

CATCH THE BIG ONE

ELECTIVE ADVENTURE



SNAPSHOT OF ADVENTURE



Humans started fishing as a way to get food. Many cities and towns were established and grew because they were close to a source of fish. Today, most people fish as a hobby, releasing what they catch. Fishing gives you a chance to be outdoors near the water and have fun.

REQUIREMENTS

Approved by _____

1. Make a plan to go fishing. Determine where you will go and what type of fish you plan to catch. All of the following requirements are to be completed based on your choice. _____
2. Use the BSA SAFE Checklist to plan what you need for your fishing experience. _____
3. Describe the environment where the fish might be found. _____
4. Make a list of the equipment and materials you will need to fish. _____
5. Determine the best type of knot to tie your hook to your line and tie it. _____
6. Choose the appropriate type of fishing rod and tackle you will be using. Have an adult review your gear. _____
7. Using what you have learned about fish and fishing equipment, spend at least one hour fishing following local guidelines and regulations. _____



- Elective Adventure
- Scan for this Adventure page

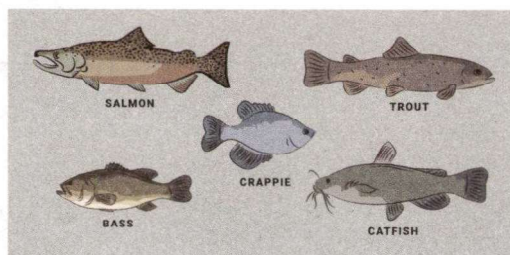
REQUIREMENT 1

Make a plan to go fishing. Determine where you will go and what type of fish you plan to catch. All of the following requirements are to be completed based on your choice.

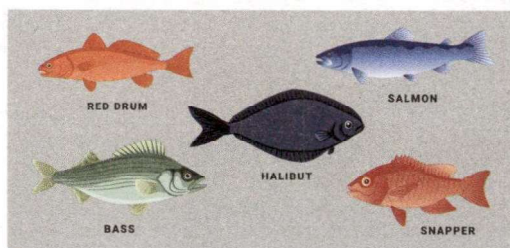
Fishing is popular because there are so many different places to fish and because most people live in an area that is not too far away from a fishing spot. Your fishing spot may be a man-made lake that is stocked with fish, a stream known for fly fishing, or an ocean pier.

Once you have decided on where you will go fishing, spend time identifying the type of fish that live in that body of water. Here are things you should think of that will help you have a more successful fishing trip:

- ▶ What time of day are the fish most active and feeding?
- ▶ What do the fish naturally eat?
- ▶ At what temperature are the fish most active?
- ▶ Where are the likely places you might find fish?



Freshwater species

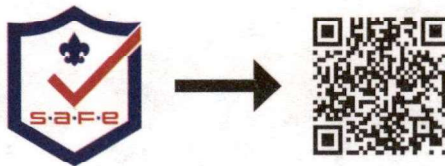


Saltwater species

REQUIREMENT 2

Use the BSA SAFE Checklist to plan what you need for your fishing experience.

With your den or family visit the BSA SAFE Checklist website on scouting.org. You can find the page by following the QR code here.



Here are the points of the BSA SAFE Checklist to consider for your fishing trip.

- ▶ **Supervision** — Youth are supervised by qualified and trustworthy adults who set the example for safety.
- ▶ **Assessment** — Activities are assessed for risks during planning. Leaders have reviewed applicable program guidance or standards and have verified the activity is not prohibited. Risk avoidance or mitigation is incorporated into the activity.
- ▶ **Fitness and Skill** — Participants' BSA Annual Health and Medical Records are reviewed, and leaders have confirmed that prerequisite fitness and skill levels exist for participants to take part safely.
- ▶ **Equipment and Environment** — Safe and appropriately sized equipment, courses, camps, campsites, trails, or playing fields are used properly. Leaders periodically check gear use and the environment for changing conditions that could affect safety.

