




Gold Torch Award

Ready to inspire others? The Gold Torch Award helps you turn ideas into action, bring people together, and create meaningful change. As you lead, you'll unlock doors to incredible opportunities and discover just how powerful your voice and ideas can be!

Steps <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explore your strengths2. Set your direction3. Lead your team4. Look ahead together5. Make your mark	 <p>Meeting tools and additional resources for leaders can be found within the Volunteer Toolkit on mygs.org.</p>
Purpose <p><i>When I've earned this award, I'll know how to lead a successful team.</i></p>	
Getting Started <p>This award is earned while you serve in an elected or volunteer leadership position, such as being a team captain, club officer, youth leader, Girl Scout advisory board member, or any kind of leader at a community organization.</p> <p>Use this guide to help you as you go through your leadership term. The activity ideas are suggestions—you can create your own, too. After each step, use the Gold Torch Plan on the last page to capture your thoughts. Reflect on your experience in any way you'd like: Write, sketch, take photos or videos, or talk it through with someone you trust.</p>	

Step 1: Explore your strengths

Set a personal leadership goal.

There is no one type of ideal leadership. Leadership is about finding your own way to inspire others. The way you lead today shapes how you'll handle future challenges, build strong relationships, and create meaningful change.

Before you start:

1. **Explore what kind of leader you want to be.** Reflect on why you chose the position, what leadership means to you, what leadership qualities you already have, and which you'd like to strengthen and grow in your upcoming role.
2. **Set a personal goal.** Use what you discover to identify at least one personal goal for your term. Maybe you want to develop your mentoring skills, become a more confident speaker, or practice something you're hoping to use in your post-high school plans. You don't need to share your goal with anyone else!

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Your Leadership Edge

As you're thinking about the kind of leader you want to be, consider your past leadership experience. Think about:

- A time when you helped get something important done
- Ways you bring out the best in others
- How you respond when things get difficult
- What makes you stand out as a leader

Look for patterns and use what you learn to help shape your personal goal.

Step 2: Set your direction

Make an action plan.

A strong plan turns ideas into action. During your leadership position, think about your personal leadership goals as well as goals for your group. Start by setting clear benchmarks. Then map out your steps and build a support network to help.

1. **Explore your organization.** Start by getting the full picture of what your group or organization stands for. Look at past projects or experiences—what made the biggest impact? What inspires people? If you can, talk to previous leaders about their wins and challenges.
2. **Define your group's goals.** Talk to your group about what they'd like to see the team accomplish during your term. In what ways are *they* hoping to grow? Then work with your group to create at least one group goal using the **SMART** framework. (See the box on this page.)

[Sidebar]

Set SMART Goals

A SMART Goal is:

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Relevant

Time-Bound

For Example: Cassidy is Vice President of her school's debate club. Her SMART goal is to host a dinner (*specific*) to fundraise \$2,500 (*measurable and achievable*) for her team to travel to a tournament in Washington D.C. (*relevant*) by November 3rd (*time-bound*).

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3. **Break it down, then build it up.** Take your big goals—both personal and group—and break them into smaller steps. Map out what needs to happen each month. Work with your group to decide who will take on each role. Create a timeline showing key dates, from team meetings to project deadlines. Keep everyone on track by making the plan

visible—use a shared digital calendar, a team messaging app, or even a creative wall display. Seeing progress keeps momentum high and gives everyone a reason to celebrate wins along the way.

4. **Build a support network.** Strong leaders seek support, learn from experience, and keep improving. Think about the kind of support you'd like to have in this role. Advice on decision-making? Feedback on your plans? Guidance on handling challenges? You might talk to someone who has experience leading a group like yours—a former team captain, a club president, or a leader in a similar organization. You could also talk to an adult mentor, like a teacher, coach, or troop leader. Set up regular check-ins to stay on track.

Step 3: Lead your team

Bring out the best in your group.

Your role as a leader is to support, guide, and create an environment where everyone can contribute and succeed. During the first half of your leadership term, focus on these areas:

1. **Lead with purpose.** Prepare, participate, and make every meeting count. Before each session, ask yourself:
 - a. What needs to happen today?
 - b. How can each person contribute?Challenges will come up—and that's okay. When they do, remember past successes and use what you learned to keep things moving forward.
2. **Strengthen team dynamics.** Pay attention to how different personalities work together. Notice when your team is most engaged—who comes alive during brainstorming sessions? Who's great at organizing and turning ideas into action? Use these insights to create meaningful roles and opportunities for everyone in the group.
3. **Reflect and adjust.** Strong leaders know that plans evolve. Be open to adjusting your approach to help your team work even better together. Most importantly, ask yourself: *How can I best support my team?*

[Sidebar]

Keep Your Leadership Growing

Use your Gold Torch Plan to record what works best for your team. Write down strategies that get everyone involved, ways to handle challenges, and approaches that bring out your group's strengths. These insights will help you grow into an even stronger leader.

