

Patch Program

Beyond the Book

Wander through chapters; treasures behold.
Discuss with the wise, let thoughts be bold.
In literary realms, riches unfold!

Be entered into our featured patch sweepstakes! Patch purchasers will be automatically entered into our sweepstakes, with the chance to win one of three book lover's bundles! Read the [sweepstakes rules](#) for details.

Grade level requirements:

- **Daisies (grades K-1).** Choose one activity from each category.
- **Brownies (grades 2-3).** Choose two activities from each category.
- **Juniors (grades 4-5).** Choose two activities from each category.
- **Cadettes (grades 6-8).** Choose three activities from each category.
- **Seniors (grades 9-10).** Choose four activities from each category.
- **Ambassadors (grades 11-12).** Choose four activities from each category.

When you're done, [submit photos](#) and a story to inspire other Girl Scouts to earn this patch, too. [Purchase patch](#) by December 31.

Discover

Once upon a time, there was a Girl Scout. She was a wise Girl Scout who loved reading but felt there had to be more to reading than just books. She wanted to explore the world of literature. She wanted to go, beyond the book...

- **What is literature?** Books are often referred to as literature. However, literature is defined as “written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit¹.” While “literature” includes books, literature goes beyond books. Poems, comic books, magazines, and newspapers are all written works. What are some different forms of literature you can think of? Do you have a favorite form of literature? Explore the different **genres** of books. Do you have a favorite one?
- **Have you ever felt braille before?** Braille is tactile system of reading and writing for the blind and visually impaired. In 1824, an educator named **Louis Braille** created this system of raised dots based on cryptography (the art of writing in codes). Can you find a sign that has braille and read it using the **braille alphabet**? If you can’t find braille, make your own. Study the braille alphabet and practice tactile reading by using a pen to gently push dots into thick paper.
- **Does your school have a library?** If so, find out what it takes to be able to borrow books from your school library. What resources does your school library have for you to explore? If your school doesn’t have a library, is there something else offered in your community in place of a library, such as Words on Wheels?
- **Find your local public library.** Did you know there are over 9,000 public libraries in the country²? With over 1,000 libraries in Texas, there’s a good chance you’ve seen one³! Do you know where your local library is located? If not, find your local library. Is it part of a system of libraries? Is there a main branch?
- **Use literature as tools.** Think of a topic that you are interested in and research it. Work with an adult to explore different research resources. Hint, most librarians will have great resources for you. What does it mean to be a scholarly backed resource? Did you learn something new about your topic?
- **Have you heard of previously banned books?** A previously banned book is a book that was once prohibited from being read, typically in schools or libraries, but is now freely available. With the guidance of an adult, look up previously banned, challenged, or censored books. Some examples of these

¹ "Literature," Oxford English Dictionary

² National Center for Education Statistics. (2023). Table 701.60. Number of public libraries, number of books and serial volumes, and per capita usage of selected library services per year, by state: Fiscal years 2019 and 2020 [Data table]. In *Digest of Education Statistics*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved December 14, 2023, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22_701.60.asp.

³ Texas State Library and Archives Commission, <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/texshare/libsearch/>

are *The Lorax*, 1984, *Hidden Figures*, and *Fahrenheit 451*. Do you recognize any of the titles? Look at your required reading for the year, have any of these books been previously banned? Have you already read any books that used to be banned?

- **Literacy for all!** Dolly Parton's [Imagination Library](#) is dedicated to inspiring a love of reading by gifting books free of charge to children from birth to age five. Inspired by her father's inability to read and write, Dolly started her Imagination Library in 1995. Learn about a literacy organization near you.
- **Find a way you like to log your reading.** One way to do this is by making a reading necklace, bracelet, or key chain! Get creative with your beads. Here are a few options to consider
 - Add a bead for every book you read or every 20 minutes you spend reading.
 - Every bead can be a different color or style based on what genre or format you read.
 - Add a charm when you complete a chapter book.
 - Reading with someone? Give them the jewelry as a present.

