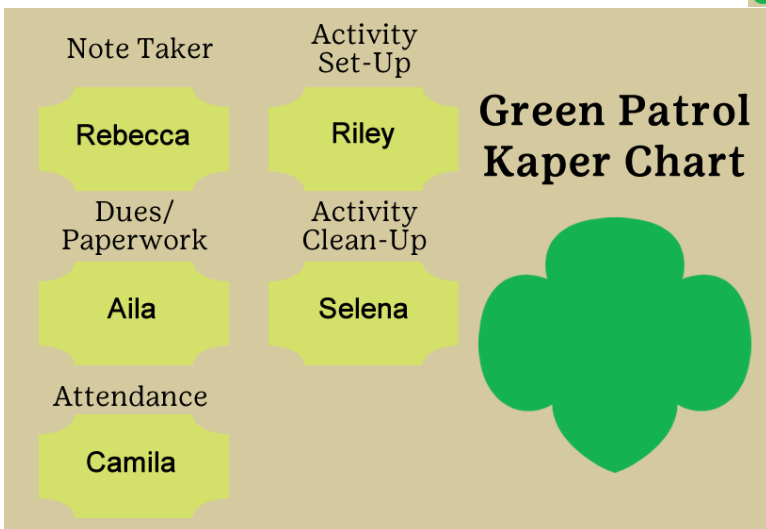


- Patrol leaders, and other officers, may be elected by the troop to serve a predetermined term or rotated regularly as part of the troop kaper chart.
- Having an assistant patrol leader for each patrol is also a good idea in the event that the patrol leader cannot make a meeting.
- Other officer positions, such as troop moderator/president, secretary, and treasurer, may be elected by the troop if the girls wish. If this is the case, each officer should know the responsibilities and expectations of her position.
- For meetings/outings, kapers may be divided up by patrol, with each responsible for a specific kaper or kapers may be designated to individual girls.
- Patrols should establish a discussion process that allows for everyone to participate in an orderly fashion.
- Girls may need to designate a time limit for each person speaking (within patrol or court of honor meetings), such as one minute, to allow everyone a chance to speak.
- Encourage girls to include things in their troop agreement such as listen to others attentively and no putting down people or ideas.
- Leaders can model behavior by listening without criticism to girls and parents.

Kaper Chart example
by Patrols



A kaper chart for Troop 12345. It features a large black four-leaf clover icon on a green background. Below the icon, the text reads "Troop 12345 Kaper Chart". To the right, there are four green arrow-shaped boxes pointing downwards, each containing a patrol name and a kaper: "Green Patrol" for "Opening", "Blue Patrol" for "Closing", "Orange Patrol" for "Snack", and "Everyone" for "Cleanup". At the bottom, a green arrow-shaped box labeled "Patrol Kapers" points to "Dues/Paperwork" and "Attendance".



A kaper chart for the Green Patrol. It features a large green four-leaf clover icon. The chart is organized into two columns of kapers with names in yellow boxes: "Note Taker" (Rebecca), "Dues/Paperwork" (Aila), and "Attendance" (Camila) on the left; "Activity Set-Up" (Riley) and "Activity Clean-Up" (Selena) on the right. The title "Green Patrol Kaper Chart" is centered above the icon.

Kaper Chart example
for individual patrols



The Patrol System in Action

Objective: Pick a badge to earn as a troop

1. Leader Preparation

- The girls decide they would like to earn a badge. Gather badge pamphlets for the girls to look through. If you do not have the physical badge pamphlets, you will need to bring laptops or tablets to the meeting, so the girls may look at the badges on the VTK or Badge Explorer.
- Make sure the girls have their attendance tracker and dues record to take attendance and collect dues.

2. Go to the Girls

- Girls take attendance and collect dues within their patrols.
- Each patrol looks through the badge pamphlets discussing which ones interest them. If you do not have the badge pamphlets available, the girls can look up badges in the VTK on a laptop, tablet, or cell phone.
- Conversely, girls may look through badge pamphlets on their own at home and share what they learned about it with their patrol.