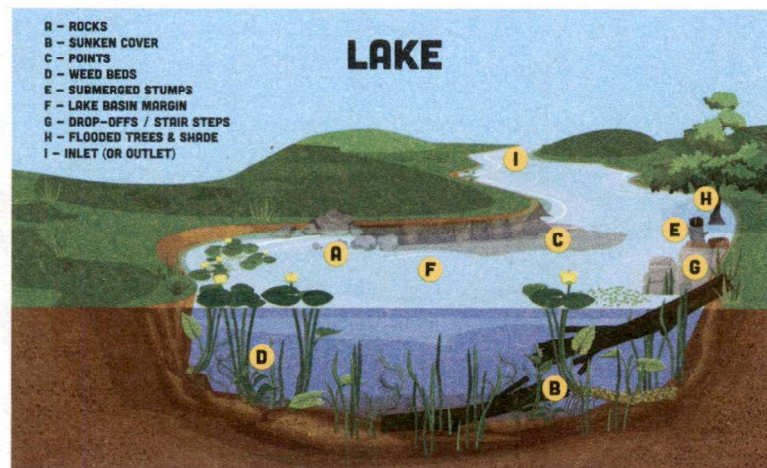
REQUIREMENT 3

Describe the environment where the fish might be found.

Different species of fish have different behaviors based on where they live, but all fish act on instinct. Instinct is the natural behavior an animal uses to survive. Think like the fish you plan to catch, and you'll increase your chances of success.

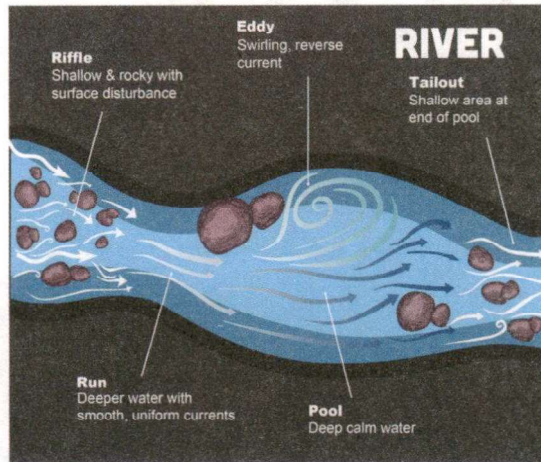
Most big fish eat little fish. To survive, little fish move fast, and they find places to hide where big fish cannot go. Little fish need food, too, so if you know what the little fish eat, chances are you'll find bigger fish nearby.

Some fish find food on the bottom of the body of water. Other fish find food floating on the top. Knowing where fish find their food will help you know where to fish. If you want to catch catfish, which sometimes find their food on the bottom of a lake or river, you'll want to have your bait or lure on the bottom. If you want to catch a big bass that eats little fish near the surface, you may want to have your bait or lure near the top of the water.



Where do the fish you want to catch live?

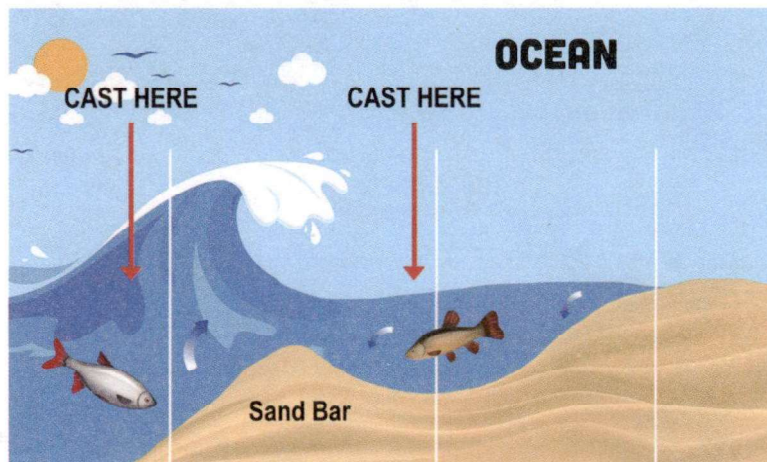
- Do your fish eat smaller fish?
Where do those smaller fish live? What do those smaller fish eat?
- Do your fish eat insects? If so, what kind and where do you find them?



- Do your fish like warmer or colder water? Water on top is warmer than deeper water.



To learn more about fish, you can find links to state fish and wildlife agencies on the internet (with permission) at fws.gov/offices.



REQUIREMENT 4

Make a list of equipment and materials you will need to fish.

It's fun to fish with a simple fishing pole, but most people who fish use a rod and reel instead. This equipment lets you cast your line farther out in the water. And when you hook a fish, it's easier to reel it in. Here's the equipment you will need.

ROD

The rod takes the place of the fishing pole. A rod has line guides (metal rings) along its length that the fishing line runs through. Most rods are made of fiberglass or carbon fiber. Some rods come apart so you can transport them easily. These are called take-down rods.

