

# 2017 Merit Badge Rankings for US

Data based on the actual number earned, not on sales of the badges.

## The top 10 (with Eagle-required badges included)

Rank	2017	2016
1	First Aid	First Aid
2	Swimming	Swimming
3	Citizenship in the World	Environmental Science
4	Environmental Science	Citizenship in the World
5	Citizenship in the Nation	Citizenship in the Nation
6	Cooking	Cooking
7	Camping	Camping
8	Communication	Communication
9	Personal Fitness	Personal Fitness
10	Personal Management	Citizenship in the Community

## The top 10 (with Eagle-required badges excluded)

This list of exclusively elective merit badges reveals two things:

1. **Interest.** These are merit badges that Scouts themselves select. They could've chosen any from the list of 137, but they chose these.
2. **Opportunity.** These are merit badges frequently offered at summer camp, meaning qualified merit badge counselors are readily available.

Rank	2017	2016
1	Fingerprinting	Rifle Shooting
2	Rifle Shooting	Fingerprinting
3	Leatherwork	Archery
4	Archery	Leatherwork
5	Wood Carving	Wilderness Survival
6	Wilderness Survival	Wood Carving
7	Kayaking	Kayaking
8	Chess	Canoeing
9	Canoeing	Chess
10	Fishing	Fishing

## The bottom 10 (with Eagle Excluded)

Note: You won't see Computers or Cinematography on this list, though a couple-hundred Scouts earned each in 2017. The Computers phase-out began in 2014, and Cinematography was changed to Moviemaking in 2013. Scouts who started work before those badges' official demise are allowed to finish that work.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
137	Bugling	Bugling
136	American Business	American Business
135	Surveying	Stamp Collecting
134	American Labor	American Labor
133	Stamp Collecting	Journalism
132	Drafting	Surveying
131	Journalism	Drafting
130	Composite Materials	Gardening
129	Gardening	Landscape Architecture
128	Landscape Architecture	Composite Materials

### Top 5 gains (biggest percentage gain and fall in popularity from 2016 to 2017)

<b>Merit Badge</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>Diff.</b>
Stamp Collecting	793	954	20.3%
Animation	4,637	5,462	17.8%
Inventing	2,834	3,296	16.3%
Journalism	970	1,127	16.2%
Genealogy	4,570	5,213	14.1%

### Top 5 drops

<b>Merit Badge</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>Diff.</b>
Safety	4,267	3,280	-23.1%
Whitewater	3,476	2,832	-18.5%
Geocaching	15,210	12,604	-17.1%
Surveying	1,028	863	-16.1%
Painting	3,829	3,222	-15.9%