

## Ready, Aim, Fire

What does it take to be a great marksman? Have you ever given thought as to the many different choices of rifle shooting that are available? Do you know that rifle shooting is a recognized sport in the Olympics? Do you know that you, too, can earn awards and medals in rifle shooting with the Winchester/NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program along with the Rifle Shooting merit badge?

Rifle shooting offers you the ability to increase your skills and enjoy the exciting sport over a lifetime. The choices for different levels of rifle target shooting are endless. This program feature lets you and fellow Scouts learn how to become marksmen and enjoy the exciting sport of rifle shooting.

First you will need to understand the importance of how to safely handle a rifle by learning what the different parts of a rifle are and how they operate. As you master the fundamentals of shooting, your excitement will grow as your accuracy improves. Let's get started.

### Objectives

This month's activities should:

- Teach Scouts how to handle guns safely.
- Help Scouts understand the parts of a rifle and different types of ammunition.
- Emphasize the importance of properly caring for firearms.
- Help Scouts build their self-confidence by learning new skills.
- Introduce Scouts to a potential lifelong hobby.

### RELATED ADVANCEMENT AND AWARDS

- Archery, Rifle Shooting, and Shotgun Shooting merit badges
- BSA Shooting Sports Outstanding Achievement Award
- NRA Outstanding Youth Achievement Award
- Winchester/NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program awards
- Ranger: Shooting Sports elective
- Quest: Requirement 5



## Leadership Planning

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

1. What is our unit's current skill level?
2. What will we do for our main event?
3. Do we know someone who is an NRA rifle instructor?
4. What are the BSA rules for handling firearms?
5. Do we have a copy of the current *BSA National Shooting Sports Manual* for reference?
6. What materials, firearms, and other equipment do we need for our demonstrations?
7. What location is needed for meetings—our normal meeting place or a shooting range?
8. Is there any cost factor involved?
9. To meet our needs, what should we change in the sample meeting plans?

### THE SCOUT MARKSMAN'S CODE

In marksmanship, nothing is more important than safety. It is critically important to learn, practice, and respect *all* of the rifle safety rules.

A Scout:

- Always follows the rules for firearms safety.
- Accepts the responsibility that goes with the use and possession of firearms.
- Follows the laws that govern the use and possession of firearms in their community.
- Practices wildlife conservation.
- Follows the spirit and the letter of the game laws.
- Is especially careful to be a true sportsman when using firearms.

## BSA RIFLE SHOOTING POLICIES

Unlike most other program features, rifle shooting requires certified instructors. The unit leader must take responsibility to assure that all instruction involving any handling of firearms or live ammunition is supervised by a certified BSA National Camping School (NCS) shooting sports director or a certified National Rifle Association (NRA) rifle instructor or coach.

Instruction involving muzzleloaders must be supervised by an NCS shooting sports director or an NRA/National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association (NMLRA)-certified muzzleloader firearms instructor. Shooting must be supervised by an NRA-certified range safety officer (RSO).

If instruction and shooting are to occur at the same time, both the RSO and qualified instructor must be present. The supervisor and instructor may not be the same person. Note that commercial shooting ranges may provide RSOs. See the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and the *BSA National Shooting Sports Manual*, No. 30931, for further details on shooting sports.

Scouts are permitted to fire .22 caliber bolt-action, single-shot rifles; air rifles; shotguns; and muzzleloading long guns. Venturers and Sea Scouts may also shoot rifles, pistols, and revolvers of any caliber or action. An exception is they may not shoot fully automatic firearms.

### PARENTS CAN HELP WITH THE RIFLE SHOOTING PROGRAM FEATURE BY:

1. Teaching the safe handling of rifles (if they are NRA instructors)
2. Identifying a location for the main event
3. Providing transportation for the main event
4. Maintaining current Youth Protection certification, which is required of all adults providing transportation for or participating in outings



## Rifles

The following are standards established for rifles used in Scouting.

1. Breech-loading rifles will be .22 caliber bolt-action, single-shot with removable magazines only. Tubular magazines are not permitted. They may be chambered for the .22 short, .22 long, or .22 long rifle, but not for the .22 WRF, which is a more powerful cartridge. Air rifles using pellets or BBs are also permitted.
2. Semiautomatic rifles are not permitted.
3. Rifles must meet the requirements for the conventional and international rifle shooting competitive programs. The trigger pull will be determined by the course of competition.



