

Mr. D's Merit Badge Review

Merit Badge	#Rqmnts	Difficulty	Duration	Prereqs*	Comments
AMERICAN BUSINESS	5	Hard	3 Months	1st Class	Would go great with school economics course. What makes this "hard" is running a business for 3 months, otherwise it is easy to medium.
AMERICAN CULTURES	5	Medium	1-3 Months	none	Duration is mostly logistics - this one takes some planning.
AMERICAN HERITAGE	5+	Medium	2-3 Months	none	Would go great with an American History class. A fair bit of planning and reporting required.
ANIMAL SCIENCE	6	Easy	1 Month	none	Some planning and visits, but most information is in an encyclopedia or library book.
ARCHAEOLOGY	11	Hard	2-5 Months	1st Class+	Very involved. Need to do research, reports, presentations and visits. Jurassic Park and Indiana Jones movies won't count as requirements, but they will help make it more interesting.
ARCHERY	5	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Skill required! But fun to learn and do. Good summer camp badge.
ARCHITECTURE	5	Medium	1 Month	none	Lots of cool PC tools to help, involves interviews. Be sure to ask the architects why they almost always under estimate the cost!
ART	7	Easy	1 Week	none	Good first merit badge - they don't get any easier than this ... fun too.
ASTRONOMY	9	Medium	1-2 Months	1st Class	Fairly involved and requires planning. Good camp or troop badge.
ATHLETICS	5+	Medium	1-3 Months	Tenderfoot	A scout is physically fit ... and this newly updated badge will prove it. Takes some planning and scheduled events.
ATOMIC ENERGY	6+	Medium	1-3 Months	1st Class	Would go well with high school science. Not hard, but involves research and projects.
AUTO MECHANICS	11+	Hard	2-5 Months	15-16ish	This will be invaluable later (when you need to get that thingy to stop making that noise, etc.), but not of much interest until around driving age. I
AVIATION	7	Medium	1-3 Months	none	Some of this is in you Webelos book! It's close to "easy" but does require some planning and project work.
BACKPACKING	11+	Medium	3 Months	Some First Aid	Not difficult, but time consuming. Good start possible at summer camp.
BASKETRY	2	Easy	1-3 Days	none	As easy as they get!
BIRD STUDY	8	Medium	1-12 Weeks	none	Lots to study, but not too involved.
BUGLING	6	Medium	3 Months	none	Good one for brass players in band, but most can learn a bugle. 3 months of bugling required.
CAMPING (E)	10+	Medium	1-2 Years	1st Class	Most requirements are simple, but to get in all the campouts takes time. Keep track of all campouts and around 1st Class should have most done.
CANOEING	10+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	First Aid, 1st Class	First Aid will cover CPR and other first aid issues and 1st Class requires basic swimming skills. Otherwise, enjoy the ride!
CHEMISTRY	9	Medium	2-8 Weeks	Science in School	A good one to do with High School Chemistry or Science class.
CINEMATOGRAPHY	4	Easy	1-4 Weeks	none	The hard part might be finding the merit badge counselor, but otherwise this is a fairly easy one.
CITIZENSHIP - Community (E)	10+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	A good one to do with Jr. High or High School government class. Eagle Required.
CITIZENSHIP - Nation (E)	7	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	A good one to do with Jr. High or High School government class. Eagle Required.
CITIZENSHIP - World (E)	9+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	This is the most involve citizenship badge, but again a good one to do with Jr. High or High School government class. Eagle Required.
CLIMBING	11+	Medium	1-12 Weeks	1st Class or 14	Some knots and climbing required. Good one for summer camp or high adventure campout.
COIN COLLECTING	4+	Medium	1-12 Weeks	none	Helps if you have a coin collection already started, but a relatively simple badge.
COLLECTIONS	8+	Medium	1-12 Weeks	none	Could do in conjunction with coin collecting ... or why not do PokeMon or Magic cards ... beany babies ... or perhaps something useful!
COMMUNICATIONS (E)	9	Easy	1-4 Weeks	none	Good summer camp or merit badge trail activity ... I'd tell you more, but that's your job!
COMPUTERS	9	Medium	1-12 Weeks	none	Good one for school keyboarding or if you already use the computer for papers, internet and other things. If it's all new to you, this will take some time!
COOKING	4+	Easy	1-8 Weeks	none	Need to do some planning and cooking, but fairly easy. Good summer camp or troop campout related badge.
CRIME PREVENTION	9+	Medium	4-12 Weeks	none	Lot of trips/visits to plan, so this one will take some time.
CYCLING (E Opt)	9+	Medium	3-6 Months	none	Lots of bike rides required for this one. Plan to do it over a year or so.
DENTISTRY	7+	Medium	2-6 Weeks	teeth	These requirements were definitely written by a dental zealot. Not hard, just lots of steps to be done. Do you floss?

