**[The 2024 merit badge rankings: Take a swing at guessing what made the largest gains this year!](https://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2025/03/06/the-2024-merit-badge-rankings-take-a-swing-at-guessing-what-made-the-largest-gains-this-year/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**

[Aaron On Scouting](https://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/)by Gina Circelli / Mar 6, 2025 at 8:06 AM

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Our annual merit badge roundup has become a regular Scouting fan favorite. It’s the perfect glimpse into what elements of the program youth are interested in, are pouring time into and are emerging more knowledgeable about.

Reading this post is a great way to not only learn about Scouts but also about the general interests of youth from around the country. In addition, you should use this information to inform how you structure meetings, outings and recruitment.

If you review this recap each year, you’ll notice things look pretty typical … until you check out the merit badges that climbed the charts. Read the entire post so you don’t miss out on what youth are showing more interest in than we’ve ever seen before!

**The 10 most-earned merit badges of 2024**

Here are the badges most earned by Scouts last year. Badges are in bold if they flipped rankings slightly. To compare, check out last year’s post on the [2022 rankings.](https://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2024/02/13/2023-merit-badge-rankings-a-look-into-scouts-current-interests-and-achievements/)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***2024 Rank*** | ***Merit Badge*** |
| 1 | **First Aid** |
| 2 | **Citizenship in the World** |
| 3 | Swimming |
| 4 | **Citizenship in Society** |
| 5 | **Citizenship in the Nation** |
| 6 | **Communication** |
| **7** | **Camping** |
| 8 | **Environmental Science** |
| 9 | **Personal Fitness** |
| 10 | Cooking |

**The alternative top 10**

When we take out the badges required to earn Eagle Scout and the Eagle Scout elective badges, the most-earned list looks like the ranking below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***2024 Rank*** | ***Merit Badge*** |
| 1 | Fingerprinting |
| 2 | **Rifle Shooting** |
| 3 | Archery |
| 4 | **Leatherwork** |
| 5 | **Chess** |
| 6 | Wood Carving |
| 7 | Kayaking |
| 8 | Art |
| 9 | Fishing |
| 10 | Wilderness Survival |

**The 10 rarest merit badges last year**

Take a look at the badges earned least last year. If your Scouts hunt for the rarest badges, this is the list for them.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***2024 Rank*** | ***Merit Badge*** |
| 129 | **Gardening** |
| 130 | **Dentistry** |
| 131 | **Landscape Architecture** |
| 132 | **Journalism** |
| 133 | **American Labor** |
| 134 | **Composite Materials** |
| 135 | **Drafting** |
| 136 | **Stamp Collecting** |
| 137 | **Surveying** |
| 138 | Bugling |

**Noteworthy changes in the rankings**

And finally, here is where some seriously interesting shake-ups happened! Check out Golf’s huge lift in the rankings.

**Top gains**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2024 Rank** | **Merit Badge** | **2023 Rank** | **Difference** |
| 81 | Golf | 121 | 40 |
| 31 | Sustainability | 65 | 34 |
| 101 | American Business | 112 | 11 |
| 121 | Energy | 131 | 10 |
| 65 | Salesmanship | 73 | 8 |
| 49 | Search and Rescue | 57 | 8 |

**The complete lineup**

The merit badges in blue text are required to earn Eagle Scout. Remember, a total of 21 merit badges must be earned for the Eagle Scout rank, including these 14 merit badges:

1. First Aid
2. Citizenship in the Community
3. Citizenship in the Nation
4. Citizenship in Society
5. Citizenship in the World
6. Communication
7. Cooking
8. Personal Fitness
9. Emergency Preparedness OR Lifesaving
10. Environmental Science OR Sustainability
11. Personal Management
12. Swimming OR Hiking OR Cycling
13. Camping
14. Family Life

