



# MEETING PLANS & IDEAS: ORIENTEERING

[Orienteering](#)

[Information](#)

[Troop Meetings](#)

[Main Event](#)

## OBJECTIVES

This month's activities should:

- Teach Scouts basic map and compass skills.
- Give Scouts multiple opportunities to practice their map and compass skills.
- Introduce Scouts to the sport of orienteering.
- Help Scouts work toward the Orienteering merit badge.
- Foster self-confidence and team building.

## LEADERSHIP PLANNING

As a leadership team, you may want to discuss the following items when choosing orienteering as your program feature during your planning meetings:

- What will our main event be?
- Where will we have our main event?
- How proficient are our Scouts and leaders in orienteering skills?
- How can we involve parents?
- Are there local orienteering clubs that could provide expertise?
- Can we find local or regional orienteering meets to participate in?
- Do we have access to enough orienteering compasses for meetings and the main event?
- Do we have access to orienteering controls, cards, and punches or e-boxes?
- Where can we get topographical maps of our area and the site of the main event?
- How much of the Orienteering merit badge and other related advancement can we complete this month?
- How can we use orienteering activities to promote team building?
- To meet our needs, what should we change in the sample meeting plans?

Meeting Plan		Week	Date	Plan by	Year
Preparation	Activities				
Planning Committee	Activities				
Scout Participation	Activities				
Adult Participation	Activities				
Resource Groups	Activities				
Scout	Activities				
Training	Activities				
Other	Activities				
Total # of Scouts at Meeting					
Total # of Leaders at Meeting					

*Click above for fillable troop meeting planning form.*

## PREOPENING IDEAS

[Preopening Ideas on Troop Program Resources](#)

- Set up a 100-foot course near your meeting place. As Scouts arrive, have them walk the course and calculate their pace (how far they travel every two steps).
- Draw a large chalk circle on the parking lot. Place an index card marked "North" at the northernmost point. As Scouts arrive, give them index cards marked with other compass points. Have them place their cards in the correct spots on the circle.
- As Scouts arrive, challenge them to sketch topographic maps of their neighborhoods or the area around your meeting place.
- Set up a display of items related to orienteering courses, including controls, punches, control cards, maps, bibs, etc.

## OPENING IDEAS

[Opening Ideas on Troop Program Resources](#)

## GROUP INSTRUCTION IDEAS

### Compasses

- Explain what orienteering is.

### Maps

- Obtain topographic maps of your meeting place, a favorite campsite, and/or other familiar locations.
- Point out landmarks on the maps and explain the symbols that represent those landmarks.
- If possible, compare the maps with satellite photos from a website like [Google Maps](#).

### Map and Compass Together

- Explain declination and how it affects orienteering.
- Tell the declination for your area.

### Orienteering Basics

- Have a guest speaker from an orienteering club discuss the sport, or show an Internet video (perhaps from Orienteering USA's YouTube channel) to give participants a sense of what the sport is like.

## SKILLS INSTRUCTION IDEAS



### Compasses


- Learn how to use a compass.
- Practice following given bearings outside your meeting place.
- Practice following those bearings without going off course.


- Review the skills above.
- Practice determining the bearings to specific landmarks outside your meeting place.

- ◆ Review the skills above.
- ◆ Practice calculating and following back bearings (which take you from a destination back to the starting point); add or subtract  $180^\circ$  to get a back bearing.


### Maps


- Study the map symbols found on a sample topographic map.
- Discuss how these symbols differ from those found on a road map.
- Discuss what contour lines indicate and why they are important in orienteering.


-  Review the skills above.  
Discuss what the colors used for map symbols mean and why knowing the colors can be useful.
  - Learn the difference between contour lines, index contour lines, and depression contour lines.
  - Review how contour lines depict cliffs, hilltops, and the direction of streams. (The V formed by contour lines point upstream.)
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-  Review the skills above.
- Study the legend on a contour map. Discuss why the information there can be important in orienteering.
- Learn how to order topographic maps for a given location.


### Map and Compass Together


-  Learn how to orient a topographic map.
  - Learn how to adjust your compass for declination.
  - Determine the directions between various landmarks on a topographic map.
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-  Review the skills above.
  - Discuss different ways to adjust for declination, such as drawing magnetic north-south lines on the map or using a compass with declination adjustment built in. (See the *Boy Scout Handbook* chapter on navigation.)
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-  Review the skills above.
- After determining directions between landmarks on a topographic map, determine the easiest ways to travel between those landmarks using techniques like aiming off, handrails, and catching features.

