Highlights:

A Challenge is a small, comprehensive project
Scouts accomplish Challenges to progress in our Personal Achievement Program
Scout demonstrate their Challenges during the Did and Do portion of the team meeting

The Scout Programs of Adventure Scouts USA provide our Scouts with opportunities for learning, advancing, and achieving. One of those ways is by learning and performing a Challenge.

A Challenge is a comprehensive project. It is also one part of the requirements necessary to earn a personal achievement award. Our Scouts choose which Challenges to participate in. We have a list of over a thousand! We always enable our Scouts to choose their own adventures.

Challenges as Part of Personal Achievement Awards

A personal achievement award requires a certain number of Challenges to be earned from each of our different categories. For instance, the Gateway Award (the first Personal Achievement Award is our North Star Scout Program) may require a certain number of Challenges from the Society and Home category, a certain number from the Science and Nature category, and so forth. When a Scout has completed the necessary number of Challenges, in the necessary categories, plus other requirements, such as first aid, our Scouts have earn a Personal Achievement Award.

Challenge Mentor

A Challenge Mentor is an expert on a subject our Scouts have chosen to earn a Challenge in. They are people who have agreed to volunteer their time to help our Scouts earn Challenges.

How to Contact a Challenge Mentor

Proper planning must be made prior to meeting with a Challenge Mentor or visiting a place.

Proper planning includes making an appointment with the appropriate person.
Making an appointment includes: generating the contact information for a selected individual by conducting research via the internet, telephone book, or personal referral. Be sure to ask your parents, teachers, Counselors, Team Leaders, fellow scouts, and your friends for referrals.

Contacting the selected individual:
After obtaining the telephone number and dialing it, it is possible you may initially reach a receptionist in which case you need to tell them you wish to speak with.

It will then be necessary to say your name, and identify that you are a Scout of Adventure Scouts USA or of the specific Scout Program you are a member of;

Explain the purpose of your call.

It is then possible you may then be connected with the assistant or secretary of the person you are trying to contact rather than the person you seek directly. It may then be necessary to repeat your name, and again identify that you are a Scout of Adventure Scouts USA or of the specific Scout Program you are a member of;

Explain the purpose of your call and why you wish to speak to the person you have been referred to.
When you get to the person you are trying to contact, greet them;

Say your name;

Identify that you are a Scout of Adventure Scouts USA or of the specific program you are a member of;

Explain why you would like meet with them in order to complete your mission;

It is possible that individual may refer you to someone else either in their company, office, or department to work with in order to complete your mission. If this happens, you will need to introduce yourself again and explain the purpose of your call again.

Once they have agreed to assist you with your mission;
Schedule an appointment on a specific day and time; therefore you should be prepared to know when you have some free time and if you need a ride, when the driver will be available.

You will need to know the exact address, directions, and the approximate amount of time the person will be able to spend with you.
Then remember to thank the person for agreeing to meet with you.

Not everyone you speak with will have the time or desire to help you. If this happens, ask them if they can refer you to someone who can help you. If they are unable to refer you to someone, then ask your parents, teachers, Counselors, Team Leaders, fellow scouts, and your friends for another referral. Keep trying until you are successful at completing your mission. Perseverance is a strength that will help you to successfully reach your goals. Never be discouraged when you encounter obstacles. Like the story of the rabbit and the turtle, it is not the fastest. Rather it is the one who sticks with it, who succeeds.

Remember to:
Call the day before to re-confirm your appointment.
Prepare whatever you need to know;
Bring with you necessary materials;
Arrive early for your scheduled appointment;
Be properly dressed in uniform unless damage to your uniform will occur.

Remember, you are an ambassador of the program you are a member of within Adventure Scouts USA.

Obtain permission from your parent or guardian prior to choosing a mission.
Consult with your parent or guardian regarding your appointment time and meeting place.

Be certain to leave a note with the exact address of where you are going and the name of the person you are meeting with, your departure time, and your expected return time.

Remember no Scout is permitted to enter the home or garage of anyone unless accompanied by their parent or guardian or are otherwise following the safety practices of Adventure Scouts USA.

Demonstration of Challenges

Scouts demonstrate their Challenges during the Did and Do portion of team meetings.

Did

As part of their Personal Achievement Program, our Scouts learn how to master a certain Challenge, a certain skill. For example, our Scouts acquire the skill of shooting a free throw in basketball. Each Challenge will take different amounts of time to master and as our Scouts progress, the Challenges become more difficult and increasingly more comprehensive.

In their own time, our Scouts master a Challenge. In order to earn a Challenge in setting up a tent, Scouts need to learn which tent to use, where to set it up, why to set it up in a certain area, how to set it up, and how to do it quickly. A Challenge is comprehensive and representative of having mastered a skill, rather than simply being able

to set up a tent once. When our Scouts feel they have truly mastered the Challenge, they present their Challenge to their fellow Scouts.

Do

It is important for our Scouts to demonstrate their skill before their fellow Scouts. We ask that our Scouts not only learn a new skill, but also retain the information. That is why it is important for our Scouts to be able to recreate the Challenge in front of their fellow Scouts. They can honestly say, "Not only did I do this, but I can do it right now."

The efforts of the Scouts should not solely be for the purpose of completing the task but rather to learn to jump in with both feet, wrap themselves around exciting and real projects with consequences for themselves and the greater community. While Did and Do is in fact the test, it is truly an opportunity for the Scout to be able to demonstrate to themselves, their fellow Scouts and the greater community what they have practiced to make perfect and most importantly the skills and habits they have acquired.

Ingenuity is desired as is gaining self-confidence. We desire that the Scout clearly state their purpose, be able to convincingly and persuasively demonstrate their efforts and demonstrate that they can accomplish what they set out to do. This will require practice, persistence, organization, effort, and creative and critical thinking skills.

Evaluation of Challenges

Fellow Scouts evaluate Challenges, based upon performance-based demonstrations. This permits an accurate demonstration of a Scout's ability and is combined with an appreciation for whether the Scout has given their best. Fellow Scouts are the best choice to evaluate each other because they know exactly what goes into l earning a particular Challenge and demonstrating it properly because they have done it themselves.

Demonstrations are evaluated based on appearance, quality of the presentation, and whether the Scout gave their best. Positive feedback is immediate.

Objective Evaluation

Whether the Scout can do what they said they could do and do it in an appropriate amount of time are objective criteria. It is obvious to everyone observing whether this part of the Challenge has been met.

Subjective Evaluation

Whether the Scout truly gave their best is a subjective criterion. Because their fellow teammates know the Scout being evaluated, they have a good idea whether the Scout truly gave their best. The Scout presenting the Challenge is also asked whether they think they truly gave their best.

It is both unique and exciting that our Scouts evaluate each other, help and support each other, and encourage each other to give their best. If a Scout who always completes impressive Challenges comes in one day to demonstrate that their Challenge was picking one leaf from a tree, fellow Scouts know something is wrong. Alternatively, for a Scout with challenges in their life, picking that leaf could be an accomplishment. Our Scouts know the difference.

Our Scouts know when their fellow Scouts are giving their best. It is both fairer and more inspiring for our Scouts to evaluate each other than for adults who have never performed the Challenge to judge one based on criteria they read in a book. Like all aspects of our Scout Programs, Challenges are by our Scouts and for our Scouts.