



Volunteer's Guide to the Gold Torch Award*

A great way to practice leadership—plus, it opens the path to earn the Gold Award

Find tips and ideas to help guide Girl Scouts through this award program.

Facilitator Overview: This guide will help leaders support Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts in earning the Gold Torch award. You may be supporting just one Girl Scout, a few, or a larger group—adjust your delivery and language accordingly.

Much of the work of this award will take place outside of your direct supervision. You will:

- Help Girl Scouts identify and obtain/be elected to/volunteer for a leadership position (such as leading a community group, serving in a student council leadership position, becoming captain of a sports team, or anything else that interests them). If they're already in such a role, they don't need to find a new one; they can use their current position for this award.
- Help Girl Scouts define a timeframe (the "term") for their award work. Some leadership positions may last just a few weeks (for instance, leading a team to organize a community event), while others may last longer (serving as the captain of a sports team for a season, for instance, or as student council president for a school year). ANY leadership position, whether the duration is short or long, is valid for this award.

In the case of long-term positions, you'll help Girl Scouts set an award timeframe that seems appropriate. (It can be adjusted later to allow more time, if needed.)

- Help set up the award framework and make sure Girl Scouts have the information and tools they need. This may include:
 - Facilitating an initial review of each step alongside the **Gold Torch Plan** so Girl Scouts have an idea of what to expect; asking whether Girl Scouts have any questions or need clarification
 - Reminding Girl Scouts to go back and review the **Gold Torch Plan** for helpful guidance and prompts prior to each step, while emphasizing that you're always available for guidance and/or support
 - Asking Girl Scouts to identify how they'll stretch (by trying new things? taking on new responsibilities?) through this award. Where

do they feel confident? Where do they feel uncomfortable? Are there any areas where they feel they need or would like help?

- Checking in according to an agreed-upon schedule to see how things are going and provide any needed support (develop this schedule in collaboration with Girl Scouts)
- Guiding Girl Scouts to reflect on their experience, their personal growth, and their thoughts on leadership once all steps are complete

Prioritize making yourself available throughout the Gold Torch process to mentor and advise. Some Girl Scouts will be able to manage most of the award steps independently, but others may need more support. Meet Girl Scouts where they are and provide assistance as needed, but encourage them to take the lead whenever possible.

Note: To Do items in this award are required; **Activity Options** are suggestions. Girl Scouts may make substitutions for activity options, if desired.

Below, you'll find high-level summaries of each step's purpose, followed by ways for the facilitator to support each activity. (See the Girl Scout-facing award overview for activity details.) This guidance is not meant to be comprehensive—you may find that other help is needed—but it addresses some of the most common issues you may encounter. Use these suggestions as needed to help Girl Scouts understand and prepare for their role, every step of the way.

Step 1: Explore your strengths

Girl Scouts will reflect on their current or intended leadership position—why it matters, what leadership means to them, what leadership qualities they already have, and how they'd like to grow in their role. They'll also set a personal goal to work on during their term.

To Do (and how you might help):

1. **Explore what kind of leader you want to be.** Encourage participating Girl Scouts to discuss and compare notes if several are working on the award, or

*Detailed choice activities, meeting tools, and additional resources and materials can be found within the Volunteer Toolkit on my.girlscouts.org.

to talk to you one-on-one if not. Suggest journaling as a reflection aid.

2. **Set a personal goal.** Remind Girl Scouts that they'll be setting group goals later, but this moment is all about THEM and their personal goals. As Girl Scouts complete this activity, remember that your role is to support them, not to evaluate them or provide feedback. Let them share authentically and vulnerably. **ALL goals are valid, no matter how big or small.** Keep it girl-led and applaud Girl Scouts' efforts without directing or judging their choices.

Step 2: Set your direction

As Girl Scouts settle into their role, they'll get to know the group or organization they're leading, then work individually to create personal goals and collaboratively to create group goals.

To Do (and how you might help):

1. **Explore your organization.** Help Girl Scouts brainstorm things they might want or need to know about their organization, to inform their direction. Talk about how or from whom they might get this information.
2. **Define your group's goals.** Go over the SMART goals criteria in the award overview to make sure Girl Scouts understand the framework for effective goal-setting.
3. **Break it down, then build it up.** Girl Scouts may vary in their planning experience and abilities. Help with practical aspects of the planning process as needed, but encourage Girl Scouts to take as much initiative as possible.
4. **Build a support network.** Help Girl Scouts consider what types of support they might want or need beyond what you can give them.

Step 3: Lead your team

During the first half of their term, Girl Scouts strengthen their leadership skills through experience, continually applying what they learn to reflect and adjust course as needed.

To Do (and how you might help):

1. **Lead with purpose.** You've set Girl Scouts up for success. Now it's their turn to fly! As they do, remind Girl Scouts to check their Gold Torch Plan for prompts, and help them brainstorm further if needed.
2. **Strengthen team dynamics.** Discuss the importance of team building in leadership success. Remind Girl Scouts that great leaders don't just get things done—they inspire their teams, too!

3. **Reflect and adjust.** Suggest journaling as a reflection aid. Remind Girl Scouts that change is a healthy part of the leadership process, not a sign of failure. Encourage them to share successes, challenges, and ideas for course correction with you or with a wider group, if they're comfortable doing so.

Step 4: Look ahead together

Midway through their term, Girl Scouts will check their progress toward their personal and group goals. They'll also get input from their team.

Activity Options (and how leaders might help):

- **Host a group reflection.** Help Girl Scouts consider the skills needed to moderate a group and how to handle feedback in a positive, constructive way.
- **Think beyond your term.** Help Girl Scouts consider how they'll plan their group brainstorming session; if they're working on their own, suggest journaling as a reflection aid to help them organize their thoughts.

Step 5: Make your mark

At the end of their term, Girl Scouts will look back at their **Gold Torch Plan** and talk with their team to evaluate if/how they reached their goals and what they learned from the experience. Then, they'll decide how they want to meaningfully wrap up their experience.

Activity Options (and how leaders might help):

- **Shape your leadership portfolio.** Help Girl Scouts consider their goals for their portfolio (what will they do with it? how does the portfolio's purpose affect its format?) and assemble any resources they need. When they're done, encourage them to share their work with you or the larger group, if they're comfortable doing so.
- **Show appreciation.** Help Girl Scouts brainstorm all the people they might thank for help given during their leadership term. Consider being a role model by writing a heartfelt note or showing appreciation to your Gold Torch Girl Scouts in another way. Your actions can help them to remember that kind words go a long way—and inspire them to follow your lead.

Award Overview: Reflect and grow

After all steps are complete, guide Girl Scouts to think about their Gold Torch experience as a whole and ask themselves how they've grown as a leader. Use the questions in the award guide to facilitate this conversation.

Girl Scouts receive the Gold Torch award once the award overview process is complete.

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