

Troop Government

Using a democratic form of troop government is one way to implement girl-led, learning by doing and cooperative learning because it gives girls the opportunity to lead the planning, decision-making, and activities in their troop!

Daisy Circle

The Daisy Circle is the planning portion of troop meetings, where decisions for the troop are made. In the circle, girl scouts learn communication and decision-making skills by participating in a large group discussion. The Daisy Circle can begin or end a meeting and is recommended to only last 5–15 minutes.

Sit in a Circle - All girl scouts sit in a circle so everyone can hear.

Have a Moderator - The leader, or another adult, should be a moderator for the circle by guiding girl scouts in a discussion. This is a great opportunity to offer choices about activities they would like to do as a troop.

Daisies Need Structure - Daisies need to understand how decisions are made and will need a set of rules to follow. Establish a structure for your circle right from the beginning. If a girl scout wants to contribute to the conversation, let her know that she must raise her hand.

The Brownie Ring

The Brownie Ring is the planning portion of troop meetings, where decisions for the troop are made. In the ring, girl scouts learn communication and decision-making skills by participating in a large group discussion. The Brownie Ring can begin or end a meeting and is recommended to only last 5–15 minutes.

Sit in a Ring - All girl scouts sit in the Brownie Ring so everyone can see and hear.

Let Girl Scouts Try Moderating - A ringleader may begin to lead discussions—with leader guidance—and brainstorm ideas and activities for the troop. Be sure that all the girl scouts are getting this leadership opportunity at some point throughout the year.

Brownies Need Structure - Brownies need to understand how decisions are made and will need a set of rules to follow. Establish a structure for your discussion time such as:

- using a “talking buddy”—pick an object and the person holding it is the only one who should talk.
- teaching the quiet sign—when someone raises their right hand, everyone must do the same and become quiet.
- establishing the troop rule that nobody criticizes any ideas that anyone offers to the group.
- Leaders can prepare a list of choices for girl scouts to choose from or have them generate ideas themselves. If you gather suggestions from the group, you can record the suggestions and consolidate the ideas to what’s feasible and realistic after the meeting. Later, offer a list of options that came from all of their ideas so they can discuss and decide as a group.

Pictures, charts, Girl Scout Journey books, and other materials are great decision-making aids for Brownies.

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The Patrol System

The Patrol System is one of three common forms of government used for older Girl Scout troops. In the Patrol System, girl scouts learn communication and decision-making skills by participating in smaller group discussions and then selecting a lead to represent their group.

Divide Into Groups – Girl scouts are divided into small groups of four to six, called “patrols.” Each patrol can choose a patrol name, a symbol, a patrol lead, and assistant patrol leaders.

Members of the patrol rotate as leaders so that everyone has an opportunity throughout the year.

Court of Honor - Each patrol leader represents their group in a Court of Honor consisting of other patrol leads. The Court of Honor meets with an adult leader who helps guide decision-making.

Patrol leaders communicate all decisions made in the Court of Honor back to their patrols.

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Executive Board

The Executive Board is one of three common forms of government used for older Girl Scout troops. In the Executive Board, girl scouts rely on one leadership team for the whole troop, which is called an “Executive Board.”

Elect the Board – Girl scouts should elect board positions such as president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer for your troop. The number of officers and positions may vary, depending on the needs of your troop.

Hold Board Meetings - The board holds meetings outside of regular troop meetings to discuss troop matters. The board should report to the troop on a regular basis regarding decisions made, and most importantly, seek feedback and input from the troop before final decisions are made.

The Town Meeting System

The Executive Board is one of three common forms of government used for older Girl Scout troops. In this system, there is no formalized government structure. The girl scouts discuss and make decisions as an entire troop.

Have a girl scout as a moderator - This system requires a moderator to ensure that everyone gets a chance to speak and provide input. The girl scouts should be leading the discussion with very little help from the leaders, so it's especially important to establish guidelines for discussion