

Unit Elections

To become a member of the Order of the Arrow, a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout is chosen by vote of the youths in his unit. This is a unique feature of the Order since the majority of those who select their candidates for this honor are not members of the lodge. However, lodge members in the unit have a vote as well as nonmembers. In this way membership is controlled by the youths in their own units and not by those who are already Arrowmen.

It is important that the members of the unit have the membership requirements properly explained to them.

Registered active member. In Boy Scout troops and Varsity Scout teams, every registered active member of the unit under age 21 at the time of election is eligible to vote.

A Boy Scout or Varsity Scout who carries a current national membership card and participates in at least some unit activities during the year is considered to be a registered active member of the unit. For example, a youth away at college who participates in some unit activities when home, such as a campout, camporee, or occasional unit meeting, should be considered a registered active member.

A youth who moves away or drops out of the unit because of other interests would not be counted in the registered active membership figure.

Elections outside the registered council. All elections must be conducted by the Order of the Arrow lodge of the council in which the unit is chartered. *No unit may visit outside its own council and hold an OA election under the auspices of an OA lodge of another council. Elections are held only in troops or teams.*

Induction: Election to Ordeal

1. The lodge will determine the time of the year unit elections will be held and should inform troop and team leaders of this by mail well in advance. Lodges are encouraged to complete all unit elections prior to their troops/teams going to summer camp. This ensures that the maximum number of troop/team members can be present to vote in the election. Elections are not to be held in Venturing crews or Cub Scout packs.
2. The lodge, through the unit elections committee, should work with the troop/team leader in establishing the actual time and place to conduct the election. The Order should be represented by a two- or three-member team from the lodge or chapter unit elections committee. All election team members must be trained and in proper uniform during the election.
3. Before the election, the OA team must secure from the unit leader verification that at least 50 percent of the registered active unit membership is present. If at least 50 percent is not present, an election cannot be held. The number of registered active members and the number present are entered in the spaces provided on

the unit election report form illustrated on page 24. If the unit leader is an Arrowman, he may explain to the group the purpose of the Order of the Arrow and the basis upon which candidates should be selected, and describe the method of election. If the unit leader is not a member of the Order, a member of the OA team should make this presentation with the unit leader's consent, demonstrating that election leadership is a cooperative effort of the unit leader and the OA team.

4. The unit leader provides a list of all registered active members of the unit who meet all eligibility requirements, including attitude and participation. The names of these members are entered on the report form and the unit leader signs the certification.
5. The election team leader explains the following to the unit leader:
 - This is the current method of election approved by the national OA committee in use by the lodge.
 - All eligible youths who receive votes from at least 50 percent of those who turn in ballots are elected. If no one is elected a second vote may be held immediately, and the result of this vote will be final.
6. A voter may list on his ballot any combination of names, including all eligible candidates who he believes are worthy to become members of the Order of the Arrow.
7. The OA team conducts the election following the instructions on pages 26–27. Stress the following points:
 - Select the candidates who, in your opinion, have set the best examples of brotherhood, cheerfulness, and service.
 - Vote only for those you believe will continue in unselfish service to your troop/team.
 - If you feel that no one is worthy, turn in a blank ballot.
 - If you are new in the unit and do not know the candidates well enough to vote wisely, you may abstain by not turning in a ballot at all; this will not affect the final result.
 - Youths eligible for election also vote, and they may vote for themselves if they feel they are worthy.
8. When the voting is finished, the OA election team counts the number of ballots turned in, and enters the numbers on the unit election report.
9. The OA team determines the minimum number of votes one must receive to be elected, as follows: If the number of ballots turned in was even (2, 4, 6, 8, etc.), divide this number by two. If the number was odd (1, 3, 5, 7, etc.), add one and then divide by two. The number of votes a youth must receive to be elected is entered on the report form.



10. The votes are counted in private by the election team and the unit leader to determine who has been elected. All votes count equally. If at least one has been elected, the election result is final. If no one is elected, the OA team announces this fact and states that the unit will now be given the opportunity to vote again. Time is allowed for further explanation of the purpose of the Order and the election procedures, and for any questions. (No information about the votes received by candidates is to be revealed at any time.) The second ballot is then held immediately, and if the unit still elects no one, this is the final result for the year's election. The OA team places a check mark next to the names of those who have been elected.

