

Scouts

A structured Troop Forum: generate options, build consensus, vote properly and commit to the result.

Ages 10½-14

Troop

Troop Forum

YouShape Award available

Run the session

Total: 1 hour 30 minutes

0:00	Arrival - Car Park Put up a flipchart labelled Car Park. Anything off-topic goes there and comes back at the end.	LEAD
0:10	Opening Patrol Leaders lead. Be explicit: what is fixed tonight, and what is genuinely theirs to decide.	LEAD
0:20	Generate - Brainstorm Box Use random objects to spark six programme ideas each. Patrols work fast and loud.	PLAN
0:40	Shortlist - Diamond Formation Nine ideas per Patrol, ranked to consensus. One objection means keep talking.	REPRESENT
1:00	Decide - Polling Station Ballot papers, screened table and pencils. Secret ballot on the top ideas.	REPRESENT
1:15	Count and commit Count in public. Announce numbers, winner and date.	CLOSE THE LOOP
1:25	Clear the Car Park Answer what you can and carry the rest to next week.	REPRESENT
1:30	Closing Patrol Leaders close. Name who is doing what before the next meeting.	LEAD

Volunteer cue: the point of the night is not just to collect opinions. Finish with a real decision, a clear next step and a date for when the section will hear back.

How to run each activity

Use this page alongside the timeline. The steps explain the practical set-up, what the facilitator says or does, and what must be recorded before moving on.

Arrival - Car Park

0:00

1. Put a flipchart or large sheet labelled "Car Park" where everyone can see it. Explain that useful but off-topic points will be parked rather than ignored.
2. Whenever the discussion drifts, write the point on the Car Park and return to the current decision. Scouts can add items themselves.
3. Do not promise to solve every parked point tonight; promise that each one will either be answered or carried forward.

Record: Record every Car Park item and what happened to it.

Decide - Polling Station

1:00

1. Set up a screened table or quiet corner with identical ballot papers and pencils. List only options that are genuinely deliverable.
2. Give every Scout one ballot. Use one clear method - for example, choose one favourite or rank the top three - and explain it before anyone votes.
3. Place completed ballots in a box. Volunteers and Patrol Leaders should not watch how individuals vote.

Record: Record the number of ballots issued and the final totals.

Opening

0:10

1. Give Patrol Leaders the agenda before the meeting. One Patrol Leader chairs the opening and names the decision.
2. Split the programme into "fixed" and "open". Fixed could include booked events, safety constraints or budget ceilings; open is what Scouts can genuinely choose.
3. Make the decision route clear: brainstorm, shortlist, secret ballot, then dates and owners.

Record: Record the non-negotiables and the exact choice being handed over.

Count and commit

1:15

1. Count the ballot openly with two Scouts checking the totals. Announce the numbers, not just the winner.
2. Immediately check the calendar and place the winning idea on a real date. If a booking or permission is required, name the person doing it and by when.
3. If the winner later proves impossible, the Troop must be told why and what happens instead - do not silently substitute another choice.

Record: Record the totals, winner, date, owner and first action.

Generate - Brainstorm Box

0:20

1. Give each Patrol a random object such as a spoon, rope, torch, map, ball or cardboard tube. The object is a prompt, not a restriction.
2. Set a fast target: six programme ideas inspired by the object in two minutes. Wild links are encouraged and nothing is filtered yet.
3. Swap objects and repeat if time allows. Put every idea on a separate card so it can be ranked.

Record: Record all ideas, including unusual ones that may lead to a stronger final option.

Clear the Car Park

1:25

1. Read every parked item aloud. Give a quick answer where one is available.
2. For anything needing more work, assign an owner and a date for the answer. Cross items off only when the next step is clear.
3. Move any longer issue onto the next Troop Forum agenda rather than squeezing it into the final minutes.

Record: Record the answer or named follow-up for every item.

Shortlist - Diamond Formation

0:40

1. Each Patrol chooses nine ideas and lays them out in a diamond: 1 at the top, then rows of 2, 3, 2 and 1.
2. The top card is the strongest priority; the bottom is the lowest. Patrol members must explain their reasoning and keep moving cards until everyone can accept the final order.
3. Take the top one or two ideas from each Patrol into the Troop-wide vote. Similar ideas can be combined only if the Patrols agree.

Record: Record each Patrol's final Diamond and the ideas going to ballot.

Closing

1:30

1. A Patrol Leader reads back the decision, date and action list.
2. Ask each named owner to confirm their action in one sentence so there is no ambiguity.
3. Finish by saying when the Troop will receive the next update.

Record: Record the final action list with owners and deadlines.

Prep, record, close the loop

Before they arrive

- ✓ Flipchart / large sheet labelled Car Park
- ✓ Random objects for Brainstorm Box
- ✓ Cards/sticky notes for Diamond Formation
- ✓ Ballot papers
- ✓ Screened voting area or table
- ✓ Pencils
- ✓ Programme/calendar with real available dates
- ✓ Sheet for actions, owners and deadlines

What to record

- ✓ Items placed in the Car Park
- ✓ Ideas generated by each Patrol
- ✓ Each Patrol's ranked shortlist
- ✓ Ballot totals
- ✓ Winning ideas and dates
- ✓ Car Park items carried forward
- ✓ Action, owner and deadline for each next step

Facilitation notes

- State the non-negotiables at the start, then genuinely hand over the rest.
- Use Patrols so everybody contributes before whole-Troop discussion.
- Count the ballot openly.
- Do not announce a winner without also naming the date and next action.

End-of-night check

- ✓ Did young people make at least one genuine decision?
- ✓ Did somebody young lead part of the session?
- ✓ Have you named what happens next?
- ✓ Have you said when you will update them?

Keep it going next meeting

Fifteen-minute Troop Forum

Every fortnight, use Patrols: one question, five minutes, feed back, then decide by ballot or show of hands.

Patrol takes the programme

Each Patrol owns one night this term: choose it, plan it, cost it and run it, with volunteers retaining the responsibilities they must.

Close the loop

YOU SAID

WE DID

WE COULD NOT YET

NEXT UPDATE

Use these four headings at the next meeting, on a noticeboard or in your parent/carer update. Showing what happened after young people spoke is what makes the next forum worth taking seriously.