BOLT ACTION



LEVER ACTION

### Common types of actions

4. Repeating rifles with a removable clip-type magazine are permitted but must be used as single-loaders.
5. All rifles used in BSA shooting sports must have a minimum trigger pull of 3 pounds and must be tested with a 3-pound weight or scale at least once a week while in use. If the trigger mechanism is activated by the 3-pound pull, the rifle must be removed from service.
6. Shooting safety glasses and hearing protection must be worn on rifle ranges.
7. Care must be taken to comply with federal, state, and local laws.



SEMIAUTOMATIC



FALLING BLOCK

## Parts of a Rifle

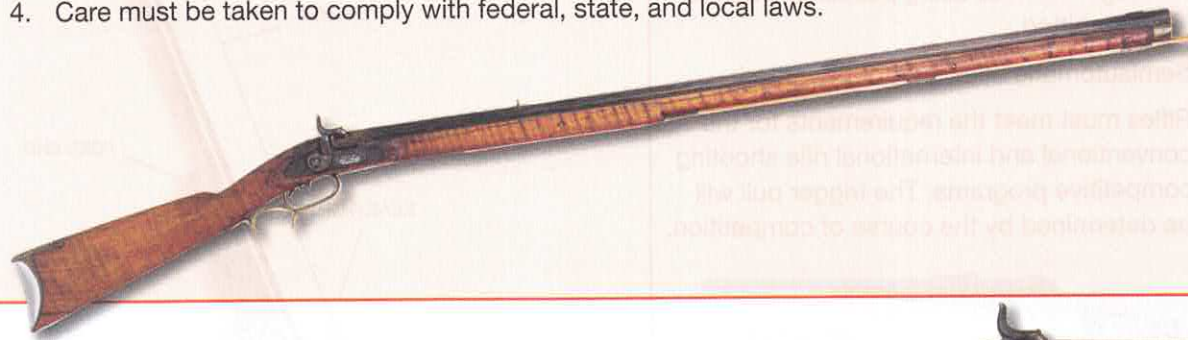




## Muzzleloaders

The following standards for muzzleloading long guns are to be used by members of the BSA.

1. Muzzleloading rifles, including in-line rifles, must be recently manufactured, percussion-lock only. The BSA recommends .45 or .50 caliber. Rifles made by kits must be checked by a qualified gunsmith.
2. Recommended loads of black powder or Pyrodex® are not to exceed 1 grain per caliber; 35 grains is frequently sufficient for target shooting at close range.
3. Shooting safety glasses and hearing protection must be worn.
4. Care must be taken to comply with federal, state, and local laws.



Pennsylvania long rifle, a full-stock firearm also known as the Kentucky rifle



A musket, a military-style firearm



Half-stock mountain rifle, a shorter, more easily portable design. The ever-popular Hawken-type rifles are included in this category.



In-line percussion muzzleloading rifle





## RIFLE SHOOTING GAMES

### Rifle Parts Relay

**Equipment:** NRA posters showing different parts of rifles for different action types or, if there is an NRA instructor available and the location permits, different rifles for the different skill levels

**How to play:** Teams line up relay-style at the opposite end of the room from the posters or rifles. On a signal, the first player on each team runs forward. The instructor or leader points to a specific part of a rifle and asks the Scout to name it or tell what it is used for. The Scout answers, then runs back and tags the next player. Continue until time is called.

**Scoring:** Each correct answer is worth 1 point. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

**Note:** After the game, review any terms that Scouts seemed to have trouble remembering or understanding.

### Kim's Game, Ammunition Edition

**Equipment:** Fifteen to 20 pieces of ammunition (pellets, BBs, .22 caliber dummy ammunition); there can be several of each type; paper and pencil for each team.

**How to play:** Ahead of time, put each piece of ammunition in a paper cup and line the cups up along a table. The Scouts walk along the table in single file and try to memorize the items they see in order without speaking or taking notes. Afterward, each team meets and writes down the list of items they saw. The team with the most accurate list wins.



### Rifle Terms Matching

**Equipment:** For each team, two sets of 20 to 25 index cards—one set of rifle-shooting terms (one per card) and one set of definitions for those terms (one per card); see the *Rifle Shooting* merit badge pamphlet for possibilities.

**How to play:** Assign one judge to each team. Have each team shuffle all its cards together. On a signal, each team tries to sort its cards into matching term/definition pairs. When a team thinks it has succeeded, it asks its judge to check its work. The judge either confirms that the team has won or points out one (and only one) incorrect pair. Play continues until one team wins.

**Note:** The other teams can continue to work while a judge is checking their team's work. This should discourage teams from too quickly declaring that they are finished since they will lose valuable time while their judge is checking their work.

