

JUNIOR BADGES TO DO AT HOME



Inside Government

Do you ever wonder exactly what government is and what it does? Active citizens should know the basics of government, so here's your chance to go behind the scenes. In this badge, you'll explore laws that affect you every day, meet people who work in government, and be active in government yourself!

Steps

1. Decide what being an active citizen means to you
2. Go inside government
3. Look into laws
4. Report on the issues
5. Get involved in government

Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I'll know more about how government is run.

To earn this badge, please complete one option per step.

STEPS	BADGE REQUIREMENTS	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3
Step 1	Decide what being an active citizen means to you.	<p>Be an active citizen in action.</p> <p>With a sibling or adult family member list 10 things that make an active citizen. It might include things like following laws, paying sales taxes, and knowing what is going on in the world. Then do something from your list to practice being an active citizen.</p>	<p>Take a poll.</p> <p>What do you think are some of the rights and responsibilities that come with being a citizen? Ask at least three members of your family about what they think, and talk about their answers with your family in-person at dinner or your friends by email.</p>	<p>Get a global view.</p> <p>Talk with someone who has lived or worked in another country (by phone, email, text or in-person if it is someone in your home). Ask the person what it was like to live in that country as compared to the United States. Is the definition of an "active citizen" always the same?</p>
Step 2	<p>Go inside government.</p> <p>Learn more about how the government works, and who helps make decisions that affect you.</p>	<p>Take a virtual field trip of the three branches of government and the roles performed by each.</p>	<p>Find out who your current local, state, and federal representatives are, and then choose one to look up online to see what her/his current focus is on within the government.</p>	<p>Chart the government structure of your school district, town, county, or state. Make a big branching chart that shows who has the power to make and change laws.</p>

Step 3	Look into laws.	Hold a "mock vote" on community laws with your family or in a virtual troop meeting. Research online for laws that citizens in your community must follow. Choose three. Then with your family or troop, review each law. Say if you would vote yes or no if you had been the lawmaker. Be sure to share your reasons.	For 24 hours, list the laws that affect your daily life. With the help of your family or troop, compile a list of examples. Make sure this document is shared with all members of the group involved and that they have editing access so they may include their information. For example, you must use the crosswalk to cross the street, you cannot litter, and you must pay sales tax when you buy an apple. At the end of the day, look at the list and make comments or add thoughts on the document.	Think about laws you might propose one day. What laws, rules, or regulations would you propose in these three situations? What should happen to a citizen who does not follow them? Discuss your answers with your family during mealtime or with your troop at a virtual meeting.
Step 4	Report on the issues.	Report on a government meeting. Research to see if your city, town or county tapes their council meetings. Find one and then watch it. These meetings can include a town/city council, planning commission, board of education, or county commissioners. What are the issues they are discussing? Pretend you are a reporter and take notes. Then write a short article about the issue you think is most important.	Follow the local news every day for one week. What stories do you think are most important to your community? Choose one, and write your opinion in a letter and mail to the editor of your local newspaper. Local officials read letters to the editor to get ideas about what laws to put into place!	Interview by phone or email a local historian or longtime citizen. Ask about how your community has changed over the years. Is your community still working out the same issues it was 20 years ago? If not, what are the new issues? Turn your interview into a radio program, video, or article to share with others in your community.
Step 5	Get involved in government.	Plan a campaign as if you were running for office. Write a list of the top three things you would try to change if you had that office in your organization. Share your ideas with a family member.	Work on someone else's campaign. If being an elected official is not for you, use your leadership skills to help out a candidate you believe in. Make posters or buttons, or assist with a speech about the reasons you think this person should be elected.	Create a virtual pamphlet or poster. You can convert it to a PDF or jpeg and use it as a digital flyer to raise awareness about an issue you would like to change. Make sure you get permission from an adult before sharing electronically and think very carefully—like a politician—about the words you use. You want to educate and inspire people to take your side, so be respectful of the current administration and citizens of the community.