



Venturing Out Troop Trip Planning

Information contained in this booklet has been collected from various sources including other council training guides, GSUSA publications and the GSUSA website. We gratefully acknowledge their contributions.

To complete this self-study, you'll need:

The most recent copies of the [Safety-Activity Checkpoints](#) and [Volunteer Essentials Leader Notebook](#) including GSSA Policies & Procedures

This self-study helps adult volunteers use *Safety-Activity Checkpoints* and GSSA's *Volunteer Essentials Leader Notebook* to locate information to use progression when planning appropriate day outings beyond the meeting place such as field trips to museums, malls, parks, zoos, etc., as well as indoor overnight (non-camping) outings for the troop, such as lock-ins or overnights in hotels. ALWAYS refer to these two resources when planning any outing away from the meeting place!

Topics:

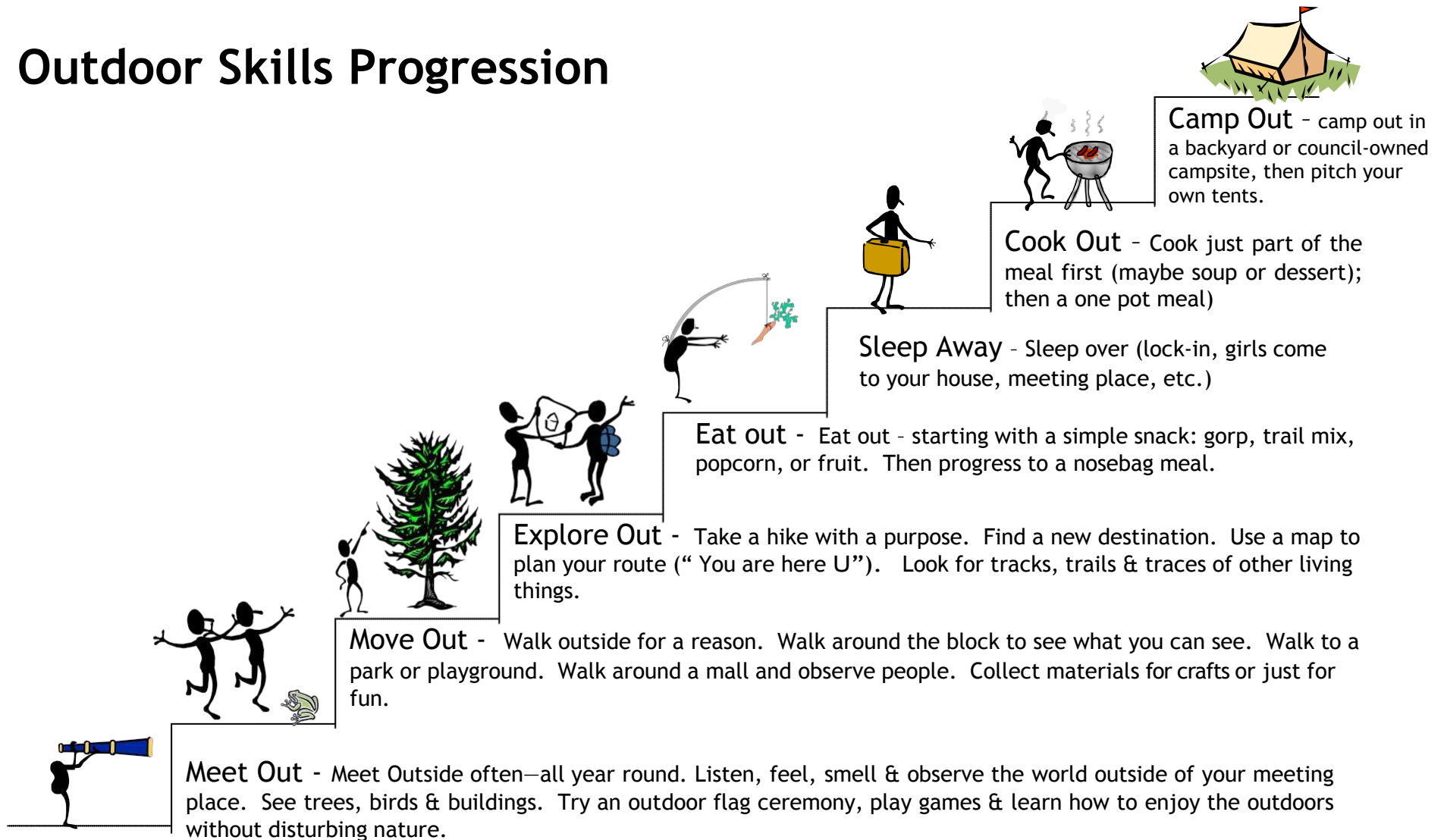
- Readiness
- Questions to ask before you venture out
- Responsibilities
- Outdoor skills progression
- Progression of trips
- Planning
- What to wear in the outdoors
- Snoops and stuff