DISABILITIES AWARENESS	6+	Hard	3 Months	none	While the political correctness runnth over, this is a merit badge to be proud of. Lots of service project work, but a life/perspective-changing effort.
DOG CARE	9	Medium	2 Months	Helps to have a dog	A good one to do if you have a dog or like animals. If you don't have a dog, you might be able to take care of someone elses for the badge.
DRAFTING	6	Medium	1-8 Weeks	none	Shades of my old mechanical drawing class from high school! Helps to access to a CAD system and drawing tools. Might as well do the architecture badge while you're at it.
ELECTRICITY	11+	Medium	1-2 Weeks	none	Can get most of the information from books at the library. Rated medium because it requires two small projects and has over 10 requirements.
ELECTRONICS	5+	Medium	1-2 Weeks	none	Goes well with electricity, project intensive and requires some math.
EMERGENCY PREP. (E Opt)	9+	Hard	1-6 Weeks	First Aid	This or Lifesaving are Eagle Required. This badge is a breeze if taken shortly after First Aid and Pioneering ... otherwise it's hard.
ENERGY	8+	Medium	3-6 Weeks	Jr/Sr High Science	This is best done in conjunction with a school science class and requires oral and written reports.
ENGINEERING	9+	Medium	1-2 Months	1st Class	Another badge prepared by zealots! You'll know a lot about engineering and get to do some visits and hands-on projects. Learn why most engineers should be required to take the communications merit badge!
ENTREPRENEURSHIP	6+	Hard	3 Months	1st Class	This badge was probably prepared by consultants (like a zealot only with no stake in the outcome)! Does require you to start a business, good joint badge with American Business.
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE (E)	8+	Hard	1-8 Weeks	2nd Class	Eagle Required. Prepared by PC zealots ... for a good cause of course! Good one to start at Summer Camp, but does involve a bunch of activities.
FAMILY LIFE (E)	6	Easy	3 Months	none	Earn brownie points at home! A simple enough merit badge, but it does require some discipline.
FARM MECHANICS	9+	Medium	1-6 Weeks	none	If you live on a farm this is a breeze! If not, your camp ranger or a local farmer would appreciate your projects on this one.
FINGERPRINTING	4	Easy	1 Week	none	You can probably pick up a finger printing kit from your local police department ... and, no, you don't get to cuff anybody!
FIRE SAFETY	11+	Medium	3 Weeks	1st Class	Pyros ... this is the one for you - please! Not hard, but lots of stuff to do, demonstrate and includes a visit to the fire department.
FIRST AID (E)	7+	Hard	1 - 4 Weeks	none	You must know Tenderfoot, 2nd and 1st Class first aid for this, but it's a good way to kill 4 birds with one stone (okay, wound 4 birds and then fix them up). Requires learning and demonstrating CPR. Good one to do before many other badges!
FISH AND WILDLIFE MGMT	7	Medium	1 - 4 Weeks	none	Good Summer Camp badge.
FISHING	8	Medium	1 - ? Weeks	none	Time to complete this is mostly dependent on how quickly you can catch two fish. Scout fishermen are exempt from "trustworthy" only in reporting the size of the fish that got away!
FORESTRY	7+	Hard	1 - 8 Weeks	1st Class	This is a good Summer Camp badge. It requires several "collections"/identifications of plants, trees and shrubs.
GARDENING	4+	Easy	2 Months	none	Just need to watch your garden grow ... and a few other things!
GENEALOGY	10	Medium	2-4 Weeks	none	More than you ever wanted to know about your family roots ... created by a zealot!
GEOLOGY	13+	Hard	1-16 Weeks	none	If you are a rock hound ... this is for you. Otherwise, find a rock hound, it's one only they could appreciate. This is more involved than my Geology 101 class in college ... however, you'll be ready for class!
GOLF	7+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	This is definitely a fun one, play golf and earn a badge!
GRAPHIC ARTS	7+	Medium	2-4 Weeks	none	Good intro to graphic arts and includes a field trip.
HIKING (E Opt)	6	Medium	1-4 Weeks	1st Class First Aid	Eagle alternate badge (swimming or cycling). This is a good one to do over a longer period of time based on troop hikes/events.
HOME REPAIRS	14	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Make the folks happy by becoming Mr. Fix-it. I'm for this one!!!
HORSEMANSHIP	10	Medium	2 Months	Helps to have a horse	A good one to do if you have a horse or like animals. If you don't have a horse, you might be able to take lessons or a merit badge counselor may provide one.
INDIAN LORE	4	Easy	1 Week	none	Could go well with history. This is a nice introductory level approach to the topic. Kudos to the authors.
INSECT STUDY	11	Hard	1-3 Months	none	If your school biology class still requires an insect collection, this will be a natural, otherwise the bug collection could be a show stopper.
JOURNALISM	4+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	This is a nice introductory level approach and very useful for understanding what you read and hear in the news.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	6	Easy	1 Week	none	This is fairly straightforward and a good intro to landscaping.

