

## Getting started – guide for parents/carers

Special Interest Areas (SIAs) are one component of the Achievement Pathways, encouraging Scouts of any age to try new things and pursue their interests by setting goals and designing a project that challenges them.

They are broad, which enables Scouts to pursue a diversity of interests and ensures that any activity a Scout could possibly think of can be included. The six Special Interest Areas are:

- Adventure & Sport
- Arts & Literature
- Creating a Better World
- Environment
- Growth & Development
- STEM & Innovation



In the Joey Scout section, this looks like an activity or project that takes approximately two hours of effort. This could be completed as a big group (12+ members), small group (~4-8 members), or individually. The activity or project should have at least one goal that the young people involved are working to achieve.

If a Joey Scout is seeking to achieve their peak award, the Joey Scout Challenge Award, then **at least one of the six required projects must have individual and personalised goals.**

## Goals

Goals are something we want to achieve. To achieve a goal, we can break it into small steps. We should keep trying to achieve our goal, even if we make mistakes or things don't go as planned. When working towards a goal, we should celebrate our successes, no matter how big or small.

To work towards a goal, we can imagine climbing a ladder. At the top is what we are aiming to achieve – our big goal. Each rung of the ladder are steps we will take along the way.

## Examples

**Goal:** *To build a block tower resembling a famous landmark (e.g. Eiffel Tower, Eureka Tower)*

**Steps:**

1. *Find a photo of your chosen landmark so you know what it looks like*
2. *Choose the biggest blocks first*
3. *Add one block at a time*
4. *Compare your tower to the landmark it's based on and celebrate what you have built!*

**Goal:** *To draw a zoo with lots of different animals*

**Steps:**

1. *Practise drawing parts of different animals*
2. *Choose the best animals that you would like to include in your zoo*
3. *Draw each animal, as well as some visitors, the enclosures etc.*
4. *Celebrate the zoo you have just drawn!*



## Developing a Special Interest Area

Many of our activities have one or more goals that we are working towards.

If we are looking to complete a big group-based Special Interest Area, think about a goal or activity that all members might want to achieve. If we are looking at a small group-based Special Interest Area, the goal or activity should be suited to the interests of the small group.

For example, our goal might be to *explore the plants and trails in our local reserve*. We would then identify what the smaller activities might be that are needed to complete this goal or activity.

In this case, the steps might be to:

1. *Plan a nature walk in the local reserve*
  - *What equipment do we need for our walk?*
  - *How long will it take us?*
  - *What do we need to know before we go on our walk?*
  - *Look at a map of the trails we might walk (if available)*
2. *Look at the different leaves on plants*
  - *What is similar and different?*
  - *What are the patterns on the leaves?*
  - *What are the shapes of the leaves?*
  - *What do the leaves or plant smell like?*
  - *What do the leaves feel like?*
3. *Look at the different heights of plants*
  - *What plants are taller?*
  - *What plants are smaller?*
  - *Are there different heights of plants in different areas along the walk?*
4. *Take photos of the different plants you can see*
5. *Name the plants*
  - *You can also use an app to identify the different plant types, so you might like to also do this when on your walk*
6. *Draw five different plants that you saw on your walk*
  - *Label your drawings*
7. *Create a display to help remember the plants, using the photos and drawings*
8. *Draw a map of the walk you did:*
  - *What do you remember about the turns you took?*
  - *What do you remember about the areas we walked through?*
  - *Did you use a map and compass on the walk? Does this help with your drawing?*
9. *Record and review your adventure*
10. *Celebrate what you have learned*



This example can work for individuals and groups of any size. This might occur over multiple weeks. You don't need to be prescriptive – each of these steps and questions have been identified so that you can be selective about which elements you might use.

## Ideas that can become Special Interest Areas

The ideas that follow are not an exhaustive list but instead might provide inspiration. They could be the base for a Special Interest Area or a complete project.