Objectives:

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Recognize readiness indicators
- Identify responsibilities of leaders and girls in the planning process
- Recognize steps in outdoor skills progression and importance of following progression
- Locate guidelines relevant to troop trips in *Safety-Activity Checkpoints* and *Volunteer Essentials Leader Notebook* and identify forms required for various trips
- Explain importance of appropriate attire for out-of-doors trips
- Locate ideas for games and activities to use outdoors
- Understand that liquid charcoal starter is never to be used around the girls—a piece of match-light charcoal or approved homemade firestarter should be used instead
- Identify equipment necessary for troop trips

Outdoor Skills Progression



Look Out - Look outside and talk about animals, weather & signs of the seasons. Make leaf prints & plant seeds.

Progression of Trips

See additional information in *Safety-Activity Checkpoints* and *Volunteer Essentials Leader Notebook*

Simple Meeting Time or Day Trips:

1. Council approval not required; notify Service Unit Manager (or Field Executive if no Service Unit Manager for your area.)
2. New troops and those who have not taken the GSSA camping pre-course or other comparable courses must be accompanied by an adult who has completed *Venturing Out*.
3. For activities which require persons with specialized training or certifications (such as lifeguard for any water activities), notify Service Unit Manager (or Field Executive) at least two weeks in advance.
4. Must have first-aider and first aid kit.
5. Review *Safety-Activity Checkpoints* for girl/adult ratio; if multi-level troop, follow ratio given for girls in youngest level.
6. Ensure each girl and adult participant is a registered member and that each adult has an approved [volunteer application](#) on file with GSSA.
7. Parent permission required; have [permission forms](#) signed by parent or guardian [and health form](#) for each girl.
8. Copy of the health form and permission slip is located in the car in which the girl is riding.
9. Directions to the location and emergency and other contact phone numbers are provided for each driver.
10. Vehicles carrying Girl Scouts do not caravan.
11. Drivers must have completed volunteer application, background check authorization, and driving record request forms and have received notification that their applications have been processed. Drivers must be at least 21 years old and have liability insurance on the vehicle which will be used to transport Girl Scouts; there must be a seat belt for each person.
12. No additional insurance is required.
13. Consider distance when planning various grade-level trips; younger girls may tire more easily than older girls.

NOTE: Day trips to council camps also require completion of [Camp Reservation](#) form and are on a first-come, first-served basis. For Camp Humming Hills and Kamp Kiwanis, contact the Montgomery Service Center. For Camp Sid Edmonds and Camp Scoutshire Woods, contact the Mobile Service Center.

Overnight Trips/Camping on Council or Non-Council Property: (one or two nights, not including a federal holiday)

NOTE: Day trips (only) are recommended for Daisy Girl Scouts.

