



Middle School Badge Plan || 2022-2023

At The Forest School, learners earn badges to showcase their ability to Learn to Learn, Learn to Do, Learn to Be, and Learn to Live Together. They do this by setting and meeting their SMART goals, completing required challenges, submitting proof of their mastery in a subject area or character focus, and getting approval from their studiomates. The focus of this document is to clarify the dimensions of the Middle School Studio Badge Plan.

In this document, you will find the following contents:

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Total Number of Middle School Badges Offered:

There are currently 96 badges available for mastery in the Middle School Studio.

Math (pre-algebra, algebra basics, algebra 1)	3
Storytelling	21
Deep Books	12
Quests	21
Civilization	21
Grammar	2
Servant Leader	5
Apprentice	3
PE	3
Art	3
World Language (optional)	3
Total	96

Badges are one way Heroes can demonstrate their achievements in Learning to Learn, Learning to Do, Learning to Be, and Learning to Live Together. Badges are intentionally challenging, requiring proof of mastery and a structured process for getting approval from fellow Heroes. As such, it is not expected that learners will be able to achieve all of the badges presented. Below are our minimum badge requirements to be considered for advancement from Middle School to High School.

Minimum Badges to be considered for advancement to High School for incoming 6th graders (i.e., in addition to meeting requirements for points, freedom levels, and 360 reviews):

Math	3 (out of 3)
Storytelling	18 (out of 21)
Deep Books	12 (out of 12)

Quests	18 (out of 21)
Civilization	18 (out of 21)
Grammar	2 (out of 2)
Servant Leader	4 (out of 5)
Apprenticeships	3 (out of 3)
PE	3 (out of 3)
Art	3 (out of 3)
World Language (optional)	0 (out of 3)
Total	84 (out of 96)

Many Heroes entering the Middle School Studio are coming in as 7th and 8th graders and are unable to complete a “three year” badge plan. In addition to meeting requirements of 360 review scores and average weekly points, those learners can complete the following badge plans for advancement:

One-year MS Badge Plan (for incoming 8th graders only):

Math	1
Storytelling	6 (out of 7)
Deep Books	4
Quests	6 (out of 7)
Civilization	6 (out of 7)
Grammar	2
Servant Leader	1 (out of 4)
Apprentice	1
PE	1

Art	1
Total	29

Two-year MS Badge Plan (for incoming 7th graders only):

Math	2
Storytelling	12 (out of 14)
Deep Books	8
Quests	12 (out of 14)
Civilization	12 (out of 14)
Grammar	2
Servant Leader	2 (out of 4)
Apprentice	2
PE	2
Art	2
Total	55

Heroes will be invited to earn badges in these areas over their three-years in the middle school Studio:

Deep Books

The Deep Book Badge celebrates the world changing and life changing books read by The Forest School Heroes while making sure Heroes read at least as many great books as students at a traditional school.

Deep Books include important literary works from Philosophy, History, Biography, Science, Drama, Fiction, and other important genres. Deep Books also challenge Heroes to encounter diverse stories and encounter the world from many different perspectives. While we encourage and applaud Heroes who read widely for pleasure, most popular books and best sellers will not qualify as Deep Books.

In order to achieve a Deep Book badge, Heroes must submit a “pitch” to a committee of their studiomates on why this particular book should be approved as a “Deep Book.” After the book is approved, Heroes create a SMART goals plan to read the book in a timely manner. Once complete, Heroes must submit a review of the book to their committee, citing if and how this particular book helped them on their Hero’s Journey.

You can read more about the Deep Book Badge Process [here](#).

Math

Heroes use the latest in e-learning platforms to complete their math badges. Over the course of Middle School, Heroes earn the Pre-algebra, Algebra Basics, and Algebra 1 badges by completing 100% of these courses in Khan Academy, where they will encounter world-class video lessons, adaptive diagnostics, and interactive practice modules.

Storytelling

Storytelling is a key component of a Hero’s life at The Forest School. This incorporates traditional “writers’ workshops” where learners are able to go through the complete writing process (brainstorming, organizing, drafting, peer-editing, revising, and publishing) every session, focusing on a different genre of storytelling each time. This also incorporates digital storytelling skills like podcasting and video production, giving learners experience with 21st century communication platforms.

