

Boards of Review—a primer assembled from 2006 BSA training (available at <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/18-625.pdf>)

Boards of review (BORs) are how the troop tracks the progress of a Scout to determine his understanding of the ideals of scouting and how he applies them in the troop. If the BOR is for rank advancement, the board will satisfy itself that the Scout has done what he was supposed to do for that rank and will review with the Scout the requirements for the next rank.

A BOR is conducted by at least three members of the troop committee. The Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters are not members of the BOR nor are the parents of the Scout. All boards must constitute at least three and not more than six members who are all 21 years of age or older.

A BOR focuses on a Scout's accomplishment and progress. The BOR is a chance to get a sense of how the troop is doing and to offer support where needed. It gives three to six other sets of ears a chance to hear how a Scout is doing, how he feels about the troop and his role in it, how he is advancing, and whether he is striving to live up to Scouting's ideals.

The board of review is not an interrogation, nor a retesting of a Scout's competence. Rather, it is a checkup to see that what should have been done actually was done. It is a friendly growth experience. All this should be accomplished in 15 minutes, though an Eagle Scout BOR may take up to half an hour.

Simple questions like "What did you cook for your First Class meal?" or Where and When or How questions will soon tell the board whether achievements were properly accomplished. In all cases, open-ended questions are good to prompt comments by the Scout. You should encourage the Scout to come to conclusions on his own, not simply tell him what you think.

You can and should ask a Scout how he felt about certain accomplishments, how he felt he handled himself. Ask a Scout about his leadership position, whether he believes he was successful or had problems.

A board can expect a Scout to be neat in appearance and properly uniformed.

Some Scouts may freeze up at the BOR and become silent or monosyllabic in answers. Or they may forget simple items. The board should encourage and support Scouts in a friendly, kind, and courteous manner and help them become more comfortable.

Once you have interviewed the Scout, the board will ask him to leave the room so that the members may deliberate. As this is often the most stressful part of the process for the Scout, this deliberation should not be long. However, it should be long enough to have a discussion that leads to a unanimous decision. When the meeting is finished, the

Scout should be invited back in to hear the board's decision, which, of course, should be delivered in a friendly and supportive manner, regardless of what the decision is.

The Scout holds his new rank as of the date of the board of review. For ranks where a period of tenure is required, that period begins with the date of passing of the BOR for the previous rank.