The weight of rods varies. To catch small fish, you could use an ultralight rod. To catch fish like trout, you could use a long, thin lightweight rod called a fly rod. For bigger fish, you would need a rod that is thicker around and stronger. If you were going surf fishing, you might use a rod that's 20 feet long!



REEL

The reel is attached to the rod near its handle. Inside the reel is a spool that your fishing line wraps around (and around and around and around). From the reel, the end of the line goes up the

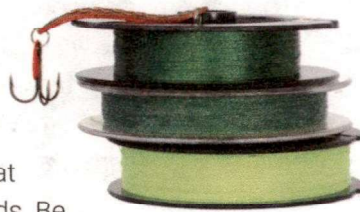
rod through the guides before you attach your hook or lure. To reel in the line, you turn the reel. When casting (tossing your line out on the water), you release a trigger on the reel which lets the fishing line go.

There are many types of reels. If you're new to fishing, you might want to pick a close-faced spincast reel that has a cover to protect the line inside. When casting with a spincast reel, you press and hold the button on top of the reel. During the cast, you release the button to let the line out and complete the cast. The timing can be tricky, but you'll soon figure it out.

Open-faced spincasting reels don't have a cover and take more skill to use. Without practice, you can end up with something called a "bird's nest": a big, knotted wad of fishing line that is no longer usable.

FISHING LINE

There are many types and colors of fishing line. Some line is meant to catch fish that weigh less than a pound. Some is meant to catch fish that weigh 10, 20, or even 50 or more pounds. Be sure to use line that is strong enough for the fish you want to catch. Otherwise, a fish can break the line and get away.



Fishing line may be clear or have a tint, like green or bronze. Like camouflage, the tinted fishing line blends into its surroundings and makes a good choice for fishing when looking to keep your line invisible to fish. A tinted fishing line may be more visible to you than clear fishing line in very clear water.

BAIT

You will also need to have the correct bait for the type of fish you're fishing for. If the fish don't like to eat the bait you're using, they won't bite. Do you remember what you learned in





requirement 1 about the fish in your area? You'll have better luck catching a fish if you use bait that the fish would naturally eat.

You will need to decide if you want to use live bait like minnows, worms, or grubs or use artificial bait. There are many types of artificial bait. Some

make noise in the water or spin around to attract fish. Some are designed to look like live bait. There are special dough baits that you can form around the hook. These have scents that attract fish.



TACKLE BOX

A tackle box is a good place to store your bait and other fishing supplies (called tackle) while you're traveling and while you're fishing. It keeps your tackle clean and organized. You can buy a tackle box at a store or reuse something you find around your home. Be sure there is a way to secure the lid so it doesn't open at the wrong time.



Here are some things to carry in your tackle box:

- ▶ **Artificial bait** to catch fish.
- ▶ **Barbless hooks** to catch fish. These hooks cause less harm to a fish's mouth when you're practicing catch-and-release fishing. If you cannot find barbless hooks, you can use pliers to flatten the barbs on barbed hooks.
- ▶ **Bobbers** to attach to your fishing line. They are small floats that keep your hook at a certain depth and show when a fish bites.
- ▶ **Sinkers** to attach to your fishing line about 6 to 10 inches above the hook. They let you fish lower in the water because they are weighted and pull down on the hook. This keeps your bait down near the lake or river bottom where most fish swim. For most shore fishing, pinch one or two small split-shot sinkers onto your line. Use only enough weight to sink the bait.
- ▶ **Clippers** to cut off the fishing line after you tie it on a hook.
- ▶ **Dehookers** to remove hooks safely and quickly from a fish that swallows them.
- ▶ **Needle-nose pliers** to help you remove hooks from fish and pull knots tight.

Since you'll be outside, you'll also want to carry the Cub Scout Six Essentials when you go fishing. Other items to carry may include raingear if there is a chance of light rain and a life jacket if you're going fishing from a boat.

If you want to learn about fishing but aren't sure whether you'll like it, you may be able to borrow some equipment from a family member or friend. Once you decide you like it, you can purchase the proper equipment. You can also buy one or two items at a time and slowly build up a collection of fishing gear.

