



Shotgun Shooting

Option A

Merit Badge Study Guide

• Organize thoughts to prepare • Take notes • Keep track of progress

Merit badge counselors may not require the use of this or any other workbook. Scouts must still demonstrate that have learned the material and can perform each required skill. If a requirement directs you to discuss, show, "tell, explain, demonstrate, identify, or anything similar, the requirement must be completed as written. No one may add to or remove anything from the official requirements listed in Scoutbook or on scouting.org/skills/merit-badges.

• This guide was updated in July 2026.

Scout's Name: _____ Unit _____ Date Started _____

Counselor's Name: _____ Email: _____

Before class:

- Read the [merit badge pamphlet](#)
- View helpful online video resources for each requirement at <http://scouting.org/merit-badges/shotgun-shooting>

1. Do the following:

- a. Explain what a projectile is, and why any device that shoots a projectile at high speed must be handled with care and respect, and used only in approved locations.

- b. Explain the basic rules of safe gun handling that apply to all firearms.

- c. Describe how you would react if a friend visiting your home asked to see your or your family's firearm.

d. Explain the need for, types, and use of eye protection and hearing protection.

e. Explain the main points of the laws for owning and using guns in your community and state.

f. Explain how hunting is related to the wise use of renewable wildlife resources.

☐ g. Successfully complete a state hunter education course, or obtain a copy of the hunting laws for your state, then do the following:

1. Explain the main points of hunting laws in your state, and any special laws on the use of guns and ammunition.

2. List the kinds of wildlife that can be legally hunted in your state.

h.

i. List and explain three shotgun sports. Identify places in your community where you could practice these sports.

1.	
2.	
3.	

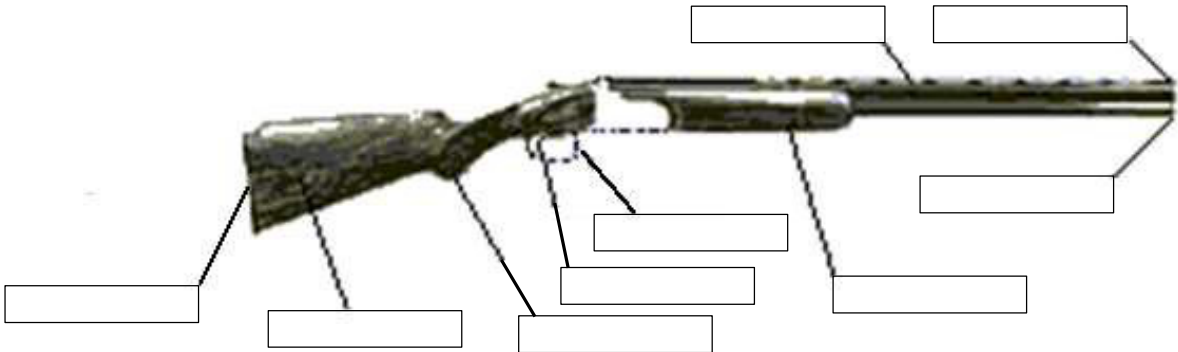
Explain how you can join or be a part of range and target activities.

j. Discuss with your counselor a list of sources you could contact for information on firearms and their use.

2. Working under the supervision of a certified National Rifle Association (NRA) Shotgun instructor and a certified range safety officer, at a nationally authorized camp property or at a commercial firearm range (as defined in the Scouting America National Range and Target Activities Manual), do the following option:

A. Option A: Shotgun Shooting (Modern Shotshell Type)

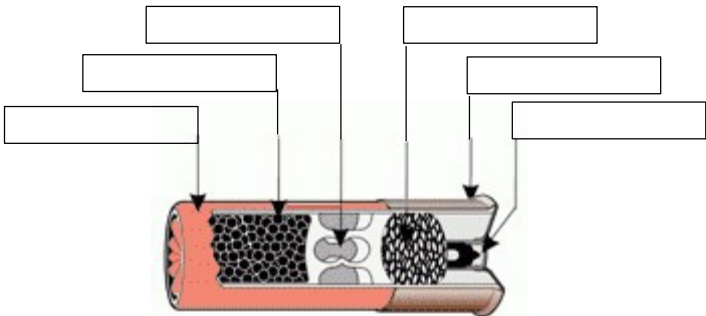
- ☐
- a. Identify and explain the principal parts of a shotgun, action types, and how they function..



Part Name	Function

- ☐ b. Identify and demonstrate the rules for safely storing and handling a shotgun.

- ☐ c. Identify the parts of a shotgun shell and their functions.



