

Order of the Arrow

WHAT IS IT AND HOW TO USE IT IN YOUR UNIT

Time Available

10 minutes.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand the purposes of the Order of the Arrow (OA).
- Know how the Order of the Arrow can benefit a unit.
- Understand the importance of the Unit Order of the Arrow representatives.

Suggested Presenter(s)

The presenters should be the District/Chapter Order of the Arrow Chief (a youth) and the Chapter Advisor (an adult). They may choose to include a youth or adult unit leader whose unit has benefitted from close ties to the OA.

Presentation Method

- Begin with a review of the purposes of the Order of the Arrow.
- Describe the duties of the Unit Order of the Arrow representatives.
- Discuss how the Order of the Arrow can benefit unit operations.
- Provide contact information for the Chapter Chief and Chapter Advisor, and the date and location of the Chapter meeting.

BSA Reference Materials

- Order of the Arrow Handbook, *no. 622163*
- [National Order of the Arrow website](#)
- Your Council Order of the Arrow website
- [Order of the Arrow Fact Sheet](#)
- [Order of the Arrow Interest Topic](#) from the 2014 – 15 Roundtable Commissioners Guide

Presentation Content

Introduce the mission and brief history of the Order of the Arrow (the OA), from either the handbook or the national OA website:

- The mission of the OA is to fulfill its purpose as an integral part of the Boy Scouts of America through positive youth leadership under the guidance of selected capable adults.
- For more than 100 years, the Order of the Arrow (OA) has recognized Scouts and Scouters who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives. Arrowmen are known for maintaining camping traditions and spirit, promoting year-round and long-

term resident camping, and providing cheerful service to others. OA service, activities, adventures, and training for youth and adults are models of quality leadership development and programming that enrich and help to extend Scouting to America's youth.

- Order of the Arrow is also recognized as Scouting's National Honor Society as it has expanded its reach beyond camping to include broader service to Scouting and the community.

Describe the purposes of the OA, which are:

- Recognize those who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and through that recognition cause others to conduct themselves in a way that warrants similar recognition.
- Promote camping, responsible outdoor adventure, and environmental stewardship, as essential components of every Scout's experience in the unit, year-round, and in summer camp.
- Develop leaders with the willingness, character, spirit and ability to advance the activities of their units, our Brotherhood, Scouting, and ultimately our nation.
- Crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.

Discuss the requirements for OA membership:

- Be a registered member of the Boy Scouts of America.
- The youth must have experienced 15 nights of Scout BSA camping while registered with a troop or team within the two years immediately prior to the election. The 15 nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of at least five consecutive nights of overnight camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the BSA. Only five nights of the long-term camp may be credited toward the 15-night camping requirement. The remaining 10 nights must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps of, at most, three nights each.
- Youth must be under the age of 21, hold the BSA First Class rank or higher, and following approval by the Scoutmaster, be elected by the youth members of their troop. Members are elected to the OA by their fellow Scouts. The OA is unique in that nonmembers are often the ones that elect Scouts in their troop for membership.
- Adults (age 21 or older) who are registered in the BSA and meet the camping requirements may be selected following nomination to the lodge adult selection committee. Adult selection is based on their ability to perform the necessary functions to help the Order fulfill its purpose, and is not for recognition of service, including current or prior positions. Selected adults

must be an asset to the Order because of demonstrated abilities; and must provide a positive example for the growth and development of the youth members of the lodge.

- The induction ceremony, called the Ordeal, is the first step toward full membership in the Order. During the experience, candidates maintain silence, receive small amounts of food, work on camp improvement projects, and sleep apart from other campers. The entire experience is designed to teach significant values. All candidates for membership must complete the Ordeal.

How does the OA benefit a unit?

- By recognizing Scouts who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives, electing the best Scouts to the OA can allow those Scouts to lead by example, and cause others to conduct themselves in the same way so someday they too may be elected to the OA by their peers.
- The camping requirement for OA membership promotes and in essence requires camping by the unit both year-round and in summer camp, as essential components of every Scout's experience. Scouts who camp often will advance faster and master Scouting skills better than those who do not camp as often.
- The OA is a youth led, adult advised, organization. The leaders of the district's OA Chapter and the Council's OA Lodge are youth under the age of 21; and are elected by the youth OA members. Chapter meetings allow youth members to plan and organize district OA activities. Lodge meetings allow Chapter leaders members to plan and organize council-wide OA activities.
- By serving the Chapter and/or Lodge, youth OA members become leaders with the willingness, character, spirit and ability to advance the OA, Scouting, and ultimately our nation. These leadership opportunities enable the OA leaders to enhance youth leadership development in their troops.
- The slogan of the Scout BSA is to "do a good turn daily". In the Scout Oath, Scouts pledge "to help other people at all times." The OA crystallizes the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life of cheerful service to others. The unit's OA members are expected to lead and participate in service projects conducted by the unit, again leading their peers by example.
- An older Scout whose interest may be flagging may choose to be a Chapter or Lodge officer as a way of doing something new, something that encourages development of leadership skills. He can couple that interest with service to his unit by being the Unit OA Representative.

Discuss the duties of the Unit OA Representative.

- The Unit Order of the Arrow is an optional but important youth leadership position. It is optional in the sense that the OA does not require a troop to have one, but it is an important role because the Unit OA Representative serves as a communication link between the troop and the Chapter and Lodge. The position also qualifies as a unit position of responsibility for Star, Life and Eagle ranks.
- The Unit OA Representative is selected by the Senior Patrol Leader and should have an adult advisor from among the Assistant Scoutmasters. The adult advisor works in the background, so the youth OA Representative is always the face of the OA to the Scouts in the troop.
- He keeps all troop members aware of Chapter and Lodge news and activities, so the troop may participate in them. To do so, he attends Chapter meetings as often as he is able. He may bring other troop Arrowmen to Chapter meetings.
- He promotes year-round camping as well as resident summer camping and high adventure programs.
- He also promotes participation in community service projects. These can be Lodge or Chapter service events, as well as troop service to the chartered partner organization.