1. Council approval is required.
2. For approval of sleepovers, lock-ins, hotel stays, etc., camping on council or non-council property, submit [Overnight Trip/Camping Application Form](#) at least two (2) weeks in advance.
3. If camping, must have troop camper who has completed the GSSA camping certification course or submit required documentation of other equivalent Girl Scout camping course.
4. If water activities are planned, must have adult certified in lifeguard and basic water rescue/small craft safety training as applicable.
5. Must have first-aider and first aid kit.
6. Review *Safety-Activity Checkpoints* for girl/adult ratio; if multi-level troop, follow ratio given for girls in youngest level.
7. Ensure each girl and adult participant is a registered member and that each adult has an approved volunteer application on file with this Council.
8. Parent permission required; have [permission forms](#) signed by parent or guardian and [health form](#) for each girl.
9. Copy of the health form and permission slip is located in the car in which the girl is riding.
10. Directions to the location and emergency and other contact phone numbers are provided for each driver.
11. Vehicles carrying Girl Scouts do not caravan.
12. Drivers must have completed [volunteer application, background check authorization, and driving record request forms](#) and have received notification that their applications have been processed. Drivers must be at least 21 years old. (see Transportation Policy in *Volunteer Essentials Leader Notebook*)
13. Transportation:
 - Cars, vans, buses, planes, or rental vehicles must have seat belts for each passenger. This council does not allow the use of 15-passenger vans.
 - Must have the minimum amount of liability insurance state dictates.
 - If vehicle is leased, rented, charter, or borrowed, complete and return the Vehicle Rental/Lease/Charter Application to council at least four (4) weeks before the activity. Council approval is required; additional insurance may be required.
14. Accommodations:
 - Hotels, state parks, Girl Scout camps
 - Reservations for overnight accommodations are confirmed in writing and sufficient space is reserved so that each girl has her own bed.

Extended Overnight Trips/Camping on Council or Non-Council Property:

For trips of more than two nights, not including federal holidays, follow ALL of the same guidelines listed above and purchase required extended trip insurance, Plan 3E or 3P. Contact GSSA Service Center for information.

Venturing Out Overnight

Overnight experiences away from home can be important to the development of girls because they provide a “laboratory experience in life” where girls get to test themselves in new but safe circumstances—ones for which they have planned and prepared. Girls grow as a result because these activities:

- Enhance trust among girls as they build friendships and teamwork skills.
- Build self-confidence.
- Expand horizons as girls live and work in a new environment.
- Build bonds between adults and girls.
- Provide opportunities for girls to increase their skills and feel good about their accomplishments.
- FUN

In order to be ready to *Venture Out*, a Girl Scout needs to be ready emotionally, physically, have proven competency in skills involved, and must want to go on an outing. When these criteria are met, most Girl Scouts will be ready.

In a few groups, all of the girls may be ready to *Venture Out* at the same time. In other groups, only some girls will be ready. For Girls who appear apprehensive, their first *Venture Out* overnight might be with an experienced troop, sister style. These indicators also include those needed for troop camping, some of which would not apply to simple day and/or overnight trips such as lock-ins or hotels.

Readiness Indicators

Emotional Readiness

- Is not afraid to be away from home or parents for several hours or overnight (and parents are prepared to let daughter go)
- Wants to go
- Doesn't always have to have her own way; can give in graciously.
- Can function as a member of a group
- Can manage with little or no privacy
- Is willing to sleep, eat, play with all girls, not just with best friends
- Can cope with unknowns such as:
 - *strange places (including bathroom),
 - *darkness (no electricity),
 - *woods and new sounds especially at night,
 - *spiders, bugs and worms (they come indoors, too)
- Can accept people with physical disabilities

Physical Readiness

- Strong enough to carry own equipment
- Has strength and coordination needed for planned activities: can sweep and mop, move tables and chairs, hike “the mile”, etc
- Has stamina, does not tire quickly

Skills and Knowledge Readiness

- Can help plan a simple trip
- Can read and follow a recipe or a kaper chart
- Can use kitchen implements safely: hand-operated can opener, grater, peeler, paring knife.
- Knows how to operate a flashlight, camera, etc.
- Can read a map
- Knows when to use Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Can make a bed, clean a toilet
- Can find wood, build fire and/or operate type stove to be used
- Can wash dishes, cleanup kitchen/cooking area, and store food properly

Experience and Proven Ability Readiness

- Has followed orders/instructions previously—satisfactorily
- Has been on a series of day trips, cookouts and/or has been to day or resident camp
- Has done all the camp jobs usually found on kaper charts
- Has practiced in troop meetings her ability to pack and repack a suitcase, roll and tie a bed roll, etc.

