PARENT'S GUIDE · BOARD OF REVIEW

Preparing for the First Class Board of Review

TYPICAL LENGTH	WHO'S ON THE BOARD	TONE
15–20 minutes	3–4 troop committee members	A real conversation; often looks ahead to Eagle

First Class means your scout has learned the core Scouting skills: cooking for the patrol, swimming, lashing, first aid, navigation. The board treats it as a milestone, and the conversation usually goes deeper. Members will ask what your scout has learned about themselves and what comes next. Many boards use this one to talk about merit badges, leadership positions, and whether Eagle is a goal. Scouts who know what they want to do next tend to leave energized.

What the Board Will Likely Talk About

Leading the patrol kitchen

Planning the menu, budgeting, buying food, and serving as patrol cook. A big step in responsibility.

Skills that came hard

Swimming, the orienteering course, lashings. Boards love hearing about something that took several tries.

Citizenship

Their conversation with a community leader about citizens' rights, and the environmental issue they looked into.

What's next

Merit badges they want, interest in a leadership position, and whether they're thinking about Eagle.

Questions to Ask at Home

Ask these casually, not as a mock interview. You're helping your scout remember their own stories, not rehearsing answers.

1. **“What was it like being in charge of cooking for your patrol?”**

   A strong answer: How they handled directing other scouts, what went wrong, and what they learned about leading friends.

2. **“Which First Class requirement was the hardest for you, and how did you get through it?”**

   A strong answer: A real struggle, like the swim test or the orienteering course, and what kept them going.

3. **“Who did you meet with about citizens' rights, and what stuck with you?”**

   A strong answer: One specific thing they learned or found surprising.

4. **“What environmental issue did you look into? What could actually be done about it?”**

   A strong answer: A local issue and at least one realistic idea.

5. **“Are you thinking about Eagle? What do you want to do next in the troop?”**

   A strong answer: Any honest answer. "I'm not sure yet, but I want to be patrol leader" is great.

Before the Board

- [ ] All First Class requirements are signed off, including the swimmer test and the second four-week activity log.
- [ ] Outings are recorded: ten activities, six of them overnight campouts.
- [ ] Scoutmaster Conference is done and the board is scheduled.
- [ ] Scout has a rough idea of their next goals: merit badges, a position, a summer camp.
- [ ] Uniform and handbook are ready.

Tips for Parents

Talk with your scout about goals before the board. Not to script answers, but so they've actually thought about it.

If your scout has gotten busier with school and sports, be honest about it. Boards aren't looking for perfect attendance, just real engagement.

This is a good time to look at the Eagle-required merit badges together. Some, like Personal Fitness and Personal Management, take months.

> **Watch out:** The swimmer test is the requirement that most often holds up First Class. If your scout hasn't passed it, summer camp is usually the easiest place to do it.

Good to Know About Every Board of Review

It isn't a retest. The requirements were already signed off. Board members can ask how your scout learned a skill or what they got out of it, but they shouldn't make them retie knots or recite requirements. Your scout doesn't need to cram.

Parents usually wait outside. The board is three to six adult committee members talking with your scout. Parents can't serve on their own child's board, and most troops ask parents to wait outside. Check your troop's practice, and don't take it personally — the point is for your scout to speak for themselves.

There are no "right" answers. The board wants to hear how Scouting is going and what your scout has learned, in their own words. An honest "the hike was really hard and I almost quit" goes over much better than a polished speech.

Uniform matters, but not that much. Scouts should wear the uniform as neatly as they can. Missing pieces or an outgrown shirt shouldn't hold up a rank. If you're unsure what your troop expects, ask.

If it's not approved, there's a next step. Boards rarely turn a scout down. If they do, they have to explain what's missing and how to fix it, and the scout can come back. There's also a formal appeal process. A board that "continues" a review just needs something finished first; it isn't a failure.

Troops and councils handle scheduling and logistics differently. When in doubt, ask your troop's advancement chair.