LAW	10	Medium	2 Weeks	none	I expected a high-falutin' set of requirements, but found these quite reasonable. A good intro.
LEATHERWORK	4	Easy	1 Week	none	Good camp badge in terms of having the materials you need, but can be done at home too.
LIFESAVING (E Opt)	15	Medium	1-4 Weeks	Swimming MB, CPR	Good camp badge for pool, etc. This is Eagle required, but optional if Emergency Preparedness has been earned. A good one to do regardless.
MAMMAL STUDY	5	Medium	1 Week	none	Has many options, some more time-consuming than others.
MEDICINE	11	Hard	1 Month	none	Good introduction, but prepared by zealots. Lots of details in this one.
METALWORK	2+	Easy	1 Week	none	A good one to do in conjunction with metal shop, but simple enough to do. Access to proper tools is helpful.
MODEL DESIGN AND BUILDING	5	Medium	2 Weeks	none	Project planning and model creation required, but a fun one.
MOTORBOATING	6+	Medium	1-6 Weeks	1st Class, CPR	This is a good one to be an older scout, having 1st Class swimming requirements and CPR (via First Aid or other merit badges) - access to a motorboat is required.
MUSIC	4+	Easy	1 Week	none	This will be easy if you consider yourself a good singer or a bit of an extrovert. However, singing well isn't a requirement - so go for it!
NATURE	5+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Good summer camp or merit badge trail activity.
OCEANOGRAPHY	8	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Good in conjunction with high school biology, good selection of options to choose from.
ORIENTEERING	10+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Might be better to be 2nd Class or above, but not essential. You'll know map reading and compass use well after earning this one! Still as a male you may only ask for directions as a last resort!
PAINTING	5	Easy	1 Week	none	An easy one, but useful none-the-less. You do not have to paint the counselor's house!
PERSONAL FITNESS	9+	Medium	3 Months	none	Eagle required ... CHANGING in late 1999 (can use old requirements until 4/1/2000). This'll get you in shape!
PERSONAL MANAGEMENT (E)	9+	Hard	3 Months	none	Eagle required. This is hard because it requires planning and discipline, but provides an invaluable life skill!
PETS	4+	Easy	4 Months	none	Easier that Dog and Horse MBs, but you need 4 months of pet care to earn it.
PHOTOGRAPHY	5+	Medium	2-4 Weeks	none	Helps if you have access to a dark room and photographic equipment, but possibly your school or counselor can help you out.
PIONEERING	9	Medium	1 Week	none	Good scout weekend or summer camp badge. Helps to earn this one on your way to Emergency Preparedness. Plus it's fun!
PLANT SCIENCE	8+	Medium	1-3 Months	none	Good companion to gardening MB. Does require growing some plants, hence 1-3 Months.
PLUMBING	8	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Does require using a torch and solder, and some plumbing materials and equipment.
POTTERY	6+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	You might find a ceramic/pottery shop offering a course or your counselor providing resources to assist you in doing the projects.
PUBLIC HEALTH	7+	Medium	1-2 Months	none	Requires a few visits, so you'll need some extra time for logistics. And remember to wash your hands!
PUBLIC SPEAKING	5+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Good to do in conjunction with a high school speech class, or possibly find a Toastmaster's Club! A good skill to acquire. A close companion of the Communications MB.
PULP AND PAPER	8	Medium	2-6 Weeks	none	Requires some time to arrange a visit and carry-out your projects.
RADIO	8+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Almost zealot status, but fairly straight forward. Find a local ham (radio operator) if your counselor isn't one!
RAILROADING	7	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Good Merit Badge trail or local model RR club activity.
READING	4	Easy	1-4 Weeks	none	Includes a good service project. The reading can likely be done in conjunction with school.
REPTILE AND AMPHIBIAN	10+	Medium	1 Month	none	Requires keep a reptile or amphibian for a month ... tell mom you have to for your badge. This does get a zealot award.
RIFLE SHOOTING	10ish	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Good Summer Camp badge.
ROWING	11+	Medium	1 Week	CPR, Swim Test	Do this one after First Aid and 1st Class or swimming MB.
SAFETY	6+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Fairly easy with on project involved.
SALESMANSHIP	8	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	You are likely already a pro based on school and scout sales alone ... might as well earn the badge!
SCHOLARSHIP	5+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Good student or improving those grades, get credit with an MB.
SCULPTURE	2	Easy	1 Week	none	Does have some writing, interviewing and visits.
SHOTGUN SHOOTING	12+	Hard	1-8 Weeks	none	Play with clay, earn a badge! Probably do this in art class at some time or another.
SKATING	6+	Medium	1 Week	1st Class First Aid	Might be good to do in conjunction with rifle shooting.
SMALL-BOAT SAILING	10+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	1st Class and CPR	Good basic intro on your choice of three types of skating, does require a demonstration of skill.