Adventure & Sport	Arts & Literature	Creating a Better World	Environment	Growth & Development	STEM & Innovation
Go on a nature walk and find 5 different types of animals or plants.	Experiment with different painting techniques like finger painting or watercolour.	Help clean up litter in the park or neighbourhood.	Learn about endangered animals and talk about one each week.	Try a new food and rate whether you like it.	Use recycled materials (like bottles and cardboard) to make a craft.
Go on a nature scavenger hunt.	Create a sculpture using clay or playdough.	Share your toys with others who don't have any.	Clean up your room and put your toys away.	Learn to tie your shoes by yourself.	Create a new game using household items (e.g., sock bowling).
Go for a hike on a nature trail.	Participate in a talent show.	Learn about kindness and do one kind thing for someone each day.	Help sort recycling at home (plastic, paper, cans).	Say something positive about yourself every day.	Build something with blocks or Legos and show it to someone.
Visit a new park and explore a new playground.	Learn to sing a simple song and sing it for others.	Plant a flower or tree and watch it grow.	Go on a nature walk and collect leaves, rocks, or sticks to examine.	Learn to express feelings using words (happy, sad, mad, etc.).	Draw a picture of a machine that could help people.
Climb to the top of a safe play structure.	Play with musical instruments (even toy ones) and make a song.	Make a thank-you card for someone who helps you.	Water a plant every day for a week.	Set the table for dinner.	Try to solve a simple puzzle with 20 pieces or less.
Explore a forest or park and find a secret hideout.	Make a collage using old magazines or newspapers.	Help a family member with a chore, like setting the table.	Use less water by turning off the tap while brushing teeth.	Wash your own hands properly before meals.	Invent a new recipe with the help of an adult.
Have a picnic in a special outdoor spot.	Create a puppet and put on a show for family or friends.	Donate gently used clothes or toys to a charity.	Watch a short video about animals or outer space.	Learn to say "please" and "thank you" without reminders.	Build a fort or tent using pillows and blankets.
Learn to identify five different types of trees.	Learn to draw or colour inside the lines.	Visit a nursing home or hospital to brighten someone's day.	Try composting food scraps with the help of an adult.	Ask for help when you don't know how to do something.	Use tape and paper to make a rocket or car.
Have a treasure hunt with clues around the house or yard.	Dress up in costumes and put on a play for the family.	Create a "kindness jar" where you add good deeds each day.	Learn about the importance of trees and plant one if possible.	Take a deep breath when you feel upset to calm down.	Explore a science kit or experiment with a grown-up.
Participate in a fun run or charity walk with family.	Try finger painting and experiment with texture.	Recycle paper, plastic, and bottles around the house.	Turn off lights when you leave a room to save energy.	Learn to count to 20.	Design a costume from recycled materials and wear it.
Participate in a "penny hike" or walkathon.	Create a collage using different materials.	Perform an act of kindness for a friend or family member.	Use reusable containers and bags instead of disposable ones.	Identify the colours of the rainbow.	Build a tower or structure using different materials.
Play tag or hide-and-seek with friends.	Paint a picture using three different colours.	Help out with chores at home.	Participate in a nature walk or clean-up event.	Recognize and write your first name.	Invent a new creature or superhero.