Note: A unit elections video is available from the national office.

Announcement of results. As soon as the election is completed, the unit leader may or may not choose to announce to the entire unit the names of members who have been elected. The names and addresses (plus additional information the lodge feels is necessary) are listed on the election report form. OA team members sign the form and mail it to the specified address immediately following the election.

Call-outs. Newly elected candidates will be called out at the earliest possible time, either at a resident camp, a camporee, or a special ceremony. The *Guide to Inductions*, which is available for download and printing at <http://www.oa-bsa.org>, contains information on how to conduct a call-out ceremony. Call-outs should be conducted by the OA lodge of the council in which the troop or team is chartered. This is the preferred method of call-out.

It is recognized that there is some value in holding a call-out at a summer camp. A lodge may not call out candidates from a visiting out-of-council troop or team unless the unit leader presents a letter from the home lodge chief and lodge adviser, requesting the call-out and identifying the members to be called out. A signed copy of the home lodge's unit election report must accompany this letter. The home lodge chief and lodge adviser must receive confirmation of the call-out following the event.

Candidate status. Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, or adults remain candidates until completion of the Ordeal and Ordeal ceremony. If this period of candidacy exceeds one year, the candidate's name will be dropped. To become candidates again, they must be elected/selected again. The executive committee of the lodge may extend the one-year limit if a candidate is ill or there are other unusual circumstances.

If a candidate permanently relocates to a new Boy Scout council prior to completing the Ordeal, the candidate should immediately join a troop or team in the new council. A copy of the election report must be presented to the new unit leader to arrange induction in the new lodge. The candidacy period is not restarted or extended.

Ordeals. Candidates for membership in the Order must complete the Ordeal and must be inducted into the Order by the lodge that serves the council in which the unit is chartered. Out-of-council Ordeals are not permitted except when religious custom and observance precludes attendance at the Ordeals of a Scout's home lodge (e.g., Sabbath-observant Jewish Scouts). In this special case, the region Order of the Arrow chairman may be petitioned for an exception to permit the Scout to be inducted by another lodge.

SAMPLE LETTER ANNOUNCING ELECTIONS

To: Troop/Team Leaders
From: Order of the Arrow W.W.W., _____ Lodge
Subject: Annual Unit Elections

The Order of the Arrow is Scouting's National Honor Society. It recognizes those campers who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and, by such recognition, cause other campers to conduct themselves in such a manner as to warrant similar recognition, to promote camping, and to crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.

Each Boy Scout troop or Varsity Scout team with qualified Scouts is urged to hold an election not later than _____, to select candidates for an Ordeal to be held at _____ on _____. The date and place of the election are selected by you, as unit leader.

Youth Membership Qualifications

1. A Boy Scout or Varsity Scout who holds the First Class rank, is under the age of 21, and is registered as an active member of the troop or team may, with the approval of his unit leader, be nominated for election. Prior to the annual election, the unit leader must certify the nominee's Scout spirit and youth membership qualifications.
2. After registration with a troop or team, the youth must have experienced 15 days and nights of Boy Scout camping during the two-year period prior to the election. The 15 days and nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of six consecutive days and five nights of resident camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America. The balance of the camping must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps.

Voting for youth candidates will be based on their spirit of brotherhood, cheerfulness (no matter how tiresome their duties), and a willingness to give unselfish and wholehearted service to others at all times.

Adult Membership Qualifications

Each year, upon holding a troop or team election for youth candidates that results in at least one youth candidate being elected, the unit committee may recommend one registered unit adult, 21 years of age or older, to the lodge adult selection committee. Troops or teams having more than 50 registered, active youth members may nominate an additional adult for every 50 registered, active youth, or fraction thereof. For example, a troop having 51 to 100 registered, active youths may nominate two adults each year if at least one youth has been elected. The adult selection committee, with the approval of the Scout executive, will decide who will be candidates for inductions provided the following conditions are fulfilled.