### Catapults

**Equipment:** A toy catapult, slingshot, or balloon launcher for each team or Scout; see the *BSA National Shooting Sports Manual* for instructions on building a simple catapult.

**How to play:** Set up targets and take turns aiming at the targets.

**Scoring:** Award 1 point for each target hit or give points for shooting a projectile the longest distance.

**Notes:** Do not aim any shooting device at a person. Never shoot any projectile—even if it is soft or seems to be harmless—at or near people, animals, or personal property. This includes water balloons.



# E.D.G.E. Ideas

- Explain* how it is done—Tell them.
- Demonstrate* the steps—Show them.
- Guide* learners as they practice—Watch them do it.
- Enable* them to succeed on their own—Have them practice/teach it.

## EXPLAIN

- Explain three rules of gun safety.
- Explain why BB and pellet air guns must be treated with the same respect as other firearms.
- Discuss the need for eye and hearing protection.
- Give the main points of local laws for owning and using guns.
- Explain how hunting is related to the wise use of renewable wildlife resources.

## GUIDE

- Help Scouts determine their dominant eye for shooting.
- Have Scouts demonstrate the different shooting positions.
- At a shooting range, walk Scouts through the shooting process.
- Have Scouts clean firearms and explain how to properly store them.

## DEMONSTRATE

- Show the different parts of the rifles.
- Display different ammunition types and show how to determine what is used for the different firearms.
- Demonstrate the different shooting positions.
- Show how to safely clean and store a firearm.

## ENABLE

- Have Scouts use the EDGE method to teach rifle terminology to a friend.
- Create coach/pupil teams where Scouts can help each other learn to get into different shooting positions.
- Have Scouts (under supervision) prepare a shooting range for use.
- Hold an open shoot where Scouts can practice the skills they've learned.

## MAIN EVENT SUMMARIES

● ESSENTIAL	■ CHALLENGING	◆ ADVANCED
<b>Day Activity</b>	<b>Day Activity</b>	<b>Weekend Activity</b>
Open shoot—Spend a day at a shooting range working on basic technique or participating in the Winchester/NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program.	Marksmanship tournament—Compete to see who can earn the highest score in .22 rifle shooting.	NRA postal match and campout—Camp in a favorite spot and use part of the time working on the Rifle Shooting merit badge and shooting targets to be entered in an NRA postal match.






# RIFLE SHOOTING

## Meeting Plan: Safe Gun Handling



Week 1 Date \_\_\_\_\_

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
<b>Preopening</b> 15 minutes before meeting	As Scouts arrive, have them determine their dominant eye as follows: 1. Extend arms forward and form an opening between your hands. 2. With both eyes open, look at a distant object through the opening. 3. Bring hands to face while looking at the object. The opening will be aligned with your dominant eye.		6:45 p.m.
<b>Opening Ceremony</b> 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
<b>Group Instruction</b> 20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have an NRA instructor teach the fundamentals of safe gun handling.</li> <li>Discuss the importance and uses and types of eye and hearing protection.</li> </ul>		7:10 p.m.
<b>Skills Instruction</b> 25 minutes	 Learn the parts of bolt-action rifles.		7:30 p.m.
	 Learn the parts of bolt-action and semiautomatic rifles.		
	 Learn the parts of multiple-action rifles.		
<b>Breakout Groups</b> 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss plans for the main event.</li> <li>Review what personal and group equipment will be needed.</li> </ul>		7:55 p.m.
<b>Game</b> 15 minutes	Play Rifle Parts Relay (described earlier).		8:10 p.m.
<b>Closing</b> 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
<b>Total 90 minutes of meeting</b>			
<b>After the Meeting</b> 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plan for the next meeting and for the main event.		

\*All times are suggested.