REQUIREMENT 5

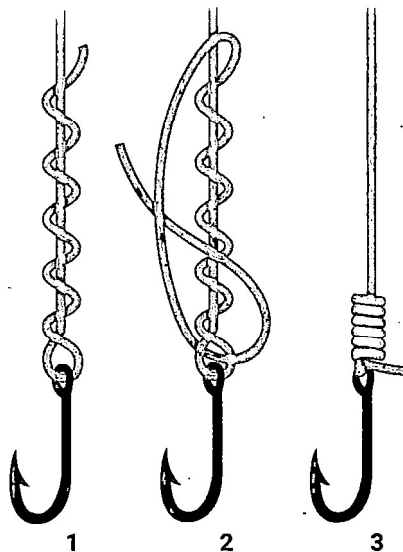
Determine the best type of knot to tie your hook to your line and tie it.

FISHING KNOTS

You must know the proper types of knots for tying a hook to your line. Because fishing line is stiff and slippery, you can't just use any knot. You need special knots that hold tight. Here are two good knots to learn:

Improved clinch knot.

1. Run the end of the line through the eye of the hook, double the line back, and make six twists around the standing part (the long part of the line).
2. Run the end of the line through the small loop where the line joins the eye and then back through the large loop you just formed.
3. Partially close the knot and moisten it a little with water before securing it tightly against the hook eye. Cut off the short (tag) end of the line.



Palomar knot.

1. Double the line to make a 4- to 6-inch loop, then pass the end of the loop through the eye. (You may need to crimp the end of the loop so it will go through the eye.)
2. Tie a loose overhand knot in the doubled line.
3. Pass the hook through the loop and pull on the doubled line to tighten the knot, guiding the loop over the top of the eye.
4. Cut off the short (tag) end of the line.



REQUIREMENT 6

Choose the appropriate type of fishing rod and tackle you will be using.
Have an adult review your gear.

Things to check before going fishing:

- ▶ Is your fishing gear the proper size for the fish that you are targeting?
- ▶ Is your fishing gear clean and in good working order?
- ▶ Is your fishing gear properly assembled?
- ▶ Is your fishing line properly threaded and attached to your reel and hook or lure?
- ▶ Are your hooks clean?

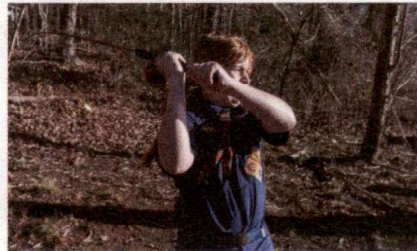


REQUIREMENT 7

Using what you have learned about fish and fishing equipment, spend at least one hour fishing following local guidelines and regulations.

It is fun to practice casting and to pick out fishing gear, but the real fun happens when you actually go fishing. Nothing is as exciting as watching your bobber disappear under the water or feeling the pull on your line as you reel in a big fish! Make a plan with your den or your parent or legal guardian for where and when you'll go fishing. Spend a minimum of one hour trying to catch a fish. Remember all the things you have learned about fish and fishing equipment.

To practice casting, you'll need a rod with a reel attached. Instead of using a hook, tie a casting plug or bobber to your line so it will be heavy enough to cast. Place a target, and practice hitting the target with the casting plug or bobber. Do this until you can get closer to the target than you were at first. As your accuracy improves, move farther from the target. The time you spend practicing will help make fishing safe and fun.





There are rules to follow when fishing. These are important because they help protect the fish and their environment. It is important that you learn these rules, understand what they mean, and promise to obey them.

Your local area may have rules about where and when you can fish, how big a fish must be to keep, and how many fish you're allowed to keep. In some places you must put the fish you catch back in the water. This practice is called catch and release. It's a good way to make sure fish continue to live in the place you're fishing.

In addition to rules about fishing, your state will also require a fishing license. Adults must purchase a fishing license before they go fishing. Youth who are Cub Scout age often don't have to have a license. Be sure to find out about licensing requirements in your area.

Once you know your local fishing rules and regulations, here are the six things to know to keep yourself and others safe:

1. Fish with proper adult supervision.
2. Get permission to fish where you plan to fish.
3. Check the weather before you go. Do not fish in a thunderstorm or inclement weather.
4. Use the buddy system. You must be able to see your buddy.
5. Give plenty of room to others fishing nearby.
6. Never fish where people are swimming.

Be sure to discuss any other rules your family has so you'll be safe while fishing.

Fishing tips:

- ▶ When you're through fishing, properly dispose of your worms or bait fish. Do not release them into the water.
- ▶ If releasing your catch, always wet your hands prior to touching a fish so you don't damage the mucous membrane that protects it.
- ▶ To release fish easily, bend down all barbs on hooks.
- ▶ Treble hooks, 3 bends and points in one hook, are not recommended.