

SCOUTING AT MOUNT VERNON

Cub Scout and Boy Scout Merit Badge Activities



TIGER: TIGERS IN THE WILD

1. Go for a short hike

The Mount Vernon estate features walking trails that are ideal for watching birds, animals, investigating trees and plants, and learning more about the landscape with educational signs and text panels.

- Hike around the Mount Vernon Estate
- Carry your own gear
- Show you know how to get ready for this hike
- Find three different kinds of plants, animals, or signs of animals and record them in your *Tiger Handbook*
- Find two different trees and two different types of plants

TIGER ELECTIVE: CURIOSITY, INTRIGUE, AND MAGICAL MYSTERIES

1. Crack a code that you did not create

During the Revolutionary War, George Washington was the spymaster of an intricate network of spies. Scouts can learn more about Washington and spies online and on the estate.

- Visit <http://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/the-revolutionary-war/spying-and-espionage/> to learn about spying and espionage during the Revolutionary War and to find the Culper Code Book
- Use the Culper Code Book to code and decode your own messages

TIGER ELECTIVE: TIGER TALES

1. Play a game from the past

George Washington and his family played games in their free time, just like you do!

- Purchase a colonial game from the Shops at Mount Vernon, including graces and hoop and stick. Play it with your family or your den!

2. Visit a historical museum or landmark with your adult partner.

George Washington's Mount Vernon is included on the National Register of Historic Places. You can visit the following places on the estate:

- The Historic Area (The Mansion, gardens, outbuildings)
- The Pioneer Farm

- The Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center

TIGER ELECTIVE: TIGER THEATER

1. Watch a play or attend a story time at a library.

The Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center includes the Hands-on-History Center, an educational space for Mount Vernon's youngest visitors and their families. Visit mountvernon.org/plan-your-visit for schedules.

- Participate in *Story Time* in Hands-on-History in the Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center.



WOLF: PAWS ON THE PATH

1. Go on a one-mile hike with your den or family. Watch and record two interesting things that you've never seen before.

The Mount Vernon estate features walking trails that are ideal for watching birds, animals, investigating trees and plants, and learning more about the landscape with educational signs and text panels.

- Hike around the Mount Vernon estate, including the forest trail.
- Watch and record two interesting things that you've never seen before.
- Name two birds, two insects, and two other animals that live in the area. Explain how you identified them.

WOLF ELECTIVE: CODE OF THE WOLF

1. Use a secret code using numbers to send a message to one of your den members or your den leader.

During the Revolutionary War, George Washington was the spymaster of an intricate network of spies, called the Culper Ring. By visiting mountvernon.org, scouts can find a digital copy of the Culper Code, a number based code that can help you code and decode messages.

- Visit mountvernon.org to see the Culper Code.
- Write a secret code for one of your den members or your den leader.
- Have that person send a message back to you.

WOLF ELECTIVE: COLLECTIONS AND HOBBIES

1. Visit a show or museum that displays different collections or models.

Mount Vernon's Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center is an excellent place to see collections and models.

- Visit the Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center to see objects belonging to Mount Vernon's collection on display.

- Visit the Ford Orientation Center to see a model of the Mansion
- Visit the Education Center to see a model of Fort Necessity
- Visit the Education Center to see a model of George Washington's gristmill

WOLF ELECTIVE: GROW SOMETHING

1. Visit or research a botanical or community garden in your area.

George Washington included numerous garden spaces in his estate's design, and you can still visit them today. Mount Vernon's Horticulture Department continues to grow and maintain the kinds of plants Washington grew.

- Visit the botanical garden
- Visit the upper garden
- Visit the lower garden
- Visit the fruit garden and nursery
- Choose two plants that you saw growing at Mount Vernon and learn more about them.

2. Using a seed tray, grow a garden inside your home.

George Washington enjoyed experimenting with different seeds and watching them grow. You can do the same in your garden at home.

- Purchase seeds from plants grown at Mount Vernon in the Shops at Mount Vernon.
- Plant them in your seed tray and watch them grow.
- Keep a journal of their progress for 30 days, and share the results with your den.



BEAR: FUR, FEATHERS AND FERNS

1. While hiking or walking for one mile, and identify the plants and animals that live nearby.

The Mount Vernon estate includes walking trails that are excellent for exploring the natural landscape and learning about the plants and animals that live there.