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Complete an obstacle course, either at home or in a park.	Learn to draw a simple object like a house or a tree.	Participate in a community clean-up day.	Conserve energy by turning off lights when leaving a room.	Learn to speak a few words in a new language.	Make a simple volcano with baking soda and vinegar.
Create an obstacle course indoors.	Memorize a short poem or rhyme.	Make cards for people in a nursing home.	Learn about recycling and practice it at home.	Sort objects by size or colour (red, big, small).	Come up with a solution to a common problem.
Go on a bike ride with family.	Design and decorate a personal art journal.	Learn about and participate in a "gift night" event.	Spend time outdoors observing plants and animals.	Do a puzzle with 10 pieces or more.	Design and build a simple machine like a ramp or a pulley.
Learn how to ride a bike without training wheels.	Learn the alphabet and recognize all the letters.	Learn about different cultures and traditions.	Plant a flower or vegetable garden.	Sing the alphabet song without help.	Design a futuristic city or vehicle.
Try a new outdoor activity, like kite flying or fishing.	Make a homemade greeting card for someone special.	Volunteer at a local soup kitchen or food bank.	Learn about different habitats and ecosystems.	Practice empathy and understanding others' feelings.	Create a story using unconventional materials or methods.
Visit a zoo or aquarium and learn about 3 new animals.	Participate in a book club or reading challenge.	Help plant a tree or garden.	Learn about pollution and its impact on the environment.	Practice identifying family members' names in photos.	Repurpose old materials to create something new.
Take a trip to a nearby town or city.	Act out a favourite story.	Collect items for a local animal shelter.	Help care for a pet or houseplants.	Dress yourself independently.	Find creative uses for everyday objects.
Travel to a new city or town and discover something special there.	Make homemade decorations for a holiday or special occasion.	Participate in activities related to Scouts4SDGs or WOSM Better World.	Learn about the life cycle of a butterfly or other insect.	Learn strategies for managing anger or frustration.	Create a new dance move and show it to a friend or family member.
Go on a family holiday to a new place.	Learn to fold origami animals.	Learn about the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.	Read books or watch documentaries about environmental issues.	Practice active listening and communication skills.	Observe the moon every night for a week and draw what it looks like.
Build a fort in the backyard.	Create a beaded necklace or bracelet.	Learn to share and take turns.	Watch a caterpillar turn into a butterfly.	Practice good hygiene habits.	Solve problems using limited resources.
Camp out in the backyard.	Design and build a birdhouse.	Participate in a project at your school to reduce plastic waste.	Use reusable bags instead of plastic ones.	Identify and express different emotions.	Watch a seed sprout and grow into a plant.
Have a treasure hunt with hidden clues.	Tell a story using puppets or props.	Investigate social or environmental issues in your local community.	Watch a time-lapse video showing how a plant grows.	Learn to make a simple snack or meal.	Create a shadow using a flashlight and toy.
Go on an imaginary adventure to a faraway land.	Read 10 books by yourself or with help from an adult.	Create a care package and visit a group in your community (e.g. nursing home, war veterans)	Observe your local community's native fauna and flora.	Develop self-confidence and a positive self-image.	Learn the names of the planets and pretend to be an astronaut.
Learn a new board game.	Have a family story time every week.	Participate in a community event that raises money for a cause.	Participate in a project at your school to reduce plastic waste.	Learn to recognize and name basic shapes.	Make observations and record findings.

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Visit a local museum.	Visit a library and check out 3 new books.	Engage with and better understand your local Indigenous community.	Be involved in a citizen science project (e.g. Birds in Backyards, Streets2Bay, Wildlife Spotter)	Improve table manners.	Play an online puzzle game or math game.
Play catch with a parent, friend or teammate.	Learn the basic parts of a story (beginning, middle, and end).	Learn a few words in another language that's well used in your local community.	Investigate what your house, school or Scout hall could do to reduce their negative environmental impact.	Make new friends and develop positive relationships.	Learn about the weather and describe the sky each day.
Learn how to skip (jump rope).	Draw pictures based on a story you've read.	Learn about and assess the accessibility of your Scout hall or other building.	Learn about a natural disaster.	Ask questions about the world around them.	Learn how magnets work by testing them with different objects.
Master basic gymnastics moves, like a cartwheel or somersault.	Pretend to be a character from your favourite book and act it out.	Learn about issues affecting a community in another country.	Build nesting boxes.	Learn about the five senses and how they work.	Experiment with mixing colours to see what new colours you can make.
Swim 5 meters without help.	Listen to a bedtime story every night.		Go spotlighting for wild animals.	Learn how to use the voice assistant to ask simple questions.	Conduct a simple experiment to observe plant growth.
Kick a soccer ball into a goal.	Read a new book every week.			Play a simple video game with a parent or older sibling.	Learn about the different phases of the moon.
Try or learn to play a new sport, like tennis, basketball, soccer, gymnastics.	Identify the names of 5 animals or objects from a picture book.			Dance to music.	Use a child-friendly tablet or computer to play an educational game.
Practice balancing on one foot for 10 seconds.	Read aloud to a younger sibling or pet.				Explore the concept of magnets and their properties.
Learn to swim a new stroke.	Listen to audiobooks and retell the story.				Learn how to take a photo with a camera or phone.
Improve throwing and catching skills.	Create and perform a short dance routine.				Draw a picture using a drawing app on a tablet.
Practice hitting a baseball or softball with a bat.	Write a short story about an imaginary adventure.				Conduct a simple experiment with mixing colours.
Join a soccer or T-ball team.	Create a picture book with simple captions.				Explore scientific concepts through hands-on activities.
Learn the basic rules of basketball.	Write a letter to a friend or family member.				Build a tower in a digital game like Minecraft.
Participate in a sports carnival.	Keep a daily journal with pictures and words.				Build a bridge out of popsicle sticks and see how many toys it can hold.