We use the term Storytelling, instead of Writing or Communication, because we believe that “story” is everywhere - existing across all modes and avenues of communication. We challenge Heroes to craft a compelling story, whether they are writing a fictional short story or a research proposal. This perspective also aligns with the creative storytelling culture being fostered in the neighborhood of Pinewood Forest and across the street at Pinewood Studios. And, maybe most importantly, focusing on Storytelling brings learners back, again and again, to reflect on the Hero’s Journey and the kinds of stories they are telling with their lives.

Storytelling badges are offered every session. To earn the badge, Heroes must complete all of the challenges associated with the badge, go through every step of the writing process, be a peer-reviewer of another learner’s work, submit proof of their work, and have their work approved by studiomates.

Grammar

Heroes will use the e-learning platform No Red Ink to work toward grammatical mastery. There will be two Grammar badges offered in middle school - the first badge is earned by mastering topics in 4th-6th grade; the second is earned by mastering topics in 7th-9th grade.

Civilization

Our primary goal with Civilization is to prepare future leaders to make important decisions—with deep context and perspective—rather than memorize easily Googled facts to regurgitate on a standardized test. A secondary goal is to pass on the blessings of economic, political, and religious freedom. For Civilization, Heroes do individual research and gather into Socratic debates in small or large groups, diving into historical, geographical, political, economic, and religious dilemmas, enigmas, and puzzles. In each case, Heroes step into the shoes of a historical figure at critical turning points to debate and make real-life decisions.

What does Civilization look like in the Middle School Studio at The Forest School? On average our Guides launch two one-hour Civilization sessions each week, framing our Civilization time around questions of worldview and historical perspective. Heroes then are given time to research online video content, articles, and primary source documents, write a reflection response, create something in our Maker Space, and participate in a learner-led Socratic discussion. The learning design moves from the Big Bang through the present every three years. Learning is further developed through immersive experiences, such as exploring foods and customs from other cultures—introduced by outside guests known as “expert heroes,” field trips, and connecting content to current Quests. Though Heroes study the world, Civilization will include key touchpoints with US and Georgia events. To build Heroes’ muscles as historians, there will be emphases on heroes grappling with primary sources and history timelines. Lastly, true to our design principle of enthusiastic diversity, Civilization exploration will not be Western Civ-focused, but rather global and multicultural.

A Civilization badge will be offered every session. To earn the badge, learners must submit proof that they complete all of the challenges and their work must be approved by their studiomates.

Quests

Quests are real-world projects where learners master design thinking, cultivate 21st-century skills, encounter and use science and social studies skills, and *deliver real world value* to users and/or experts. Usually lasting four- to six-weeks, each Quest follows a design thinking approach, includes a series of challenges bound by a compelling narrative (tied to the Session question), and is designed to deliver 21st century skills while simultaneously incorporating science and social studies. To align with design thinking, Quests more or less follow the following cycle:

Explore—Build—Share—Reflect

Working in teams is critical for learning and community building. Engaging users and experts ensures learners are informed and transformed by real-world demands and ultimately are positioned for real world impact.

EXPLORE

Research, discover, and dream with users, Guides, & teammates

BUILD

Design, develop, and complete with Guides, experts, & teammates

SHARE

Reveal, pilot, and invite critique with users & experts

REFLECT

Reflect with Guides & teammates

Quests will touch on a variety of topics, with at least three each year being Science/Engineering related. A quest badge will be offered each session. For Heroes to earn it, they must complete all of the quest challenges, submit proof of their work, showcase their learning in an Exhibition, and be approved by their running partner or quest team.

Servant Leader Badges

Heroes at The Forest School are Learning to Learn and Learning to Do, but they're also Learning to Be and Learning to Live Together. We take seriously the character formation of our Heroes and the health of the community. That is why we require learners to earn Servant Leader Badges. Each badge challenges learners to dig deep into the traits of a hero and intentionally practice these traits. We believe that this intentional practice develops habits, habits forge character, and character determines destiny.

