

# MERIT BADGE SERIES



# AMERICAN LABOR



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

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*"Enhancing our youths' competitive edge through merit badges"*



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# Requirements

1. Using resources available to you, learn about working people and work-related concerns. List and briefly describe or give examples of at least EIGHT concerns of American workers. These may include, but are not limited to, working conditions, workplace safety, hours, wages, seniority, job security, equal-opportunity employment and discrimination, guest workers, automation and technologies that replace workers, unemployment, layoffs, outsourcing, and employee benefits such as health care, child care, profit sharing, and retirement benefits.
2. With your counselor's and parent's approval and permission, visit the office or attend a meeting of a local union, a central labor council, or an employee organization, or contact one of these organizations via the Internet. Then do EACH of the following:
  - a. Find out what the organization does.
  - b. Share the list of issues and concerns you made for requirement 1. Ask the people you communicate with which issues are of greatest interest or concern to them and why.
  - c. Draw a diagram showing how the organization is structured, from the local to the national level, if applicable.

3. Explain to your counselor what labor unions are, what they do, and what services they provide to members. In your discussion, show that you understand the concepts of labor, management, collective bargaining, negotiation, union shops, open shops, grievance procedures, mediation, arbitration, work stoppages, strikes, and lockouts.
4. Explain what is meant by the adversarial model of labor-management relations, compared with a cooperative-bargaining style.
5. Do ONE of the following:
  - a. Develop a time line of significant events in the history of the American labor movement from the 1770s to the present.
  - b. Prepare an exhibit, a scrapbook, or a computer presentation, such as a slide show, illustrating three major achievements of the American labor movement and how those achievements affect American workers.
  - c. With your counselor's and parent's approval and permission, watch a movie that addresses organized labor in the United States. Afterward, discuss the movie with your counselor and explain what you learned.
  - d. Read a biography (with your counselor's approval) of someone who has made a contribution to the American labor movement. Explain what contribution this person has made to the American labor movement.
6. Explain the term *globalization*. Discuss with your counselor some effects of globalization on the workforce in the United States. Explain how this global workforce fits into the economic system of this country.

7. Choose a labor issue of widespread interest to American workers—an issue in the news currently or known to you from your work on this merit badge. Before your counselor, or in writing, argue both sides of the issue, first taking management's side, then presenting labor's or the employee's point of view. In your presentation, summarize the basic rights and responsibilities of employers and employees, including union members and nonunion members.
8. Discuss with your counselor the different goals that may motivate the owners of a business, its stockholders, its customers, its employees, the employees' representatives, the community, and public officials. Explain why agreements and compromises are made and how they affect each group in achieving its goals.
9. Learn about opportunities in the field of labor relations. Choose one career in which you are interested and discuss with your counselor the major responsibilities of that position and the qualifications, education, and training such a position requires.

# Labor-Related Resources

## Scouting Literature

*American Business, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communication, Entrepreneurship, Law, Public Speaking, and Salesmanship* merit badge pamphlets

For more information about or to order Scouting-related resources, see <http://www.scoutstuff.org> (with your parent's permission).

## Books

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *Kids on Strike*. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2003.

Dubofsky, Melvyn, and Foster R. Dulles. *Labor in America: A History*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Ewing, David W. *Justice on the Job: Resolving Grievances in the Nonunion Workplace*. Harvard Business School Press, 1989.

Freedman, Russell. *Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor*. HMH Books for Young Readers, 1998.

Le Blanc, Paul. *A Short History of the U.S. Working Class: From Colonial Times to the Twenty-First Century*. Humanity Books, 1999.

Lichtenstein, Nelson. *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor*. Princeton University Press, 2013.

Mills, D. Quinn. *Labor Management Relations*. McGraw Hill/Irwin, 5th ed., 1993.

Murray, R. Emmett. *Lexicon of Labor: More Than 500 Key Terms, Biographical Sketches, and Historical Insights Concerning Labor in America*. The New Press, 2010.

Nelson, Daniel. *Shifting Fortunes: The Rise and Decline of American Labor, From the 1820s to the Present*. Ivan R. Dee Inc., 1998.

Ross, Stewart. *The Industrial Revolution: Documenting History*. Franklin Watts, 2001.

Sinclair, Upton. *The Jungle*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014.

Stein, R. Conrad. *The Pullman Strike and the Labor Movement in American History*. Enslow Publishers, 2001.

U.S. Department of Labor. *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (current year). Skyhorse Publishing, 2014.

Woodburn, Judith. *A Multicultural Portrait of Labor in America*. Benchmark Books, 1994.

Zaniello, Tom. *Working Stiffs, Union Maids, Reds, and Riffraff: An Expanded Guide to Films About Labor*. ILR Press, 2003.

## **Biographies About American Labor Leaders**

Collins, David R. *Farmworker's Friend: The Story of Cesar Chavez*. Carolrhoda Books, 1996.

Dubofsky, Melvyn, and Warren Van Tine. *John L. Lewis*. University of Illinois Press, 1986.

Josephson, Judith Pinkerton. *Mother Jones: Fierce Fighter for Workers' Rights*. Lerner Publications, 1996.

Lichtenstein, Nathan. *Walter Reuther: The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*. University of Illinois Press, 1997.

Reef, Catherine. *A. Philip Randolph: Union Leader and Civil Rights Crusader*. Enslow Publishers, 2001.

Streissguth, Thomas. *Legendary Labor Leaders*. Oliver Press Inc., 1998.

## **Organizations and Web Sites**

### **American Arbitration Association**

335 Madison Ave., Floor 10  
New York, NY 10017-4605  
Telephone: 212-716-5800  
Web site: <http://www.adr.org>

### **American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations**

815 16th St. NW  
Washington, DC 20006  
Telephone: 202-637-5000  
Web site: <http://www.aflcio.org>

### **Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service**

2100 K St. NW  
Washington, DC 20427  
Telephone: 202-606-8100  
Web site: <http://www.fmcs.gov>

### **LaborStart**

Web site: <http://www.laborstart.org/usa>

### **National Labor Relations Board**

1099 14th St. NW  
Washington, DC 20570-0001  
Toll-free telephone: 866-667-6572  
Web site: <http://www.nlrb.gov>

### **Occupational Safety and Health Administration**

200 Constitution Ave.  
Washington, DC 20210  
Toll-free telephone: 800-321-6742  
Web site: <http://www.osha.gov>

### **U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics**

Postal Square Building  
2 Massachusetts Ave. NE  
Washington, DC 20212-0001  
Telephone: 202-691-5200  
Web site: <http://www.bls.gov>

### **U.S. Department of Labor**

Frances Perkins Building  
200 Constitution Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20210  
Toll-free telephone: 866-487-2365  
Web site: <http://www.dol.gov>