1. Selection of the adult is based on the ability to perform the necessary functions to help the Order fulfill its purposes and is not for recognition of service, including current and prior achievements and positions.
2. The individual will be an asset to the Order because of demonstrated abilities that fulfill the purpose of the Order.
3. The camping requirements set forth for youth members are fulfilled.
4. The adult leader's membership will provide a positive example for the growth and development of the youth members of the lodge.

A return postcard is enclosed for you to use in notifying the council service center of the date and place set aside for the election of candidates. It should be held at a regularly scheduled unit meeting or camping experience. Every effort should be made to have 100 percent attendance of both youths and adults at this meeting. An election team from the Order of the Arrow will be on hand to conduct the election.

Respectfully yours,

Lodge Chief

Lodge Adviser



Election Ceremony

OA MEMBER A:

Fellow Boy Scouts, the Order of the Arrow is Scouting's National Honor Society. Its purpose is to recognize and honor those campers who best live up to the Scout Oath and Scout Law in their daily lives and to guide them in expanding the service that has made them outstanding. The Order promotes Scout camping and maintains camping traditions and spirit. It emphasizes that the good Scout camper is not only skilled in Scoutcraft, but also true to the ideals of Scouting and its tradition of the daily Good Turn.

The only way that a Scout can become a member of the Order of the Arrow is to be elected for this honor by the members of his unit. To be eligible for election, a youth must fulfill the camping requirement and hold the First Class rank.

After being elected, the Scout must complete the Ordeal, which is a series of tests of his sincere dedication to the high ideals of Scouting and the Order. If he is faithful in performing the tests, he takes a solemn pledge of service and is admitted into the Order. A long period of self-improvement and service then follows.

The lodge flap, Universal Arrow ribbon, and the distinctive sash identify the Order of the Arrow member. They are symbols of service. Our lodge has its own activities and projects, but our program does not replace the member's responsibility to his unit. Indeed, each Arrowman is expected to give richer service to his own troop or team in return for the honor his unit extended to him.

American Indian lore is an attractive sideline in our Order. American Indian dances and ceremonies add color to our program of service, and members often make American Indian lore their hobby. However, one does not need American Indian attire or skill in American Indian lore to become a valuable member of the Order of the Arrow.

Scouts, you will elect representatives to our brotherhood of cheerful service, and we are here to assist you in the election. All registered active members of this troop or team, except those 21 or older, are entitled to vote.

All those who receive votes from at least half of those who turn in ballots are elected. The number of candidates you elect will depend on how your votes agree with votes of other members of your unit.

Remember that an Order of the Arrow election is not a popularity contest! Don't vote for a Scout just because he is your friend or just because he is a good athlete or because he is older than the rest. What really counts is his loyalty to the Scout Oath and Law.

Campaigning in an Order of the Arrow election is not permitted. You are expected to think for yourself; do not let others influence your decision. The election is by secret ballot and no discussion will be permitted, so no one will know for whom you are voting. This important decision about your fellow Scouts is entirely up to you.

Before we announce the names of those eligible and begin the election, are there any questions?

(Answer any questions about the nature and purpose of the Order of the Arrow and the election procedure.)

OA MEMBER B:

The following members of this unit have met the camping and advancement requirements and are eligible for election, as certified by your unit leader. Will you stand and form a line over here (point) as your names are called?

(Point out a place to line up and read the list slowly. Arrange the candidates in a line facing the voters at the place indicated; the line can be semicircular if the eligible group is large. Write each name on the chalkboard or flip chart as called.)

Scouts, you should now answer each of the following questions to yourself; your answers will help you to make the right selections.

OA MEMBER C:

Who in this group is a friend to all and a brother to every other Scout? Who is pleasant and easy to get along with? Is he kind and helpful? In all, if you were a Tenderfoot Scout, would you like to hike and camp with him?

Who is cheerful, even when he has many tiresome jobs to do? Who smiles whenever he can? Who obeys promptly and cheerfully? Does he control his temper? If you were at camp with him for several weeks, do you think you would enjoy it?