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Step 4: Look ahead together

Strengthen your impact.

It's rare for a plan to progress exactly as expected! Part of being a leader is asking for feedback along the way. Halfway through your leadership term, assess what's working and what could improve. What does your team need? How can you help?

Choose one of these activity ideas, or come up with your own.

- **Host a group reflection.** Bring everyone together for an honest talk about how things are going so far. Plan a fun session to explore what's clicking and where there's room for improvement. Mix it up with activities like quick rounds of sharing where team members start with "I wish..." and "I like...." Or have everyone write their favorite and most challenging team moments on a sticky note to post on a team wall. Use what you learn to make meaningful adjustments that keep your team moving forward.
- **Think beyond your term.** The halfway point is a good time to start thinking about sustainability. Together with your team (or on your own!), hold a brainstorming session about how you'll keep things running through the end of your term, and beyond. What have you done so far? What needs to be completed to reach goals and wrap up before the end of your term? How can you begin to set up plans for continuation of your group, or the group's goals?

Step 5: Make your mark

Leave a lasting legacy.

At the end of your leadership term, look back at the experience and reflect on both your personal and group goals. Talk to your team and see how they feel about the goals you planned together. What did they learn from this experience? What suggestions would they offer to future leaders? Then find a way to use what you've learned to make a lasting change.

Choose one of these activity ideas, or come up with your own.

- **Shape your leadership portfolio.** A portfolio can showcase your leadership experiences for future opportunities like job interviews and college applications. Capture your experience in a way that inspires others and highlights your growth. You might include photos, event flyers, planning documents, or feedback from your team.
- **Show appreciation.** No leader achieves their goals alone! The people who supported you contributed to your success. Take time to thank them in meaningful ways, such as a personal thank you note or a small token of appreciation. These supporters could become lifelong mentors or meaningful connections in the future, so take the time to build strong relationships now.

Reflect and Grow

Throughout this award, you've led teams, faced challenges, and turned ideas into action. You've learned to unite people behind shared goals while developing your own unique leadership style. Take a moment to think about your growth:

- **What worked:** What team successes are you most proud of? When did you feel most confident as a leader?
- **What challenged you:** How did you handle your toughest leadership moments? Which challenges helped you grow?
- **What's different:** How has leading others changed your view of leadership? What surprised you most?
- **What's next:** Which roles interest you now? What kind of leader do you want to become?

Keep Going!

Congratulations on earning your Gold Torch award! Here's what you can do next:

- Become a [Gold Award Girl Scout](#).
- Explore more leadership opportunities on the [Award and Badge Explorer](#).

Gold Torch Plan

My role is: _____ at _____.
Your position *Group/Organization*

Step 1: Explore your strengths

Set a personal leadership goal.

Explore what kind of leader you want to be.

Set a personal goal for your term.

Step 2: Set your direction

Make an action plan.

Group SMART goal:

Action Steps:

Date	Activity	Who's Involved	Prep Work	Goal Progress Notes

My support network:

Step 3: Lead your team

Bring out the best in your group.

My Leadership Toolbox

Include ideas for managing group dynamics, communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution.

Meeting Planning

To prepare for each session, think about:

- **The last session:** What happened? Did you encounter any challenges?
- **Your goals:** What was accomplished? What still needs to be done?
- **Your role:** How can you better support the team and each team member? How can you build a more comfortable, inclusive, and/or productive group environment?
- **The next session:** What is the purpose for the next session? What is each person's and your role? How can you prepare?

Step 4: Look ahead together

Strengthen your impact.

Halfway through the term, reflect on:

- **The experience:** How do you feel about the experience so far? How has it felt to lead this team?
- **Your performance:** What have you done well? How can you improve?
- **Accomplishments:** What has your team accomplished? What are you most proud of? What's something you're grateful for?
- **Challenges:** What challenges have you or the group faced? What do you know that can help you and the group improve?

Ideas for the rest of the term:

Areas to improve:

Fresh ideas to try:

Action plan updates:

What's working that we'll keep doing:

New approaches we'll try:

How we'll track our progress:

Step 5: Make your mark

Leave a lasting legacy.

Did you reach your goals? If yes, how? If no (or not quite), why not?

What would you do differently next time?

Shape your Leadership Portfolio.

List the documents, photos or feedback you've received to include in your portfolio.

Show appreciation.

Make a list of supporters you plan to thank with a note or small gift.