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***2024*** | ***Merit Badge*** |
| 1 | First Aid |
| 2 | Citizenship in the World |
| 3 | Swimming |
| 4 | Citizenship in Society |
| 5 | Citizenship in the Nation |
| 6 | Communication |
| 7 | Camping |
| 8 | Environmental Science |
| 9 | Personal Fitness |
| 10 | Cooking |
| 11 | Personal Management |
| 12 | Citizenship in the Community |
| 13 | Family Life |
| 14 | Emergency Preparedness |
| 15 | Fingerprinting |
| 16 | Rifle Shooting |
| 17 | Archery |
| 18 | Leatherwork |
| 19 | Chess |
| 20 | Wood Carving |
| 21 | Kayaking |
| 22 | Art |
| 23 | Fishing |
| 24 | Wilderness Survival |
| 25 | Canoeing |
| 26 | Photography |
| 27 | Shotgun Shooting |
| 28 | Climbing |
| 29 | Lifesaving |
| 30 | Space Exploration |
| 31 | Sustainability  |
| 32 | Mammal Study |
| 33 | Astronomy |
| 34 | Aviation |
| 35 | Geology |
| 36 | Metalwork |
| 37 | Small Boat Sailing |
| 38 | Engineering |
| 39 | Basketry |
| 40 | Nature |
| 41 | Welding |
| 42 | Music |
| 43 | Robotics |
| 44 | Weather |
| 45 | Pioneering |
| 46 | Geocaching |
| 47 | Game Design |
| 48 | Automotive Maintenance |
| 49 | Search and Rescue |
| 50 | Fire Safety |
| 51 | Sculpture |
| 52 | Chemistry |
| 53 | Fish & Wildlife Management |
| 54 | Moviemaking |
| 55 | Pottery |
| 56 | Orienteering |
| 57 | Forestry |
| 58 | Horsemanship |
| 59 | Electricity |
| 60 | Signs, Signals, and Codes |
| 61 | Animation |
| 62 | Motor Boating |
| 63 | Indian Lore |
| 64 | Oceanography |
| 65 | Salesmanship |
| 66 | Nuclear Science |
| 67 | Pulp and Paper |
| 68 | Electronics |
| 69 | Digital Technology |
| 70 | Traffic Safety |
| 71 | Soil and Water Conservation |
| 72 | Hiking\*\* |
| 73 | Railroading |
| 74 | Snow Sports |
| 75 | Rowing |
| 76 | Public Speaking |
| 77 | Collections |
| 78 | Scouting Heritage |
| 79 | Bird Study |
| 80 | Crime Prevention |
| 81 | Golf |
| 82 | Disabilities Awareness |
| 83 | Radio |
| 84 | Archaeology |
| 85 | Reptile and Amphibian Study |
| 86 | Entrepreneurship |
| 87 | American Heritage |
| 88 | Woodwork |
| 89 | Painting |
| 90 | Pets |
| 91 | Law |
| 92 | Mining in Society |
| 93 | Programming |
| 94 | Plumbing |
| 95 | Exploration |
| 96 | Coin Collecting |
| 97 | Architecture |
| 98 | Sports |
| 99 | Animal Science |
| 100 | Fly Fishing |
| 101 | American Business |
| 102 | Cycling\*\* |
| 103 | Textile |
| 104 | Model Design and Building |
| 105 | Scholarship |
| 106 | Backpacking |
| 107 | Reading |
| 108 | Whitewater |
| 109 | Safety |
| 110 | Graphic Arts |
| 111 | Insect Study |
| 112 | Home Repairs |
| 113 | Theater |
| 114 | Dog Care |
| 115 | Skating |
| 116 | Genealogy |
| 117 | Inventing |
| 118 | Plant Science |
| 119 | Public Health |
| 120 | American Cultures |
| 121 | Energy |
| 122 | Veterinary Medicine |
| 123 | Medicine/Health Care Professions |
| 124 | Athletics |
| 125 | Water Sports |
| 126 | SCUBA Diving |
| 127 | Farm Mechanics |
| 128 | Truck Transportation |
| 129 | Gardening |
| 130 | Dentistry |
| 131 | Landscape Architecture |
| 132 | Journalism |
| 133 | American Labor |
| 134 | Composite Materials |
| 135 | Drafting |
| 136 | Stamp Collecting |
| 137 | Surveying |
| 138 | Bugling |