

Programming & Challenge Areas



Scouting offers a varied and diverse program for our youth members. Through active engagement in the program Scouts of all ages develop in our educational objectives (SPICES) outlined in the Purpose of Scouting. We brainstorm and categorise the activities in our programs using Challenge Areas.

The Challenge Areas are four broad activity areas that are used to support programming and ensure a balanced program. Scouts, with the support of the Unit's adult and youth leaders, make sure the program has a balance of Challenge Area activities across a program cycle, or series of program cycles. Activities that don't fall within any of the Challenge Areas may not be appropriate to include in the program, or may only be appropriate occasionally.

Challenge Areas are used to support Scouts to brainstorm ideas for their program, and enable a greater scope of experiences to complement, rather than be dictated by, the SPICES. For instance, thinking of "community activities" rather than thinking of "activities that develop you spiritually" encourages a broader array of opportunities. This also acknowledges that different individuals will develop in different ways from the same activity. Challenge Areas, in conjunction with Plan>Do>Review>, will enable each youth member to consider their growth as a result of their personal experiences and reflect on how they have developed. There is more provision for broader flexibility and scope of individual development in a communal activity or experience.



CREATIVE



COMMUNITY



OUTDOORS



PERSONAL GROWTH

Using Challenge Areas

At the Plan> stage of programming, Scouts work together, with support from adults, to develop a Program Cycle that involves activities from each of the Challenge Areas. A variety of resources and key words assist in this process across each of the age sections. Scouts use a variety of means to plan their program using the Challenge Areas. Scouts may brainstorm, work in Patrols, use imagination aids, focus on any of the key word categories, and think of activities they would like to do personally or as a group. Through this process, Scouts are encouraged to make sure every activity is **fun, challenging, adventurous** and **inclusive**.

An activity may cross over more than one Challenge Area in the brainstorming stage of program planning for the Program Cycle. For example, consider a Patrol of Cub Scouts helping run an activity in a community art exhibition – this could be both a Creative and a Community Challenge that is written as ideas by Scouts in brainstorming. The Unit Council or Patrol will choose to collectively nominate the experience to one Challenge Area for the purposes of assigning to the program cycle calendar and assigning participants, assists and leads to the activity. This could occur when the Unit Council has a look at all the ideas the Unit has generated and puts together the program cycle and the Challenge Area that is assigned should best align with the intent of that particular activity.

Note: For more information on the different steps to program plan refer to the Weekly Program tab on pr.scouts.com.au/the-weekly-program/ and refer to the Scouts Australia Program Handbook

Challenge Areas are best used to support the development of balanced program cycles – but what does this mean?

Firstly, a program cycle is the length of time that a medium-term plan exists for. You might like to think of it as the school term, but it is best described as the time for which a specific theme is followed within the Unit. Ensuring that each program cycle contains a mix of Challenge Areas will mean that no Area becomes a specific focus too frequently.

Programming activities through the Challenge Areas will mainly be facilitated in Patrols, through the guidance of the Unit Council. Multiple program cycles may be underway at the same time, where multiple Patrols or individuals are running different activities at varying times. It is important to be flexible and with proper planning, not everyone needs to be doing the same activity at the same time.



But does that stop us from focusing on outdoor skill development in one cycle, and then focusing on community in another?

No – it is about making sure that the experiences are balanced, and that there is opportunity for engaging the other Challenge Areas, even if there is a heavy focus on a specific one. Across the course of a number of program cycles, you should be reviewing to ensure that all Challenge Areas have had equitable focus.

How do we use the prompting words for each of the Challenge Areas?

The prompting words have been designed to help spark imagination for activities that fit within each of the Challenge Areas. These can be used to stimulate thoughts, by asking 'what is something 'high, fast or wide' we can do?' if searching for outdoor ideas, or 'unusual, new or colourful' for something creative.

For some groups, programming using Challenge Areas will come naturally. Having the four areas displayed, activity ideas will be generated and labelled under each area. For other groups, ideas will be generated first, then categorised by Challenge Area.

When reviewing the planned program, the Unit Council need to take into consideration the development of the individuals. Have we provided all Scouts with enough opportunities to develop in each of the Challenge Areas? Are we supporting the ongoing development of the Unit through a range of opportunities and a variety of members assisting and leading in the Unit program?

Every Scout will participate, assist and lead a range of activities across all the Challenge Areas. Through this involvement, each individual Scout will develop in different ways through different SPICES. For one Scout, participating in an outdoor rock climbing adventure could be purely a physical development activity; another who, through the same activity, conquers their fear of heights, may find that they develop emotionally and spiritually. The Challenge Areas ensure that everyone has the opportunity to encounter different experiences through Scouting, to participate in and learn through a balanced program of activities. Through personal reflection at the review stage, however, progress through each of the SPICES will be developmental, responsive and, above all, very individual.

It is important to Review> the program cycle success with the use of aids such as the SPICES question cards or the Review Ball.

Can the Challenge Areas and our Program overlap with other aspects of the Achievement Pathways?

In short, yes! You might find that some youth members are participating in Challenge Areas and simultaneously completing Outdoor Adventure Skills or Special Interest Area components. The most common overlaps will be with Outdoor Challenges and Outdoor Adventure Skills, but that is not to say that the same may not occur with Special Interest Areas and any of the Challenge Areas.

Note: All information provided in this factsheet is to complement the Scouts Australia Program Handbook. Please refer to the Scouts Australia Program Handbook and Scouts I Terrain to support the information in this factsheet.



Our Challenge Areas are

Community

Creative

Outdoors

**Personal
Growth**

Some ideas are

Getting Out in
the Community
Engagement
Involvement
Projects &
Partnerships
Visits
Volunteering
Diversity &
Inclusion
Environment
Active
Citizenship

Expression
Arts
Making
Creating
Inventing
Designing
Planning

Environment
Camping
Time in Nature
Water Activities
Adventurous
Activities
Journeys

Health &
Wellbeing
Resilience
Mental Health
Beliefs & Values
Social Justice
Skills
Interests

They could be

Local
National
International
Supporting
Knowledge
Service

Unusual
New
Colourful
Bold
Innovative
Investigative

Fast
High
Wide
Slow
Deep
Safe

Individual
Healthy
Growing
Believing
Commitment
Understanding
New Skills

We'll make sure they are:

Inclusive

Challenging

Fun

Adventurous