Questions to ask before venturing out

1. Who will be going?
2. Where are we going?
3. Why are we going?
4. When are we going?
5. How will we get there?
6. How much will it cost?
7. How will we pay for it?
8. How should we get ready?
9. Where is emergency help available?
10. What safety factors must we consider?
11. What will we do along the way?
12. What will we do when we get there?
13. What will we do when we return home?

Leader Responsibilities:

1. Inform council or service unit; obtain permission if necessary
2. Bring paperwork - completed health history, permission slips parent contact information
Make copies for drivers to place in the vehicle in which girl is riding.
3. Bring equipment, food, First Aid Kit.
4. Make sure lists developed by the girls get to the right place.
5. Personal Gear, gear for sleeping outside, may need more clothes
6. Shopping list for food and supplies
7. Arrange for transportation -older girls sometimes do this
8. Parent information, complete itinerary
9. What is expected of the girls
10. What is expected of the parents
(Do NOT pack for the girls and be on time to drop off and pick up)
11. Make sure girls practice skills in troop setting before event.
12. Make sure all forms have been completed and sent to council in a timely manner so you can be notified of approval prior to the last pre-trip meeting with the girls.

Girl Responsibilities:

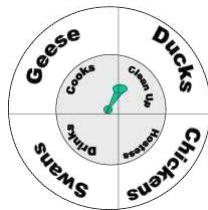
1. Girls must understand the necessity of teamwork—everyone needs to do her part or nothing will run smoothly. On a campout, the kaper chart becomes a framework for community living.
2. Girls keep parents involved and informed. Parents can't plan around an event if they don't know it exists. Make sure permission slips are signed.
3. Girls must understand their relationship with adults.
4. Girls plan menu and make shopping list; older girls may be able to help with shopping.
5. Girls make a packing list of personal items needed and equipment needed.
6. Girls look at map to help plan itinerary.
7. Girls practice skills before going on trip.
8. Girls check Safety-Activity Checkpoints to make sure everything is done.

Planning the Venture

- Everybody helps choose the menu. Going shopping with an adult is fun too.
- You may be doing some cooking. Practice using kitchen utensils by preparing troop snacks.
- Learning what to take on an outing can be fun if you do it with games: Cut pictures from magazines and fill a “duffel bag” (paper bag, small box) with items needed for the trip or remove items from pre-packed duffel and decide what is not needed.
- Learn a new song to take along with you. (Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts can be a big help with this.)
- Look on a map to see where you are and where you are going.
- The group artists can help make a colorful **kaper chart**. Kapers divide up jobs so everyone contributes and no one gets stuck with all the unpleasant jobs. The jobs may vary from trip to trip.



Sample Kaper Charts:



Hand out lunches	Sue, Jane
Set table	Cathy, Gina, Petra
Make drinks	Rema, Liz

Health and Safety

What does or does not go into a First Aid kit? Put the necessary first aid items in a pile with non-first aid kit things and let the girls sort them into “Yes” and “No” piles.

Don't forget Health Histories and Permission Slips!

Venturing Out

- Allow plenty of time to explore when you arrive at your destination, indoors or outdoors.
- Always travel with a buddy. Two by two is the thing to do!
- Set limits and times for exploring and checking in.
- Keep a record of your venturing out. Start a troop trip memory book.



Back Home

- Talk about the trip.
- What did you like most?
- What didn't you like?
- Are you ready for a more advanced trip?

What to Wear in the Outdoors

In order to make the outdoor experience a fun and comfortable one for everyone, careful thought and planning should be given to what is worn. Obviously the time of year, the type of activity, and the weather will enter into the decision. Listed below are some suggestions to assist you as you train your girls.