Who is always ready to give unselfish and whole-hearted service to others? Who, in serving others, can forget his own desires and interests? Who has served your unit all year round, faithfully attending your meetings and helping with your service projects? Do you think he will continue his service in the future? If you were his patrol leader, could you depend on him?



In all, ask yourselves: Who in this group, by living up to the Scout Oath, serves your fellow Scouts with such an example of brotherhood and cheerfulness that you look up to him with deep respect and admiration?

OA MEMBER B:

Scouts, on the ballot you will be given, print the first and last names of the candidates who, in your opinion, have set the best examples of brotherhood, cheerfulness, and service.

Vote only for those you believe will continue in unselfish service to your troop. If you feel that no one is worthy, turn in an unmarked ballot. If you are new in the troop or team and do not know the candidates well enough to vote wisely, you may abstain by not turning in a ballot at all, and this will not affect the final result. Those eligible for election also vote, and they may vote for themselves if they feel they are worthy.

The names of the eligible candidates are listed on this chalkboard (flip chart, poster, etc.). When you are finished, fold the ballot only once and give the pencil and ballot to any member of the election team.

(Distribute election ballots and pencils.)

(Collect ballots and pencils. Count the votes in private with the unit leader. The following text should be used whenever there is no formal calling-out ceremony planned.)

OA MEMBER A:

The following have been elected to the Order of the Arrow. Will you please come forward as your leader calls your name? (Name those elected.) This concludes the election. Thank you for your cooperation. Good camping and good night (day).

(Elected candidates and any Arrowmen within the unit who can be spared are taken into a separate room where the election team records necessary data and instructs the candidates as to the date, time, and place of the beginning of the Ordeal. The following paragraphs should then be presented as a charge to the candidates and present Order of the Arrow members.)

OA MEMBER B:

That you, my fellow campers, have been chosen by your companions to become members of the Order of the Arrow reflects great credit upon you, and I congratulate you upon your election. You have impressed upon those who have lived closest to you the sincerity of your purpose to live in accordance with the high ideals of the Scout Oath. The judgment of your fellows could hardly have been mistaken.

In a short time, you will take upon yourselves another solemn obligation to be unselfish in service and devotion to the welfare of others. Your fellow Scouts elected you because they felt that you would continue your service. Do not let them down.

OA MEMBER C:

My brothers in the Order, you have proved during the past year that the traditions of our brotherhood are not a collection of meaningless words. As we welcome these new candidates (the new candidate) on our journey, let us be mindful of our obligation to help and guide them (him) during the trials that lie ahead.

Ceremonies

Although we might not always understand or remember all that happened, our most vivid and lasting impression of the Order of the Arrow was probably formed during the Ordeal ceremony.

The exhilarating fatigue that comes from working hard with very little food amid the excitement of a special ceremony heightens the experience of the Ordeal. So it is important to the success of the Order that every lodge put on the best ceremonies possible.

Businesses usually are successful when they spend extra time and effort on their customers, and if a lodge is active enough to qualify for the Quality Lodge recognition, it probably can credit some of its accomplishments and strengths to good ceremonies. Because candidates realize and remember that a lot of hard work went into “their” Ordeal ceremony, the lodge’s efforts in producing good ceremonies often are repaid by inspired new members who will take an active interest in the activities of the Order.

Conducting ceremonies. Ceremonies are an important part of the activities of the Order of the Arrow. They must always be conducted in a manner that is in complete compliance with the ceremony guides and the *Guide to Inductions*. Neither hazing nor any other activity that endangers the health or injures the feelings of the candidates has a place in an Order of the Arrow ceremony.

Ceremonies should be dramatic and held in an appropriate setting with proper use of American Indian attire and council fire techniques. Nothing should be done to detract from the serious purpose of honoring new candidates. The difference between success and failure of a lodge starts with the ceremonies of the Order. Proper attire, well-laid-out ceremonial grounds, rehearsals, and, very important, memorizing speaking parts, contribute to meaningful ceremonies.