- Walk or hike at Mount Vernon, including the Forest Trail
- Identify six signs that any mammals, birds, insects, reptiles, or plants are living nearby.

2. Learn about composting and how vegetable waste can be turned into fertilizer for plants.

George Washington was an innovative farmer. He looked for ways to make his farms more productive, and he experimented with composting.

- Visit the dung repository in the south lane of the Historic Area
- Ask a History Interpreter about how the dung repository worked and Washington's experimentation with composting.

BEAR: PAWS FOR ACTION

1. Find out about two famous Americans.

Mount Vernon is the ideal place to learn about George Washington, who at one time was the most famous man in America!

- Choose George Washington as a famous American to research.
- Visit the Historic Area, including the Mansion, to visit the real places George Washington lived and learn more about him.
- Visit the Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center to learn about George Washington's life and legacy.
- Share what you learned with your den.

2. Find out where places of historical interest are located in or near your community, town, or city. Go and visit one of them with your family or den.

Mount Vernon is one of many exciting places of historical interest for scouts who living in the Washington D.C. area!

- Visit George Washington's Mount Vernon!



ARROW OF LIGHT ELECTIVE: ART EXPLOSION

1. Visit an art museum, gallery, or exhibit.

George Washington was an art collector, and Mount Vernon continues to collect and display art today.

- Visit the Mansion to see art owned and displayed by George Washington
- Discuss with an adult the art that you saw

2. Draw or paint an original picture outdoors, using art materials of your choosing.

Mount Vernon's beautiful landscape has inspired artists for centuries. Many famous artists have visited the estate and included the estate in their work.

- Find inspiration while walking around the Historic Area
- Create an original piece of art

3. Using a camera or other electronic device, take at least 10 photos of your family, a pet, or scenery.

Visitors to Mount Vernon have been capturing the estate in their photographs from the earliest days of photography. The beautiful landscape and architecture are perfect for practicing your photo skills.

- Visit Mount Vernon and take at least 10 photographs of Mount Vernon's scenery. Please note, photography is not allowed inside the Mansion and in some exhibition spaces.

ARROW OF LIGHT ELECTIVE: INTO THE WOODS

4. Identify trees and plants that are common where you live.

When designing his estate, George Washington was inspired by the natural landscape. He used trees, shrubs, and plants that grew naturally in the area to fill his gardens and walkways.

- Explore the gardens and walk the forest trail.

- Identify six trees at Mount Vernon. Tell whether they are native to the area, and tell how wildlife and humans use them.
- Identify six plants common to the area where you live. Tell which animals use them and for what purpose.

ARROW OF LIGHT ELECTIVE: MAESTRO!

1. Attend a live musical performance.

Throughout the year, Mount Vernon offers the opportunity to listen to a variety of live musical programs. Some examples of such performances are included below. Visit mountvernon.org for upcoming events, dates, and times.

- Attend Music at Mount Vernon, typically offered in December.
- Listen to performances of Revolutionary War music during an American Celebration on July Fourth
- Attend a “Red, White, and Blue” Concert during an American Celebration on July Fourth



BOY SCOUT: AMERICAN HERITAGE

1. Select two individuals from American history, one political figure and one private citizen.

As the home of the father of his country, Mount Vernon is the ideal place to study George Washington and his influence on American heritage, and as the nation’s first president, Washington is the ideal choice for a political figure to study.

- Choose George Washington as the political figure in American history.
- Visit Mount Vernon to find out about his accomplishments and discuss the contributions he made to American heritage.

2. With your counselor’s approval, choose an organization that has promoted some type of positive change in American society.

The Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association, which has owned and operated George Washington’s Mount Vernon since the 1860’s, is the nation’s first organization devoted to the preservation and promotion of American heritage.

- Choose to learn more about the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association and discover their mission and positive impacts on American society.
- Take the Saving Mount Vernon specialty tour at Mount Vernon to visit special areas of the estate and learn about the MVLA’s efforts to preserve George Washington’s home and legacy. Offered Saturday and Sunday, April through October.
- Find out why the organization believed change was necessary and how it helped to accomplish this change in the United States.
- Discuss how this organization is related to events or situations from America’s past.