Fabrics: Cotton is the fabric choice for warm weather. It is comfortable, sturdy, and will hold moisture which is the reason it keeps you cool in the summer. A breeze blowing across a damp T-shirt evaporates the moisture, taking body heat with it. For this same reason cotton will not keep you warm in wet or cold weather. The perspiration from your body is absorbed by the cotton and this dampness next to your skin lowers the body temperature.

Wool is the choice for cold weather and unlike cotton will still keep you warm even if damp. Wool socks can “wick” the moisture away from your feet. A wool sweater will insulate you from a cold wind if covered by a “windbreaker” jacket.

The secret to being comfortable in the out-of-doors is to dress in layers. Each garment traps a layer of air which acts as extra insulation. Layers can be added as the temperature drops and taken off as the body warms up.

Head gear - bandanna, knitted cap, visors, broad brim hat for sun protection

Dress in Layers - for warmth

Raincoat, poncho, and boots - when necessary

Lightweight jacket, warm gloves or work gloves - depending on weather and activity

Socks - protection against blisters, poison ivy, insects, etc.

Sturdy Shoes with closed heels and toes- no sandals, flip-flops, etc.

Relay Game: Bring bags of all types of clothes from home—jeans, foot wear, rain gear, head gear, socks, jackets, pajamas, etc. Don't forget to include some things you would definitely not wear like halter tops, sandals, short shorts, etc. Divide girls into teams with one bag of clothes per team. Each team selects one girl to be the “doll.” The leader calls out the type of weather to dress for and the team dresses their “doll.” When finished the doll is checked to see if it was dressed correctly.

Snoops and Stuff

The following “snoops” and game ideas are examples of fun ways to explore the out-of doors. Girls can experiment and develop their own games and have fun while learning and teaching. You can give them a basic purpose for a game (e.g. make up a game that uses five kinds of leaves and teaches something about each one), then let them come up with “how to play” the game. Competitions are stimulating and stretch abilities along with promoting cooperation among team members. Rearrange teams periodically to keep one group from dominating all games that are competitive.

1. Rainbow Snoop - Find and list as many colors in nature as possible. Good any time but especially after a rain.
2. Onion Snoop—Mark and follow a trail by rubbing onions on trees, smell to follow. Or see how many different items you can identify by using one of your five senses...smell, hear, feel, see, and taste.
3. Treasure Snoop -A trail with a treasure placed at the end. Treasure may be food, fruit, etc.
4. Mystery Snoop - Leaders carefully chart two or three different routes from point of departure to the goal of the hike. Directions are carefully hidden at several points on the route, which tell, in turn, where the next set of directions can be found. The unit is divided into two or three groups and given all directions as to where the next set of directions will be found. The groups all finally arrive by different routes at the same place, where fire, food and fun are provided.
5. Penny Snoop -Use a penny to determine what direction the group will take; heads-right; tails-left.
6. Monogram Snoop - Try to find three or more nature objects beginning with your initials.
7. Chain Snoop - March in couples, on whistle every five minutes, girl on the left moves up one partner and the first girl in the line goes to the rear.
8. Alphabet Snoop - Look for things in nature that start with the letter “a” and so on.
9. Magic Circle - Teams compete to find the most (list on paper) objects within a circle of string placed on ground.
10. Habitat Snoop - Look for birds’ nests, spider webs, cocoons, or other animal homes. Use any other nature theme.
11. Historical Snoop - Follow a walking tour of a city’s historical area or hike part of a trail used by Indians or pioneers.
12. Nature Bingo - Using BINGO card format, fill in squares with names of things that might be found in the woods. First team to BINGO wins.

See your age-level materials, [Outdoor Education in Girl Scouting](#), and *Games for Girl Scouts* (available for review at the service centers) for additional ideas.



Girl Scouts®

Venturing Out Troop Trip Planning

I have completed the Venturing Out self-study course.

I feel confident that I can find the information I need for planning and taking trips with my Girl Scout troop.

Yes

No

Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____ Cell _____

E-mail: _____

Troop #: _____ Service Unit #: _____ Date: _____

To receive credit for this course, please mail this page to the nearest service center or e-mail it to training@girlscoutssa.org.

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