# RIFLE SHOOTING

## Meeting Plan: Ammunition



Week 2 Date \_\_\_\_\_

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
<b>Preopening</b> 15 minutes before meeting	Invite a local rifle enthusiast to set up a show-and-tell display of his or her equipment.		6:45 p.m.
<b>Opening Ceremony</b> 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
<b>Group Instruction</b> 30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have an NRA instructor teach about various types of ammunition, including pellets, BBs, and .22 caliber bullets.</li> <li>• Discuss the uses, advantages, and disadvantages of each type of ammunition, and discuss ammunition malfunctions.</li> </ul>		7:10 p.m.
<b>Skills Instruction</b> 20 minutes	 Learn how to properly load and unload a bolt-action rifle using dummy ammunition.		7:40 p.m.
	 Review how to properly load and unload two types of rifles using dummy ammunition, BBs, or pellets.		
	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review how to properly load and unload two types of rifles using dummy ammunition, BBs, or pellets.</li> <li>• Discuss the Rifle Shooting merit badge requirements related to misfires and failures.</li> </ul>		
<b>Breakout Groups</b> 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan a cooking menu.</li> <li>• Begin meal planning and create a duty roster for the main event.</li> </ul>		8 p.m.
<b>Game</b> 10 minutes	Play Kim's Game, Ammunition Edition (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
<b>Closing</b> 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
<b>Total 90 minutes of meeting</b>			
<b>After the Meeting</b> 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

\*All times are suggested.



# RIFLE SHOOTING

## Meeting Plan: Shooting Skills



Week 3 Date \_\_\_\_\_

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
<b>Preopening</b> 15 minutes before meeting	As Scouts arrive, show internet videos of trick-rifle shooting or Olympic rifle competition. Point out the different shooting positions shooters are using and ask how they might affect accuracy.		6:45 p.m.
<b>Opening Ceremony</b> 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law		7 p.m.
<b>Group Instruction</b> 20 minutes	Have an NRA instructor do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Briefly explain the different types of shooting positions and how and when they are used.</li> <li>Teach the commands used by a range officer.</li> </ul>		7:10 p.m.
<b>Skills Instruction</b> 30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn how to properly get into the bench rest position and when to use it.</li> <li>Learn the five fundamentals of shooting a rifle safely.</li> </ul>		7:30 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn how to properly get into the bench rest and prone positions and when to use them.</li> <li>Learn the five fundamentals of shooting a rifle safely.</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn how to properly get into all shooting positions and when to use each.</li> <li>Learn the five fundamentals of shooting a rifle safely.</li> </ul>		
<b>Breakout Groups</b> 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each group fills out a duty roster for upcoming campout.</li> <li>Collect any permission slips required for shooting activities.</li> </ul>		8 p.m.
<b>Game</b> 10 minutes	Play Rifle Terms Matching (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
<b>Closing</b> 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
<b>Total 90 minutes of meeting</b>			
<b>After the Meeting</b> 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plan for the next meeting and for the main event.		

\*All times are suggested.






# RIFLE SHOOTING

## Meeting Plan: Gun Care



Week 4 Date \_\_\_\_\_

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
<b>Preopening</b> 15 minutes before meeting	As Scouts arrive, have a gun enthusiast show rifles that have been mistreated or poorly cared for or that are otherwise unsafe to use.		6:45 p.m.
<b>Opening Ceremony</b> 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
<b>Group Instruction</b> 20 minutes	Have an NRA instructor discuss general principles of cleaning and properly storing firearms.		7:10 p.m.
<b>Skills Instruction</b> 30 minutes	 Practice cleaning BB and pellet guns.		7:30 p.m.
	 Practice cleaning .22 rifles.		
	 Practice cleaning multiple-action rifles.		
<b>Breakout Groups</b> 15 minutes	Finalize plans for the main event.		8 p.m.
<b>Game</b> 10 minutes	Play Catapults (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
<b>Closing</b> 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
<b>Total 90 minutes of meeting</b>			
<b>After the Meeting</b> 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plan for the next meeting and for the main event.		

\*All times are suggested.



# RIFLE SHOOTING

## Main Event: Open Shoot



Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Logistics

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Departure time: \_\_\_\_\_

Return time: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of activity: 4 to 5 hours

Budget: Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Camping: Duty roster \_\_\_\_\_ Menu \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation: Group \_\_\_\_\_ Self \_\_\_\_\_

### Essential (Tier I)

Spend a day at a shooting range working on basic technique or participating in the Winchester/NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program.

### Equipment List

- Proper firearms and ammunition
- Hearing and eye protection
- Targets
- Cleaning supplies
- Food
- Water
- Scout Basic Essentials (Review the list and take what you need.)

### Activity

- Identify a nearby rifle range the unit can visit. (If it's not local, the field trip could easily be combined with a campout.)
- Make arrangements to use the range.
- Recruit a qualified range officer, as described in the *BSA National Shooting Sports Manual*.
- Show the 30-minute safety briefing that is required for Level 2 rifle shooting.
- Review the requirements for the Winchester/NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program and challenge Scouts to pursue the 4-Position Rifle Qualification.

