

Resources for young leaders



Planning your programme

You will learn

How to plan a programme

We'll give you the tools to help plan an awesome programme including how to budget and draft a session plan.

Choose your theme

First things first, you need to decide on the themes your group is going to work towards. It's important that:

- Everyone gets involved in deciding what you do.
- The theme is suitable for your location (for example, if you don't have access to lots of outdoor space to interact with animals or grow plants, you may choose to focus on tackling pollution).
- Your programme makes an impact in your local area.

There are lots of ways to discuss and decide on a theme.

Start with the outcomes?

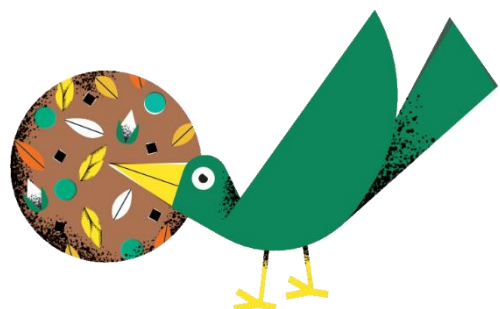
To help young people get the most from their experiences, you should begin by considering what you'd like them to learn or achieve. You can then work backwards from your desired outcomes when you're designing your plan – which will help everyone to achieve those outcomes throughout their adventure.

If you don't focus on outcomes from the beginning, it's easy to end up planning a programme that's just full of activities that you think young people would like to do – these won't necessarily teach them new skills.

The outcomes you plan for can be hard or soft.

Hard outcomes are the practical things you're doing, like:

- Cooking a meal
- Pitching a tent
- Using tools
- Reading a map
- Packing a bag
- Lighting a fire
- Tying a knot



Soft outcomes are the skills, knowledge or experience you're developing. Every activity on the Scouts website has two soft learning outcomes associated with it, from a list of 22 (you can find the complete list of these under 'outcome' in the Activity Finder).

Start by identifying the specific outcomes you'd like to achieve (instead of making a general statement of intent). For example, instead of saying 'We want to go on a canoeing camp', start by saying 'We want to plan a canoe journey, improve our paddling skills, and camp overnight'. This way you can break the adventure down into chunks of skills.

When you do this, you make use of valuable opportunities for learning. You'll be more prepared and you won't end up doing things for people when they could do them for themselves. It also helps you plan opportunities to use the Scout method, for example, by working in small teams, learning by doing, taking responsibility, and developing leadership skills.

Set a simple structure

There are many different learning models and methods that you could use to structure a learning experience. Teachers and coaches often use quite advanced models, but even a simple structure where you plan, do, and review can be effective.

The cycle

You can use the plan, do, and review structure for a whole adventure (like an overnight expedition). At the same time, you can apply the structure to specific tasks or problems within the experience (for example, cooking dinner or pitching a tent).

Plan

When you plan, you consider all the relevant information you have and decide what you're going to do. You can use open questions to help you make a working plan.

Do

Now it's time to follow the plan and adapt it where needed. You can see the plan, do, and review structure within the adventure itself– especially if an adventure is made up of lots of smaller challenges and decisions to be made.

Review

You review by considering what's happened and actively reflecting on it – you're re-viewing the experience by looking at it again from a different perspective. Think about what worked and what didn't work, any changes you had to make during the adventure, and why things happened as they did. Then it's time to think about how you'll apply everything you've learned next time.



Plan		Do	Review	
Problem to be solved – increasing the number of bees in your local area.				
Structure the session	Plan	Do	Review	Reflect on the session
Who? The people. What? The activity When? The timings. Where? The location. Why? The outcomes. How? The processes.	Choose where to put your bee hotels. Decide on the materials you'll use to create them.	Build a bee hotel.	Evaluate the success of the hotels. Did they increase the number of bees? Discuss what you could change to make a bigger impact on the bee population next time.	What worked well? How would change the plan next time?
During the activity				
Before, during, and after the activity				

Answer the questions

To create an effective plan, you need to identify what you need to know before you get stuck in. Asking open questions can help you figure out what you need to know before you begin your adventure. It doesn't matter whether you're an instructor teaching a specific skill, a group planning an adventure, or a person tackling a challenge that's popped up in the middle of an experience – you'll ask similar questions.

For example, if you were working on a growing green theme and creating planters from recycled materials, you might think about:

Who? The people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who's leading the group? Who are the group members? Does anyone have any allergies, medical conditions, or additional needs that you need to consider? Does anyone have any contacts who could donate recycled materials, gardening equipment, soil, seeds, or craft items for decorating?
What? The activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What type of planters will the group create? What equipment will they need to make each planter? What should people wear? What should they bring with them? What does everyone want to grow in each planter?
When?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When will people create the planters? Does what you're planning to grow

The timings.	<p>thrive in a particular season?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long will this activity take? When will you finish building the planters? • When do people need to revisit the planters to feed and water them?
Where? The location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where should you build the planters? • Where should you put the finished planters?
Why? The outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are people growing plants? • Why are people using recycled materials to grow plants in?
How? The processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you make sure this activity is safe? How will you effectively manage any risks? • How can people prepare for this activity? • How will you action each element of the activity? You'll need to think about gathering items of recycling, crafting them into planters, and growing flowers or vegetables in them.

Budge like a pro

Budgeting is an important and useful life skill. When you get your head around budgeting, you'll be able to manage money and make the most of every penny. At Scouts, being able to budget is helpful for planning and running programmes, activities, and events. When budgeting for your project, think about:

- How much money do you have available for the programme?
- Are you able to fundraise?
- Do you already have free access to any resources or equipment?
- Could you get any resources or equipment through donations?
- What are the core, non-negotiable costs of running each activity? For example, if you have to purchase peat-free soil, this is a core cost.
- What things are just nice to have? These are things that you could complete the activity without.

Draft a session plan

We can't predict the future, so it's always possible that something beyond your control might disrupt your programme (for example, a sudden change in weather or a surprising number of young people turning up).

At the same time, you can plan how you'll handle things that might happen. If you don't know what the weather will do, for example, you could make different plans for bright sunshine and pouring rain. This will make running your session less stressful, and will help make sure that your programme is brilliant – even if the unexpected happens.

When planning sessions:

- Always plan more activities than you think you'll need. If people begin to lose concentration, or if they finish the activities quicker than you expected, you'll have something else to go.
- Think about your setting. If you plan to spend a session outside, keep an eye on the weather and have an indoor plan ready just in case there's a sudden rainstorm.

- Plan ways to change the level of challenge of each activity. People learn and pick things up at different rates. If you've planned adjustments, you'll know how to support anyone who's finding it tricky and keep anyone who whizzes through engaged.
- Remember that repetition can be good. It's important to run a balanced programme and introduce young people to as many new activities as possible – but people like routine and are likely to enjoy repeating their favourite games or activities.

It might help to structure your sessions in a table like this:

Key Information		
Session theme	For example: Growing green – take action	
Date		
Start time		
End time		
Leaders		
Young people	Use this space as a register to write down the names of all young people who attend the session.	
Session plan		
Time	Activity	Equipment
For example, 6.45pm to 7pm	For example, people arrive. Play chair football as everyone enters.	For example, footballs and chairs

Once you've planned your session, you can risk assess it. You should also be risk assessing throughout the session. Follow the [guidance about risk assessments on our website](#) and refer to the 'managing safety' section of this resource pack.