There are five Servant Leader badges in middle school: the [Independent Learner Badge](#), [The Mentorship Badge](#), [The Excellence Badge](#), [Service Learning Badge](#) & [Socratic Discussion Leader Badges](#). These are meant to be spread over 3 years. If you are a Hero entering the Middle School knowing that you will be there for 2 years or less, use these scaled requirements. If you later decide to extend your stay in MS, more Servant Leader Badge activities may be added. Heroes have the ability to design and earn their own Servant Leader Badges. All proposed badges must be approved by the Guide, Tyler, and parents before it can be added to the badge plan.

Art

Art at The Forest School is a time for Heroes to engage both in self-expression (learning modes and mediums of Art for the sake of creativity) and in intentional design (using Art class to sharpen creative skills that support current Quests and Apprenticeships while also cultivating 21st century

communication skills). Art is not optional, and all Heroes present at school will be expected to participate. If a Hero is absent on an Art day, it is their responsibility to communicate with the Art Guide on how to make up missed assignments.

The Art Badge is earned once a year by:

- Being on time and prepared.
- It's expected that you will participate and follow contract when present.
- Maintaining a portfolio of work (Heroes are responsible for maintaining a Google Drive "Art" folder with pictures of their work).
- Writing a reflection every session containing:
 - A list of skills/mediums learned
 - An area of greatest struggle
 - An area of greatest triumph
- Participating in group "critiques" as administered by the Art Guide.

Art Badges must be signed off by the Art Guide and Running Partner.

Physical Education (PE)

At The Forest School, Heroes pledge to take on mental and physical challenges that deliver bonding experiences, character development, better health, intentional relaxation, and reflection techniques and celebration.

Badge Requirements

The Physical Development Badge may be earned in one of three ways:

- 1. Participating in the The Forest School's regular PE program.**
 - a. Participate in the opening and closing ceremonies for the year (unless absent) and
 - b. Participate in PE when present.. Heroes are expected to keep a log of their PE participation, signed off by their Running Partner.
 - c. Exemptions from PE (injury, illness, etc.) must be approved by Tyler.
- 2. Participating in an organized after school physical activity, approved by parents with a recognized coach, in advance of the start of each session and delivering:**
 - a. Written SMART improvement goals (submitted at the beginning of the year)
 - b. At least two hours per week of instruction or focused activity each week, documented by a log.
 - c. Photos of practice and or performances.
 - d. A written (250 word minimum) "lessons learned" reflection at the end of the session.

- e. A written review from the coach or teacher with an average score of 7.0 or better on a 1-10 scale on the following questions: "How was my sportsmanship this session?" and "Did I appear to deliver my best effort?"
- 3. Participating in an organized activity recognized for an annual PE credit by accredited schools, subject to Guide or Council approval, beforehand.**
- a. Photos of practice and or performances.
 - b. A written (250 word minimum) "lessons learned" reflection at the end of the session.
 - c. A written review from the coach or teacher with an average score of 7.5 or better on a 1-10 scale on the following questions: "How was my sportsmanship this session?" and "Did I appear to deliver my best effort?"

Approval Process

Submit documentation to be approved by Running Partner and a Guide.

Apprenticeships

Much of the learning at The Forest School happens outside of our walls. Heroes will be challenged to seek an apprenticeship (perhaps a paid one) doing something they are interested in to help them on their way in finding a calling that will change the world. Learners are expected to complete an apprenticeship every year they are in the Middle School Studio. To earn their apprenticeship badge every year, learners must submit:

1. The answers to all weekly challenge questions about which apprenticeships to pursue, including, if asked, questions about:
 - Gifts;
 - Passions or flow;
 - Opportunities or Injustices;
 - Industries or Functions that interest you;
 - People who might help.
 - A list of at least your top ten apprenticeships and any subsequent list where you narrowed your choices. If asked, indicate why you added each choice and how you set priorities.
2. The email, phone pitch and in person pitch you used or were going to use to gain an apprenticeship, along with any replies, a diary/log of your apprenticeship activities by date, plus a copy of the "thank you" notes you sent after any phone call or in person meeting.
3. The [apprenticeship declaration](#) signed by your parents.