SNOW SPORTS	15	Medium	1-4 Weeks	1st Class First Aid	A fun badge, but requires study and skill, so this may take awhile to complete. Was called Skiing MB which better describes it.
SOIL AND WATER CONS.	7++	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Good Summer Camp or merit badge trail project, but can do any time.
SPACE EXPLORATION	8+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Designed by zealots, but you get to shoot a model rocket!
SPORTS	9+	Medium	1 Month	1st Class First Aid	Requires participation in 2 sports, but should be a simple one for boys already doing recreational or school sports.
STAMP COLLECTING	8+	Medium	1 Month	none	If you like stamps and/or collecting, this is a good one. Think of stamps as Pokemon cards!
SURVEYING	6	Medium	1 Week	none	Good basic intro to surveying. Your counselor, city manager/engineering dept., local college, etc. are all likely to have equipment and time to help you with this one.
SWIMMING (E Opt)	9+	Medium	1 Week	CPR, 1st Class Swim Test	An eagle required badge (in option with cycling and hiking). I recommend this one, if physically able, even if you don't like to swim. It's an important life skill, even if just for safety.
TEXTILE	6	Easy	1 Week	none	Good introduction to textiles and the industry.
THEATER	6+	Medium	1 Week	none	Good one if you are involved in school Muse or Theater productions. This can be fun for campfires as well!
TRAFFIC SAFETY	6	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Requires a project related to traffic safety, but a good one to do before or during driver's training!
TRUCK TRANSPORTATION	11+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Requires a visit, but other than being designed by zealots, it's a good introduction to the industry.
VETERINARY MEDICINE	10	Medium	1 Month	none	Good badge for animal lovers. Requires assisting a Vet over a period of time.
WATERSKIING	11	Medium	1-4 Weeks	1st Class, CPR	A fun badge, but will require demonstration of basic skills. Access to equipment is important - which your counselor usually has access to. Sometimes local park districts have programs that might assist with many or all requirements.
WEATHER	10	Medium	1 Week	none	While there are several requirements, the fall in the easy category. Does require a 5 minute talk.
WHITewater	14	Hard	1-4 Weeks	1st Class, CPR, Canoeing	This one is hard by virtue of the number of requirements and pre-requisites. Even though it was designed by zealots, it is important, for safety reasons, to have so many requirements.
WILDERNESS SURVIVAL	13	Medium	1-4 Weeks	1st Class First Aid	Fun, useful, but fairly involved. A good summer camp badge, but can be done in conjunction with campouts.
WOOD CARVING	5	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Fun and only rated "medium" because two carvings are required ... watch your fingers!
WOODWORK	6+	Medium	1-4 Weeks	none	Requires a visit and a project or two, but if you like to make things out of wood ... this is for you.

E = 12 Eagle Required Merit Badges

E Opt. = Eagle Required Merit Badge with an option (Emergency Preparedness or Lifesaving; Swimming, Hiking or Cycling)

* = Mr. D's recommendations - Not usually a requirement!

Tips: you might be able to do some interviews over the internet via e-mail, instant messages, or newsgroups.

10 or more requirements means it's a more recent badge and/or the group promoting it was over-zealots.

+ means that there are multi-part requirements.