3. Girls pick activities and make a plan

- Answer any questions girls may have about the badges or help them find the answers. Get the girls thinking about the planning process by asking them questions about the badges.
- Each Patrol will narrow down their choices of which badges they would like to earn to one or two.
- At the court of honor meeting, each patrol leader would present their patrol's chosen badges. The court of honor would discuss each of the badge choices and decide which badge the troop will earn. The court of honor will assign badge a badge step (or steps) to each patrol.
- Each patrol will be responsible for planning out which activity to do for their assigned step(s).
 - If the troop does not use the VTK, the girls will need to make their own plan using whichever method they prefer making sure they are deciding who will do what. The girls will also need to make a list of needed supplies and decide if any additional assistance will be necessary.
 - If your troop uses the VTK, they can put the badge into the troop's VTK year plan. A materials list will be included as part of the plan. They will also need to decide who will do what and if any additional assistance will be necessary.

4. Communicate the troop's plan, if necessary

- Communicate with parents and troop helpers about the troop's plan to complete the badge if extra adult assistance or any additional supplies will be needed. If girls are Cadette or older, the girls may be in charge of communicating the troop's plan with parents and arranging for extra helpers as necessary.



5. Carry out the plan

- The girls should follow the VTK instructions (or their own plan if they're using the printed badge pamphlets) in order to guide the troop in completing their assigned step(s) of the badge with adult assistance only as necessary.
- Make sure the girls are involved as much as possible in carrying out the plan!
 - Adults should monitor for safety and assist only as necessary.

6. Evaluate

- Once the girls complete their badge, make sure they receive their badge. A patrol may be assigned to plan a Court of Awards ceremony.
- Have them evaluate the experience within their patrols to help with future planning. Talking about what they liked and didn't like may help them decide what they'd like to do when next picking a badge or planning an outing.

This is just one example of how the patrol system in action looks. With the versatility of the patrol system, there are many ways to use it within your troop. Each patrol may work on a different badge, or you may have one patrol planning the entire badge while the other patrols are working on other tasks. It's really about how the troop wants to divide up the work.

Other Uses for Patrols

Even if your troop does not use the Patrol System of government, there will be times when it will be beneficial for the girls to work in patrols. These can also be called task groups or committees.

- A project, activity, or event may need a committee or task group to make the plans, investigate information and/or make decisions. When this is the case it may be more efficient for the girls to form a small group or patrol that meets during or outside the troop/group meeting and then comes back to the whole troop/group to report. These patrols can facilitate decision-making and are usually appointed for a short time or until the task, like planning a Court of Awards ceremony or other type of event, is finished. This patrol could be an ongoing assignment or for a short time, depending on the interest of the girls. The chair or leader of the patrol would always be a girl, never an adult volunteer.
- Girls may break up into small groups or patrols to research or plan different aspects of and options for a trip they are interested in taking. Again, the leader of the group would be a girl and not an adult volunteer. These patrols would be formed for a short time to carry out a specific task, in this case, investigation about/planning for troop travel. When they finish their task, the patrol disbands.
- Girls within a troop may have different interests and may break up into smaller groups or patrols, so each patrol can focus on an activity or award that interests them.
- When girls go camping, they may work in patrols for the purposes of completing camp kapers. For example, one patrol could be responsible for cooking breakfast, another for cleanup, and another for leading grace.



Custom Troop Government:

Sometimes one way to conduct business works great, and at other times it just doesn't work at all. If your girls have tried out the different forms of troop government, and none of them work well for them, encourage them to create their own form of troop government. Formal troop/group government may not be what the girls in your troop want or need. They can pull aspects from each of the forms of troop government or even explore different forms of government and come up with a system of troop government that works for them. The important thing is that the girls are making decisions and "running the show" because that's what Girl Scouting is all about.

Troop Government is Working How it Should When:

- Everyone has ideas
- Everyone does her part
- Girls are making decisions
- Girls are enthusiastic about Girl Scouts
- Everyone respects each other
- Girls know the who, what, when, why, where, which, and how of the troop
- There is troop cooperation

When you give girls the opportunity to grow into leaders, to plan their own activities, budget, make decisions, and make choices, you have given them all the benefits of Girl Scouting and helped them to create fun, memorable Girl Scout experiences. When the girls feel they have control and are leading their troop, they are more likely to stay involved in Girl Scouting. Encouraging them to govern their troop in a way that works for them is part of giving them ownership of their troop. The more the adult volunteers step back and let things evolve, the more the girls will thrive as leaders.



Girl Scout Troop # _____

Business Meeting Agenda

Date:

Time:

Location:

Meeting Goals/Objectives

- A.
- B.
- C.

Pework - please prepare with the following:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Agenda Items

	Topic	Presenter	Time Allotted
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Next Steps

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Reminders

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.