4. Apprenticeship Log of Activities. Describe what you did at the apprenticeship. Try to be as specific as possible about roles and tasks and the standards you used for performance and provide a daily log with hours worked and comments about each day. If this is your first Apprenticeship, it must be at least 40 hours in duration (80 hrs for the second, and 120 hrs for the third).
5. People Met: Make a list of as many as possible of the people you met during your apprenticeship. Record any personal information (birthdays; children; college attended; hometown) and if possible, include a picture.
6. Apprenticeship Lessons Learned: What were the most important lessons you learned and what will you do differently next time? How likely is this a calling that you might pursue? Why or why not?
7. Thank you letter. Include a copy of the final thank you letter you had greenlighted and sent to the person in charge of your apprenticeship.
8. Send a request for evaluation and letter of recommendation that includes:

"Would you please evaluate my performance while working for you? (Please be as frank as possible as this will not affect my grade and feel free to ask others at _____ to comment as well.)

On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest score, how likely would you be to hire me for a paying position or recommend me to someone else? Why? Please feel free to expand on my strengths as weaknesses as I really would like to improve my performance. Finally, would you be willing to write a short letter of recommendation I could use for my next apprenticeship?"

World Languages

At The Forest School, we aim to guide the whole child, and for many, that may include the addition of a world language. Once a hero has demonstrated the capacity to work independently, is willing to accept the additional workload (and possible homework) and has the approval of his/her running partner and parents, then the world language badge option is unlocked! Together heroes, parents, and the Co-founders will discuss world language goals. Then, heroes and Guides will work backwards from those goals to monitor world language progress alongside other badgework so as to stay on track. If a hero gets off track, then we look at deeper measures to carry on with world languages or to focus on core skills.

Science

How do you teach science in the 21st century? If you want to inspire young heroes to change the world through discoveries, inventions, and innovations, our belief is that you don't "teach" science at all. ~ Laura Sandefer

Science at The Forest School is learning by doing. We will never teach science through dry facts or rote memory drills. Instead, our promise to the heroes that walk through our doors is to equip them to ask tough questions, to honor the scientific heroes of our past, and to accept that future mavericks will unlock new scientific truths. By stepping into the shoes of Galileo, Einstein, and Thomas Edison, heroes will gain a practical understanding in hands-on challenges of topics like electricity, chemistry, genetics, biology, and physics to name a few. Expert hero visits, real world applicability through Quests, and field trips continue to connect learning. Traditional scientific disciplines covered in the Middle School Studio include biology, chemistry, and physics. In year one, learners progress through three sequences of biology-centric Quests. In year two, the focus is chemistry, and in year 3, Heroes complete a series of physics-related Quests. To earn their badges in these science-oriented Quests, learners will have to submit proof of meeting/completing a series of challenges and will showcase their learning in public exhibitions.

Designing your Badge Plan

A key component of The Forest School is that Badge plans are customizable by Heroes. For example, Heroes may decide to complete all of their math badges in one year, or focus more on completing their Deep Book badges. Some badges—particularly Quests, Civilization, and Storytelling—are synchronous and will be earned one session at a time. Here's a look at the "Standard" Badge plan, which evenly distributes badges across three years in the Middle School Studio:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Math	Pre - Algebra Badge	Algebra Basics Badge	Algebra 1 Badge
Storytelling	7 Badges (1 Badge each session)	7 Badges (1 Badge each session)	7 Badges (1 Badge each session)
Deep Books	4 Deep Book Badges	4 Deep Book Badges	4 Deep Book Badges
Civilization	7 Badges (1 Badge each session)	7 Badges (1 Badge each session)	7 Badges (1 Badge each session)
<u>Quests</u>	7 Badges (1 Badge each session)	7 Badges (1 Badge each session)	7 Badges (1 Badge each session)

Grammar	Grammar 1 Badge	Grammar 2 Badge	
PE	1 Badge per year	1 Badge per year	1 Badge per year
Art	1 Badge per year	1 Badge per year	1 Badge per year
Servant Leader	Independent Learner Badge (begun in Onboarding Quest), Heart of a Hero Badge	Running Partner Badge	Socratic Leader Badge
Apprenticeship	1 Badge per year	1 Badge per year	1 Badge per year