Connect

Now that our Girl Scout discovered the world of literature, she was eager to connect to the world around her. She knew exploring the riches of literary realms was no easy feat. She decided that a grand quest required a grand team. A diverse team built on friendship and courage, a troop of sorts....

- **Have a literary meeting with your troop!** Find a poem, comic book, or something fun that everyone wants to read. You can either read it separately or read it aloud together. Then talk about it at one of your troop meetings. You can use the [Texas Bluebonnet Award](#) current list for ideas.
- **What adaptive reading technologies do you use?** If you've ever enjoyed texting, you can thank the Deaf community. The system of sending messages through texts instead of sounds was designed by the deaf scientist [Robert Weitbrecht](#). Work with your troop to figure out what other reading tools we use today that were invented as an adaptive tool? How many of

them do you use? Experience what it is like using an adaptive reading tool, such as listening to an audiobook on your next long drive.

- **Discuss previously banned books.** With the guidance of an adult, discuss why you think some books were previously banned, then accepted. Read a previously banned book as a group. Discuss with an adult why you think it got banned. Do you agree? Disagree?
- **Get a library card.** One of the resources you have as a resident of your city, county, or state is public libraries. With the help of your guardian, go to your local library and get a library card! Be sure to research what you need to bring with you to get your card. Some libraries require photo identification or proof of residence. If you are under 18, you may need an adult to register your library card with you. Bonus: see if you are eligible for the TexShare Card.
- **Plan a trip to your local library!** Libraries have great events for kids and the whole family. Find out what cool things your local library does. Do they have an anime club? Do they do arts-and-crafts? Take a trip with your guardian/troop to your local library and go to one of the events for kids your age.
- **Read a book to someone or with someone.** Help support literacy in your own family. Over fall and winter break, you might get together with your friends and family. Ask an older family member to read a story with you. Or find time to read a story to a younger family member. Pets can also count as family members!
- **Participate in a winter reading challenge.** Keep your mind active during the school break. See if your school or local library has a reading challenge. Or complete the Scholastic [holiday reading challenge](#). Or enroll in a national challenge like [BOOK IT!](#) and earn your way to free pizza.

Take Action

After connecting to the world around them, the Girl Scouts felt ready to take some action. So, they gathered their resources, and the team was off to venture onward to make the world a better place.

- **Go to the Texas Book Festival.** Expand your literary mind and attend the [Texas Book Festival](#). It takes place on November 8-9, 2025, in downtown Austin for free. Represent Girl Scouts by registering to attend our council's event at the festival, [Meet the Author at Texas Book Festival](#).
- **Plan a book swap with some friends.** Girl Scouts are all about being environmentally friendly, and a great way to help the environment is by sharing resources. Is there a book you love that you want your friends to read? Get your troop together and do a book swap. Bonus, add a page or find a blank page in the book and have everyone sign it as they pass it down.
- **Donate to a Little Free Library (LFL).** Talk to your guardians about going to a Little Free Library. See if there is one [near you](#). Do you have any books you don't want anymore? Add them to the LFL and let another kid enjoy your book. While you're there, see if there is a book you want to take and have a swap!
- **Help with literacy.** Can you help with literacy in your area in any way? Is there a program at your school where you can help kids practice reading? With the help of your guardian, sign up to volunteer.
- **Advocate for access.** As a Girl Scout, you are a sister to every Girl Scout. Learning about people with different abilities helps create inclusion. Do you or somebody you know use any adaptive reading tools? Talk to them about how helpful it is to have these resources. Is there a way you can be an ally and advocate for resources for Girl Scouts with different abilities?
- **Take a stand!** Did you find a topic about literature that you are passionate about? What steps can you take to help with the issue? Is there a policy locally or globally you can take part in to make the world a better place? Check out Troop 8226 with [Operation Beyond Books](#) for inspiration!

As day turns to night, our story comes to an end. Having completed their quest, our brave Girl Scouts return home having gained many skills and memories along the way. With a head full of knowledge and a heart full of joy, they have journeyed beyond the book.

THE END