



Unit programme planning checklist

Remember, the girls should choose the activities that form the programme. As leaders, we organise their choices by putting things together in a balanced and varied programme.

Step 1: Unit planning time with your girls

- Plan time for girls and the unit team to select what they do in their term.
- Ask girls for feedback on the previous term's activities.
- Plan how you will make this a girl-led process.

Step 2: Plan fixed events and activities that make your unit special

- Consider all the events that the unit usually does together and check that the unit wants to do them.
- Ask if there are any other activities outside of the programme that the unit wants to do this term.
- Ensure these have been inserted into the programme plan.

Step 3: Choose your skills builders

- Ask your unit which skills builders they would like to do during the term.

Step 4: Consider when and how to do the skills builder activities

- Plan which stage(s) is appropriate together with the girls.
- Plan how many groups will be doing skills builders within your unit and any support you need to make this work.
- Insert skills builder time into the programme plan.

Step 5: Plan time to support interest badges

- Plan time for girls to consider the interest badges they might want to complete.
- Plan time for girls to show you what they have achieved.
- Plan time to celebrate.



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Girlguiding

The programme

Step 6: Select unit meeting activities with your girls

Ask girls to choose the unit meeting activities they would like to do.

Check that you have got a combination of themes to add balance and variety to your programme.

Check you have all you need for the girls to do the unit meeting activities.

Step 7: Add the unit meeting activities into your term plan

Work out where the unit meeting activities will fit into your programme plan, taking into account the length of the different unit meeting activities.

Other considerations

Ensure the plan as a whole meet the Five Essentials.

Include activities and time to support individuals who need to complete specific programme elements to gain an award.

Update risk assessments and review them before trying new activities.



Dear Girlguiding...

Dear Girlguiding,

I know that we're supposed to run different skills builder groups at the same time, but I run the unit on my own with a parent rota and I just don't think I can manage it. Is it OK if the unit just all works on the same thing at the same time?

Suggestions could include:

- Chat to the parents, would any of them be willing to help you organise the equipment needed for the different activities, so you could offer girls the choice of topic A or B?
- Team up with another unit - could you both prepare sufficient equipment and materials for both units for one skills builder stage, and then meet up and exchange packages, so you can both deliver both options? Or, maybe have some joint meetings and organise two different skills builders between you?
- Talk to your local commissioner and find out if there is anyone who would be willing to come and support you for a particular topic for a few weeks. Perhaps this could be a local adviser, occasional helper or member of the Trefoil Guild.
- Finally, it is better for the girls to participate in activities they have chosen. So if you are only able to provide one skills builder stage currently, make sure the girls have chosen what they would like to do; and review the situation at your next planning session to see if there's a way you could offer two choices next time.

Dear Girlguiding,

I have read through the unit meeting activity cards and there are some activities that I just don't have the skills to deliver. Is it OK if I remove them from the pack before I give the pack to the girls to choose from?

Suggestions could include:

- All of the activities have been designed to be girl-led as far as possible. So if you are able to provide the equipment and resources the girls may be able to teach themselves with little adult input (depending on the activity and the age group).
- The unit meeting activity cards provide lots of useful information for units to help you run activities successfully, including notes to leaders, top tips, stay safe guidance and detailed instructions for girls. This means that they support leaders to try new things themselves, be supported to offer activities to girls on topics about which they might have limited knowledge or experience, and continually refresh their own experiences as a leader.
- Chat to the parents or other local leaders at a district meeting, for example - does someone have the skills, or know someone who has, who could come in and support the girls to try the activity?
- Link up with another unit in your area to try out the activity.
- Is there a video online that would be appropriate to show the girls to teach them the skills they need to learn to complete the activity?



Dear Girlguiding,

I gave the unit meeting activities pack to my girls last night and there are only 3 out of the 12 activities that the girls want to do. Help!

Suggestions could include:

- As a leader, one of our roles is to introduce girls to new challenges and expand their horizons. Start with the activities they have chosen, but revisit the ones they rejected and ask them to explain why they don't want to do them. Are there counter arguments you can put forward that would enable them to look at things differently? Perhaps you could consider ways for girls to make decisions that enable everyone to have an equal voice - some girls may feel unable to express their opinion if it differs from the majority of the group or a particular individual, so options like blind voting or anonymous voting can be used.
- Hand the pack out again and challenge the girls to identify six activities to complete over the next six weeks - one from each theme. This will encourage the girls to look again at the things they didn't want to do, and pick from them in order to meet the challenge criteria. Or, perhaps you could split the cards between small groups and asking them to select their top 1/2/3. The girls then present their choices back to the rest of the unit, and the unit votes for its six favourites.
- Join with another unit to do one or more of the activities your girls didn't choose. Hopefully they will have fun, and make some new friends, as well as complete the activities they didn't think they wanted to do.

Dear Girlguiding,

I have one girl who wants to work on a skills builder stage that no one else in the unit wants to do. What should I do?

Suggestions could include:

- Ask the girl to chat to her peers and explain why she is so keen to do that particular skills builder and see if anyone else is keen to explore it a bit more and consider joining her.
- Explain to the girl that she will need to join with another group this time; but reassure her that her chosen topic will be included in the next suite of skills builders that the unit completes (if you know that to be the case). Suggest that in the meantime she might like to complete an associated interest badge relating to her preferred theme or topic. Encourage her to consider badges to work on, or you may also be able to signpost to other guiding opportunities outside the unit related to that particular skill.
- Consider the way in which girls choose their skills builder options - perhaps they could be asked to pick two options from those you are able to offer, so that they have a second choice, too?
- Ask if any other local units are running the topic and stage that she would like to complete, and suggest that she joins with them for the duration of the skills builder (this suggestion is more likely to be applicable to Guides and Rangers units due to the girl's age).