3. Learn about the National Register of Historic Places, and visit one of those places located in your area.

Mount Vernon is on the National Register of Historic Places, and is an ideal place to visit for scouts in the Washington D.C. area.

Mark Mount Vernon on a map of historical places in your area and tell about how it became eligible to be listed.

4. Take an active part in a program about an event or person in American history.

Mount Vernon offers a variety of special programs throughout the year that celebrate American history and the life of George Washington. Possible programs are listed below. See mountvernon.org for exact dates and schedules.

- Attend an American Celebration on July Fourth
- Visit Mount Vernon to celebrate George Washington's birthday on Presidents' Day.
- Attend a Call to Arms, a Revolutionary War encampment at Mount Vernon.

5. Visit a historic trail or walk in your area.

The Mount Vernon estate includes walking trails, which include text panels that can teach scouts about the landscape's historical significance.

- Walk around Mount Vernon's historic area, including the forest trail and Pioneer Farm.
- Share with your counselor what you have learned.
- Discuss the importance of Mount Vernon and explain why you think it qualifies for National Register listing.

6. Read a biography (with counselor approval) of someone who has made a contribution to America's heritage.

As the father of his country, George Washington played a direct role in the formation of this country and the foundation of its heritage. The Shops at Mount Vernon offer a wide variety of biographies about George Washington which explore his life and legacy through a broad range of topics.

- Purchase a biography of George Washington in the Shops at Mount Vernon.
- Tell some things you admire about George Washington and some things you do not admire.
- Explain why you think Washington has made a positive or negative contribution to American heritage.



BOY SCOUT: ARCHAEOLOGY

1. Visit an archaeological site and learn about it.

Much of what is known about Mount Vernon and the people who lived here has been discovered through archaeology. Mount Vernon employs its own team of archaeologists who conduct studies throughout the year in various locations on the estate. Excavations take place in the summer months, and visitors are welcome to observe the digs.

- Observe one of Mount Vernon's archaeological excavations (currently in the South Grove or the Slave Cemetery)
- Talk to one of Mount Vernon's archaeologists and have them describe some of the information about the past that has been found at each site.
- Explain how the information gained from the study of these sites answers questions that archaeologists are asking and how the information may be important to modern people.



BOY SCOUT: ART

1. Render a subject of your choice in **FOUR** of the ways listed below.

Mount Vernon's beautiful landscape has inspired artists for centuries. Many famous artists have visited the estate and included the estate in their work. Now you can be one of them!

- Gain inspiration from Mount Vernon and depict some aspect of the estate in four of the following ways: pen and ink, watercolors, pencil, pastels, oil paints, tempera, acrylics, charcoal, computer drawing or painting.

2. Tell a story with a picture or pictures.

Mount Vernon is a beautiful setting for photography.

- Take photographs during your trip to Mount Vernon and create a photo story
- Participate in a Photo Safari at Mount Vernon (for dates and times visit mountvernon.org)



BOY SCOUT: GARDENING

1. Grow three vegetables from seeds through harvest. Grow three flowers from seeds.

George Washington enjoyed experimenting with seeds and watching them grow. Today, Mount Vernon's Horticulture Department continues to cultivate seeds at Mount Vernon.

- Purchase seeds from the Shops at Mount Vernon and watch them grow!



BOY SCOUT: LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S
MOUNT ★ VERNON

1. Go to a completed landscape project that a landscape architect designed. Before you visit the site, obtain a plan of the design if one is available.

George Washington personally redesigned the landscape of the entire Mount Vernon estate during his 40 year residence. Although he was never professionally trained as a landscape designer, he carefully studied books and consulted experts as he reshaped Mount Vernon's landscape. Today you can visit that landscape just as it looked in 1799.

- Visit mountvernon.org to see the Vaughan Drawing, a landscape drawing of Mount Vernon given to George Washington by his friend, Samuel Vaughan.
- Observe Mount Vernon's landscape. Determine whether it has separate spaces, a clear path system, and sun and shade variety.
- Observe the modern aspects of Mount Vernon's overall design. Discuss how the designated seating, eating, or parking areas suited the overall design.
- Explain how the design reflected consideration for the comfort, shelter, and security of its users.
- Discuss the choice of trees, shrubs, and ground covers used in the project contributed to its appeal and function.