

## A Guide for Badge Mentors to Planning Personal Achievement Badge Adventures

The Personal Achievement Badge program requires the youth to start with several personal goals, not with a predetermined checklist. When a youth decides to take on the challenge of achieving a badge, the youth first chooses the badge on which to focus and then gives some thought as to why he or she wants to do it. Once the youth has a general idea, he or she needs to meet with a badge mentor to develop a plan, using the Personal Achievement Badge template. The badge mentor could be a Scouter, parent or an appropriate youth leader (Patrol or Troop Leader, Cub who is assisting with Beaver Colony, etc.). The mentor helps the youth develop his or her objectives by asking a series of questions:

1. **“What is your end goal? What would you like to accomplish? Why would you like to achieve this badge? What do you hope to be able to do better?”**

Work with the youth to come up with a fairly clear goal for their badge adventures, and keep in mind that his or her goal may change through the planning process. For example, if a youth is pursuing the Year-round Fitness badge and has a goal of “I want to cook more healthy meals,” help him or her to focus this goal into something more specific and achievable, such as “I want to be able to cook a balanced meal for my entire family,” or “I want to make a healthy breakfast for my parents.”

2. **“What experience do you have already that goes with this badge theme?”**

In order to establish fair objectives, we need to know where the youth currently is in his or her level of skill, compared to where he or she wants to be. The answer to this question will also help determine if his or her end goal is appropriate. Using the cooking example, if you are working with a Cub Scout who has never cooked anything before, then “I want to be able to cook a balanced meal for my entire family” is probably not a reasonable goal. Perhaps it should be scaled back to “I want to be able to make myself a healthy after-school snack.”

3. **“What do you need to learn or to experience to meet your goal?”**

Work with the youth to break down the steps to achieve his or her goal. Use the Personal Achievement badge template. For a goal of preparing a healthy meal or snack, this could include identifying nutritious ingredients, learning how to use a stove, knowing how to safely handle kitchen tools and so on.

4. **“How can we make this into an adventure?”**

Remember, an adventure is something the youth has not done before—and it is fun! Use the brainstorming from the previous question and the sample ideas for each Personal Achievement badge to develop a clear step-by-step plan for the adventure. These steps might all be part of one of their adventures for the badge, or the steps may turn into separate adventures, depending on how many aspects of that badge theme interest the youth. Scouts are especially encouraged to explore one adventure more thoroughly, choosing something with five different goals.

5. **Although the PA badge plan is now done, you still have an opportunity to help the youth on their journey. For each objective, ask the youth planning questions like:**

- “How could you find out more about this?”
- “What could you do to improve your skill in this?”
- “Who could you ask for help with this?”
- “Where could you go to get more information for this?”
- “Where could you get the needed supplies?”
- “What safety issues will you need to consider?”

Remember to check in with the youth along the way to make sure that the adventures are progressing and still feel achievable! You can use a simple spreadsheet to keep track of youths progress like this example. If the adventure isn't working, be ready to work with the youth to adapt or change the adventure so that he or she can have success and celebrate as he or she receives his or her badge!

