



Planning your activities

What you'll find out:

- All about the 5 essentials and how they can help you plan.
- About different types of activities your unit can do.
- What your role is in planning for your unit.

Every week, girls take part in exciting activities with their unit. From games and crafts to trips and sports, there are so many ways you can help girls grow and learn while having fun. But all activities take some planning, so let's explore how to bring brilliant ideas to life.

The 5 essentials

The [5 essentials](#) are 5 key ways every guiding unit runs and the Girlguiding programme is built around these 5 elements. They help make Girlguiding, well... Girlguiding!

Match up the 5 essentials

- 1 Working together in small groups.
- 2 Encouraging self-government and decision making.
- 3 A balanced and varied programme which is girl-led.
- 4 Caring for the individual.
- 5 Sharing a commitment to a common standard.

- a Make sure our activities are a mix of different types and girls can explore out of the unit too.
- b Learn by doing and make decisions together.
- c People from all backgrounds make the same promise and law.
- d Learn about teamwork, leadership and building girls' confidence.
- e Be sensitive to the wants and needs of others.

Answers: 1) d 2) b 3) a 4) e 5) c

To find out more, check out the doing our best [5 essentials checklist](#), which explains them in detail.

Here's how young leader Krishna brings the 5 essentials to life in her Brownie unit.

Working together in small groups –
'We split our Brownies into sixes for many activities, as well as smaller groups by age for skills builder activities.'



Encouraging self-government and decision making –

'At the start of our Brownie meeting, 1 six is responsible for choosing and running a game for others to join in as they arrive.'

A balanced and varied programme which is girl-led –

'At the start of each term, we give each six a few unit meeting activity cards and ask them to choose what they'd like to do.'

Caring for the individual –

'As a young leader I talk to individual Brownies about what they've done for their programme theme awards, so we can celebrate what they achieve.'

Commitment to a common standard –

'We say our Brownie promise at the start of each meeting and do lots of different activities to explore ways the Brownies can keep their promise.'

**Essential practise**

Think about the ways your unit puts the 5 essentials into action. Is there anything else your unit could be doing?

**The Girlguiding programme**

You'll already know a lot about the [Girlguiding programme](#). But did you know it was developed with feedback from over 70,000 girls, volunteers, and their parents? Everyone in Girlguiding follows the programme – there's a huge range of activities to try, badges to earn and loads of ways to develop new skills. The unit meeting activities and skills builders are available to download for free on the [online shop](#) so take a look through!

There are [6 key themes](#) across all activities and badges in the programme:

- Know myself – exploring emotions and understanding yourself and your identity.
- Express myself – developing your creativity and ability to think innovatively.
- Be well – how to stay healthy.
- Have adventures – overcoming fears, trying new activities and survival skills.
- Take action – building the skills you need to make a positive difference.
- Skills for my future – discovering and developing the life skills you need.

If you'd like to find out more about, or have a refresher on the programme,

check out the [programme overview e-learning](#) on the learning platform.

Celebrating successes

Our [programme awards](#) give girls a chance to celebrate all the awesome things they've done. You can support girls working towards their awards by helping them do activities from the different themes, or to help track their progress to their awards. And of course, make sure to celebrate with them when they achieve an award!

Beyond the programme

We recommend that our programme takes around 60% of the unit meeting time. So, what do you do with the other 40%? Well, that's up to you (and the rest of the leadership team and girls in your unit). Trips, parties, promise ceremonies, challenge badges – the choice is yours.

Here are some top tips from other young leaders on how you could come up with activity ideas:



- Ask the girls! They'll tell you what they want to do. With your leader you can include their suggestions in the term plan. Check out the giving girls a voice module.
- Connect with other young leaders to share ideas and resources for things they've done in their units.
- Look at social media, there are lots of groups you can join where units share ideas and what they've been up to.
- Check out WAGGGS and Girlguiding countries, regions and counties' websites – they might have created their own challenges and activity packs you can draw inspiration from.

Term and activity plans

There are 2 types of plans that you might come across as a young leader. The term plan and the activity plan.

A term plan helps the unit leadership team to organise what activities they'll be doing each week in a term, or half-term, along with any trips or residentials. A term plan can include programme activities you're going to run, who'll be running the activities, and any special equipment.

Most units complete their term plan at a planning meeting. As a young leader you should be invited along to these meetings to share your ideas and to see where you can help with the running of activities throughout the term.

7 steps to planning a term

To help units to plan their term, there are 7 steps they can follow to make sure their term includes everything girls want:

- 1 Start by involving girls in your unit – ask them what they want to do.
- 2 Add in the fixed events and non-programme activities that make your unit special. For example, a trip to a cinema or going climbing.



- 3 Using girls' ideas, get them to help choose your skills builders, unit meeting activities, and other non-programme activities they might want to do.
- 4 Map out when and how to do the skills builder activities, and unit meeting activities.
- 5 Add in some time to support interest badges and celebrate achievements.
- 6 Look back at the 5 essentials – are they all in there? They don't all need to be there every week, but they should be there across the plan.
- 7 Share your exciting plans with the whole unit.

And don't forget, check with your leadership team about how your unit risk assessment will be updated to keep everyone safe.

Sometimes, you might need to create a more detailed plan for a specific activity. It can be especially helpful if it's a longer or more complex activity, but you can do it for any activity you're running. This type of plan could include things like:

- Which member of the unit leadership team is running the activity.
- Tasks for other members of the team.
- What resources you need and whether they need to be prepared beforehand.
- How you'll explain a complicated part of the activity.
- Any risks to be aware of and how they'll be avoided – these can be added to your risk assessment. Find out how to do this in our running activities safely module.
- Any other tips or information you might find useful.

These plans can be recorded in any way that's useful for you and your unit leadership team. As a young leader you might create your own activity plans or help out with developing other people's plans.



Fantastic!

You're now a planning pro ready to run an amazing, fun and challenging programme for your unit. Good luck!