### Safety

- Follow regulations outlined in the *BSA National Shooting Sports Manual*. Cellphones are a good idea as appropriate, and have a first-aid kit. Use the buddy system.
- Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

### Notes

An NRA rifle instructor and NRA range safety officer must be used for pellet gun shooting. A BB gun range master can be used for BB gun shooting only. Refer to the *BSA National Shooting Sports Manual* for detailed information on range supervision.



# RIFLE SHOOTING

## Main Event: Marksmanship Tournament



Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Logistics

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Departure time: \_\_\_\_\_

Return time: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of activity: 4 to 8 hours

Budget: Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Camping: Duty roster \_\_\_\_\_ Menu \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation: Group \_\_\_\_\_ Self \_\_\_\_\_

### Challenging (Tier II)

Compete to see who can earn the highest score in .22 rifle shooting.

### Equipment List

- Proper firearms and ammunition
- Hearing and eye protection
- Targets
- Cleaning supplies
- Food
- Water
- Scout Basic Essentials (Review the list and take what you need.)

### Activity

- Identify a nearby rifle range the unit can visit. (If it's not local, the field trip could easily be combined with a campout.)
- Make arrangements to use the range.
- Recruit a qualified range officer, as described in the *BSA National Shooting Sports Manual*.
- Show the 30-minute safety briefing that is required for Level 2 rifle shooting.
- Set up a tournament structure to allow Scouts to compete and see who is the best marksman.
- Review the requirements for the Winchester/NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program and challenge Scouts to pursue the Light Rifle Qualification.

### Safety

- Follow regulations outlined in the *BSA National Shooting Sports Manual*. Cellphones are a good idea as appropriate, and have a first-aid kit. Use the buddy system.
- Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

### Notes

An NRA rifle instructor and NRA range safety officer must be used for pellet gun shooting. A BB gun range master can be used for BB gun shooting only. Refer to the *BSA National Shooting Sports Manual* for detailed information on range supervision.



# RIFLE SHOOTING

## Main Event: NRA Postal Match and Campout



Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Logistics

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Departure time: \_\_\_\_\_

Return time: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of activity: Weekend

Budget: Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Camping: Duty roster \_\_\_\_\_ Menu \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation: Group \_\_\_\_\_ Self \_\_\_\_\_



### Advanced (Tier III)

Camp in a favorite spot and use part of the time working on the Rifle Shooting merit badge and shooting targets to be entered in an NRA postal match.

### Equipment List

- Proper firearms and ammunition
- Hearing and eye protection
- Targets
- Cleaning supplies
- Food
- Water
- Camping gear (individual and group)
- Scout Basic Essentials (Review the list and take what you need.)

### Activity

- Find and reserve a campsite near a shooting range.
- Set up a schedule that allows some Scouts to shoot while others work on requirement 1 for the Rifle Shooting merit badge. Rotate Scouts through the stations.
- Designate a time for Scouts to shoot targets to be entered in a postal match.
- Choose and cover a selection of Rifle Shooting merit badge requirements.
- Take time during the day for hiking or other activities.

### Safety

- Follow regulations outlined in the *BSA National Shooting Sports Manual*. Have a first-aid kit. Cellphones are a good idea as appropriate, and use the buddy system.
- Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

### Notes

An NRA rifle instructor and NRA range safety officer must be used for pellet gun shooting. A BB gun range master can be used for BB gun shooting only. Refer to the *BSA National Shooting Sports Manual* for detailed information on range supervision. A postal match is one in which competitors fire on their home ranges using targets that have been marked for identification. The fired targets are then sent to the NRA for scoring and ranking for awards.



## RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

### Books

*Archery, Rifle Shooting, and Shotgun Shooting* merit badge pamphlets

*BSA National Shooting Sports Manual*

National Rifle Association. *The Basics of Rifle Shooting*. NRA, 1987.

### Websites

**International Hunter Education Association**

Website: [www.ihea-usa.org](http://www.ihea-usa.org)

**National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association**

Website: <https://nmlra.org>

**National Rifle Association**

Website: [www.nra.org](http://www.nra.org)

**National Shooting Sports Foundation**

Website: [www.nssf.org](http://www.nssf.org)

**NRA Postal Matches**

Website: <http://postalmatches.nra.org>

### Related Program Features

Archery, Shotgun Shooting

### Photo and Illustration Credits

Pages 12-1 (*bullets*, Shutterstock.com/©Vladimir Gjorgiev; *all others*, BSA file), 12-3 (*large rifle*, BSA file; *all illustrations*, BSA/John McDearmon), 12-4 (*all*, BSA file), and 12-5 (BSA file)

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