### Orienteering Basics

-  Learn the basics of participating in an orienteering meet, including using an orienteering map, finding control points, and punching control cards or using e-punches.
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-  Review the skills above.
  - Learn about different formats for orienteering meets.
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-  Review the skills above.
- Research orienteering meets in your area that are open to the public.

## **BREAKOUT GROUP IDEAS**

### **Discussion Topics**

- Review what advancement requirements members have completed related to orienteering.

### **Getting Ready for the Main Event**

- Menu Planning (if applicable)
- Duty Roster Planning (if applicable)

- Patrols discuss what special items they will need for the main event.

### Preparation for the meeting's game or challenge

## GAME AND CHALLENGE IDEAS

### Library of Compass Games and Challenges on Troop Program Resources

- **Compass Triangle Game**
  - *Materials:* For each Scout, a compass and an index card with his name on it
  - *Method:* Scouts start at various spots on a parking lot or other open area, marking their spots with index cards. They determine a bearing (say 30°) and walk 50 steps in that direction. They add 120° to the first bearing and walk another 50 steps. Finally, they add 120° to the second bearing and walk another 50 steps. (If a calculated bearing is more than 360°, subtract 360° to get the correct bearing.) Scouts should end up back where they started.
  - *Scoring:* The winner is the player who gets closest to the starting point.
  - *Variation:* Have players wear bags over their heads so they can read their compasses but not look ahead. (Assign each a guide for safety.) This challenge will test their ability to walk in a straight line and will prevent them from cheating as they approach the starting point on the final leg.
- **Map Symbol Relay**
  - *Materials:* For each team, a set of flash cards with numbered map symbols, including contour lines
  - *Method:* The teams line up in relay formation facing a wall on which the flash cards have been posted. On signal, the first Scout from each team runs up, names the first symbol, runs back, and tags the next Scout who runs up and names the second symbol. Continue the relay until all symbols have been named.
  - *Scoring:* Score 2 points for each symbol correctly named, and deduct 1 point for each symbol incorrectly named. The team that finishes first scores 10 points.
- **Crash Landing**
  - *Materials:* Identical topographic maps for each team
  - *Method:* Announce that an airplane has crashed at a certain point on the map, some distance from a road. Have teams do the following:
    - 1) Locate the scene of the crash on the map.
    - 2) Determine the route to be taken by car to a point nearest the crash scene.
    - 3) Determine the route to be taken on foot from the car to the crash scene.
    - 4) Determine potential hazards along the route.
    - 5) List first-aid materials to be taken to the crash site by a rescue squad.
    - 6) List other equipment to be taken.
  - *Scoring:* The team that does the best job on the total project wins.
- **Orienteering Scavenger Hunt**
  - *Materials:* A compass, a punch card, and a topographic map of the area around your meeting place for each team, 10 or more orienteering controls and punches (can be homemade)
  - *Preparation:* Hide the controls and punches in the area around your meeting place and mark them on the maps. Assign each team five controls to visit, each in a different order (so they can't follow each other and don't get bunched up).
  - *Method:* On a signal, teams look for their assigned controls, punch their cards, and return to the starting point.
  - *Scoring:* The team that returns first with the correct punches wins.

## CLOSING IDEAS

- [Leader's Minutes](#)
- [Ceremony](#)

- [Back to top of page](#) -

<a href="#">Orienteering</a>	<a href="#">Information</a>	<a href="#">Troop Meetings</a>	<a href="#">Main Event</a>
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### TROOP LEADER RESOURCE LINKS

[Advancement Resources](#)

[Awards Central](#)

[Boy Scouts](#)

[Guide to Safe Scouting](#)

[SCOUTBOOK](#)

[Scouting Forms from the National Council](#)

[ScoutCast](#)

[Scouting Magazine](#)

[ScoutStuff.org \(Retail Site\)](#)

[ScoutingWire](#)

[Sign in to MyScouting.org](#)

[Take Youth Protection Training](#)

[The Outdoor Adventure Planning Guide](#)

[Troop Leader Guidebook Appendix](#)

[Uniforms](#)