Advancement is the process by which youth members of the Boy Scouts of America progress from rank to rank in the Scouting program. Advancement is simply a means to an end, not an end in itself. Everything done to advance and earn these ranks, from joining until leaving the program, should be designed to help the young person have an exciting and meaningful experience.

Education and fun are functions of the Scouting movement, and they must be the basis of the advancement program. A fundamental purpose of advancement is the self-confidence a person acquires from their participation.

Requirements serve as the basis for a Scout’s rank advancement. The four steps to advancement are learning, testing, reviewing, and recognition.

A fundamental principle of advancement in Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Varsity Scouting, and Venturing is the growth a young person achieves as a result of their participation in unit program.

One of the major avenues of achievement in Scouting is advancing from rank to rank. To advance, a youth member fulfills specific requirements, usually including active participation, skill achievement, service to others, and leadership experience.

Advancement is a key component in the Scouting program. It provides opportunities for youth to learn and grow, to develop character and to become good citizens. It is fun with a purpose. It is not like school although it is meant to educate. It is age appropriate for all Scouting youth. In Scouting there are four steps to advancement: learn, demonstrating what was learned, what was learned is reviewed and recognition for what was learned.
The requirements for advance in rank are established by the National BSA. Local Councils are not permitted to add to or subtract from these requirements except for those with disabilities. The National Council has established policies and general procedures for all rank advancement. These are found in the publication: Guide to Advancement, BSA document #33088 [paper copy is revised yearly and the electronic copy (Guide to Advancement), a PDF document, is updated throughout the year.]