Part name	Function

- ☐ d. Identify the various gauges of shotguns. Explain which you would choose for a particular use and why.

Gauge:

Use

Why?

Gauge:

Use

Why?

Gauge:

Use

Why?

Gauge:

Use

Why?

- ☐ e. Identify the causes of a shotgun's failure to fire, and explain what a misfire, hangfire, and squib fire are. Explain and demonstrate proper preventive measures, and the procedures to follow in response to each.

	What is it?	Procedure to follow in response
Misfire		
Hangfire		
Squib fire		

- ☐ f. Demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary to safely shoot a shotgun on a range, including understanding and following range procedures and commands.
- ☐ g. Explain the basic safety rules for cleaning a shotgun, and identify the materials needed.

- ☐ h. Demonstrate how to clean a shotgun properly and safely.
- ☐ i. Discuss what points you would consider in selecting a shotgun..

- ☐ j. Shoot a moving target with a shotgun using the four fundamentals of firing a shot :position, mount, vision, and movement.

- ☐ k. Shooting score required: Hit at least 12 out of 25 targets (48 percent) in two 25-target groups. The two groups need not be shot in consecutive order. A minimum of 50 shots must be fired.

1st Group Score: _____

2nd Group Score: _____

Shooting skill rules:

- ☐ Targets may be thrown by a hand trap, manual mechanical trap, or on any trap or skeet field. If using a hand trap or manual mechanical trap, the trap operator should be at least 5 feet to the right and 3 feet to the rear of the shooter. If throwing left-handed with a hand trap, the trap operator should be at least 5 feet to the left and 3 feet to the rear of the shooter.
 - ☐ All targets should be thrown at a reasonable speed and in the same direction.
 - ☐ Targets should be generally thrown so as to climb in the air after leaving the trap.
 - ☐ Scores may be fired at any time, either in formal competition or in practice, but only under approved supervision and at an approved range as noted in the Scouting America National Range and Target Activities Manual.
 - ☐ Modern, age-appropriate, target shotgun models, 12-, 16- or 20-gauge, may be used.
 - ☐ Only commercially manufactured ammunition may be used. Reloads may not be used in Scouting America range and target activities.
 - ☐ Shooters must shoot in rounds of 25. Rounds need not be shot continuously or on the same day. The term "round" refers to a single series of 25 shots.
 - ☐ If using a trap field, shoot station 3 with traps set to throw straightaway targets.
- ☐ 3. Identify how you could apply the skills and knowledge of safe and responsible use of firearms you learned in this merit badge to pursue a career or personal hobby. Research the additional training and experience you would need, expenses you may incur, and the affiliation with organizations that could help you maximize the positive impact and enjoyment you gain from it. Discuss what you learned with your counselor, and share what short-term and long-term goals you might have if you pursued this..



Shotgun Merit Badge

Study Snapshot

To prepare for the Shotgun Merit Badge class, please read the day before class starts.

Safety:

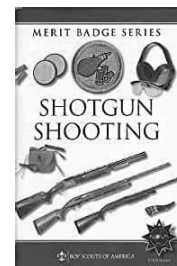
ALWAYS keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.

ALWAYS keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.

ALWAYS keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.

Commands: Cease Fire

Store guns and ammunition properly.



Gun Parts: Barrel, Stock, Action, Trigger, Trigger Guard, Receiver, Safety, Release, Comb, Butt, Grip, Forearm, Magazine, Muzzle, Rib, Bead

Gun Action Types: Pump, Hinge, Semiautomatic, Bolt, Lever, Rolling Block

Cartridge Parts: Case, Wad, Primer, Powder, Shot

Shot Sizes: Slug to No. 9 Shot

Cartridge Sizes: 10, 12, 16, 20, 29, 410

Firing Sequence:

Firing pin strikes primer $\Rightarrow$ Primer ignites powder $\Rightarrow$ Powder gasses expand $\Rightarrow$ Expanding gasses push the wad and shot out of the barrel

Malfunctions: Misfire, Hang fire, Squib

You need: Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude to shoot a moving target with a moving gun.

Personal Protection: Safety Glasses, Hearing Protection, Wash hands after shooting and cleaning.

Fundamentals: Stance, Gun Ready, Swing to Target, Trigger Pull, Follow-through

Cleaning: Cleaner, Oil, Rods and accessories, Bore Snake

Selecting a gun: Budget/Quality, Fit, Use

Merit Badge Scoring Qualifications: hit 12 out of 25 targets twice (doesn't have to be done all at one time)