

Explorer Belt

Introduction

Factsheet 1 of 6 in the Explorer Belt Series



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Introduction

Explorer Belt is the challenge of a lifetime that is available to Explorer Scouts aged over 16 and members of the Scout Network. It is a chance to undertake an international expedition over ten days that brings a real understanding of a different country, its people and way of life.

The Explorer Belt is often described as the 'antidote to the package holiday'. It is designed to help young people develop a real understanding of another country by travelling through that country, working as a small team to complete a series of projects, and, most importantly, by meeting local people.

The purpose of this fact sheet is to assist Leaders working with the Explorer Scout Section and members of the Scout Network, understand some basic facts about the Explorer Belt. It is this first of six factsheets which will explore some of the topics in more detail:

Factsheets

The factsheets in the Explorer Belt series are:

1. Explorer Belt – Introduction
2. Explorer Belt – Going your own way
3. Explorer Belt – Organising a group expedition
4. Explorer Belt – Project suggestions
5. Explorer Belt – Useful contacts
6. Explorer Belt – The end game

The requirements

The requirements for completion of the Explorer Belt are outlined in Unit Programme (pages 41-

43), Network Essentials (pages 53-55) and the Explorer Scout Membership Pack.

In short the participant must:

- Plan and train for an international expedition as part of a small team. This should ideally be three or four people but expedition teams of two (for older members) and four are also acceptable. When an expedition includes one or more Members under 18 and travels into remote terrain (i.e. outside the equivalent of Terrain 0) then the party size will need to be 4 as this is the minimum group size for expeditions in this terrain.
- Travel to another country and travel through that country for ten days
- Complete a major project of their choice
- Complete around 10 smaller projects
- Keep a notebook or diary during the expedition
- Take part in a debriefing after the expedition, and
- Make a presentation about the expedition.

General guidance on the options

There are many ways that the Explorer Belt can be undertaken.

An individual may decide to get together with a small group of friends and plan the expedition on their own from scratch. While this method is probably more suited to members of the Scout Network, Explorer Scouts have also used it successfully. This way of doing the Belt starts by

identifying the country for the expedition and planning the whole thing from start to finish.

It may be possible to bolt the Explorer belt onto the beginning or the end of a more major event such as a World Jamboree, a World Moot or a major Regional camp.

Alternatively, a District, Area or County may decide to organise an Explorer Belt expedition for a larger group. This method is probably more suited to the older Explorer Scout age group. Doing the Belt this way, the decision about the country to be visited may be taken by the trip organiser – usually a leader. The training will be arranged by the planning team and the hassle of organising the trip is taken from the participants.

Each way of doing the Belt is explored in more depth in one of the accompanying factsheets (numbers 2 and 3).

Suggestion for Projects

During the Explorer Belt, each participant is required to undertake a major project and up to 10 minor projects.

The major project is chosen by the participants and is intended to allow them the opportunity to look at some aspect of the country to be visited in some depth. For example, look at the agricultural industry in an area, comment on the architecture of a region and compare it to home, or discuss the importance of a river to a local economy.

The major project should take between 10 and 15 hours to complete.

Up to 10 minor projects should be undertaken by the participants. In group expeditions, it is sometimes helpful to suggest minor projects to the participants. It also adds some fun to the whole experience by giving some surprise projects. Five of the minor projects can be chosen by the participants and the other five can be chosen by other members of their Explorer Scout Unit or Local Scout Network.

Factsheet number 4 (Explorer Belt – suggestions for projects) explores this issue in more depth.

Useful contacts

There are many useful contacts, both within the wider Scout family and without, which can provide useful information for those planning to do an Explorer Belt. These contacts are listed in factsheet number 5 (Explorer Belt – useful contacts).

The end game

Once the expedition has been completed, the participants will feel exhausted, excited or both. They will have an extraordinary sense of achievement. At this stage the end game begins.

If at all possible, before they leave the country, the participants should be given the opportunity to talk about their experiences, either to each other or the leaders of the expedition. This should be done in an informal way and should in no way be judgemental. The reason for this debriefing is to help the participants start to order their thoughts for their presentation when they return home. They should be asked to reflect on the people they met, the experiences they had, what they learned about the country about themselves and about each other and what they achieved.

When they return home, they should be encouraged to make their presentation as soon as practical, while things are fresh in their minds. They should make their presentation to a suitable audience; this could be their Explorer Scout Unit, the District Explorer Scout Meeting, their local Network or the District AGM. The diary should be used to help plan the presentation.

The presentation should be assessed by a team comprising any expedition leaders, leaders from the local Explorer Scout Unit or local Scout Network and one other chosen by the District, County or Area.

You will then be able to award the belt itself, which is available from the Information Centre at Gilwell Park. Details of your Explorer Belt Expedition can be shared with others who might find them useful on the relevant Scoutbase pages. See the last factsheet in this series for more details.

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