

**NRA FIRST STEPS RIFLE  
INSTRUCTOR'S LESSON PLANS**

**BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA  
RIFLE SHOOTING  
MERIT BADGE TEACHING GUIDE**

NRA FIRST Steps Firearm Instruction, Responsibility, and Safety Training Program First Edition

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## BSA INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the new 2017 combined NRA Rifle *FIRST Steps* syllabus and 2017 BSA Merit Badge Instructor Lesson Plans for the Rifle Merit Badge. **This book is to be used by Boy Scout leaders who are currently certified NRA Rifle Instructors.**

The purpose of this book is to use a proven standard of instructional curriculum to teach the BSA Rifle Merit Badge. We have been using the **BSA Shooting Sports Manual Appendix 2** and the **NRA *FIRST* (Firearm Introduction, Responsibility and Safety Training) *Steps* Rifle Instructor Syllabus** as separate items to teach the **BSA Rifle Merit Badge** since 2009. We have now combined the NRA *FIRST Steps* Rifle Instructor Syllabus with the additions from the BSA requirements necessary to teach the BSA Rifle Merit Badge into one document and both the BSA and the NRA have approved this document.

The advantage to using this document is that our youth will receive a consistently safe and proven instructional training no matter where they are trained in any council within the BSA family.

By using this syllabus, the BSA leader or parent who is trained as a NRA Rifle Instructor is accomplishing two important items.

First and most important, they are delivering a consistent program of responsibility and safe gun handling to our youth. Secondly, and equally important, they are using the NRA *FIRST Steps* syllabus contained in this document to satisfy the requirements of the NRA to teach a NRA *FIRST Steps* course. By using this syllabus and then registering their BSA merit Badge course on the NRA Instructors.org portal, as an *NRA FIRST Steps* course they get credit with the NRA towards accomplishing the goal of qualifying to become a NRA Training Counselor.

The goal of both the BSA and the NRA is to have at least 2 NRA Training Counselors in every council in the US. By doing this we can conduct NRA instructor courses at a cost that most BSA volunteers can afford. Thus allowing more leaders the opportunity to become NRA Rifle Instructors. These instructors will not only be able to conduct merit badge classes, but equally important, they can help provide more year-round shooting sports programs for the unit, district and council.

The next page in this document will help you learn how to use this syllabus. If you have any questions regarding anything covered in this manual please contact Mark Belli at 704-824-7489 or email him at [philmontmark@gmail.com](mailto:philmontmark@gmail.com). You may also contact your regional shooting sports chairman or your local council shooting sports chairman and their committees as a resource to provide more training to our youth.

Thank you for all you do and we look forward to serving you in the future.

Mark Belli  
NRA-BSA National Liaison  
BSA National Task Force-Southern Region Chairman

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## HOW TO USE THIS SYLLABUS

This syllabus contains the NRA *FIRST Steps* program and has been modified by adding a third column to the contents outline along with some BSA notes in various places within the document.

If you have never used the NRA *FIRST Steps* Instructor syllabus, the first column tells you what you are going to do, the second column tells you how to do it or what to say and now the third column tells you what page to turn your BSA Merit badge students to and what requirements they will have completed once you do that particular assignment. When teaching the Boy Scout Rifle Merit Badge use this syllabus as written and instead of using the NRA Guide: *Basic of Rifle Shooting* handbook you will use the BSA Rifle Merit Badge book. Each student should have a merit badge book to follow along with the instructional component. When the syllabus says **Ask**, please ask the question, when it says **Explain**, then please explain and when it says **Demonstrate**, please demonstrate. These teaching methods have proven successful with many beginning shooters and your cooperation in following the syllabus will help you in providing a great program to our youth.

The lessons are broken up into 4 days of 1.5 hrs. minimum class time per day. This is the minimum it will take to teach this course properly. Making alterations to the class due to a 1 hr. class 4 or 5 days a week does not accomplish the goals as outlined and this book may not be used if that's the time period you have in your summer camp. Using the 1.5 to 2 hour classes usually provides students ample opportunity for them to complete their required targets during the normal merit badge sessions.

Free time in residence camp was designed for scouts to have fun and for those not in the merit badge class to be able to still shoot at targets and give them a taste of rifle shooting so that they may wish to pursue the Rifle Merit Badge the next time it is available.

The BSA Rifle Merit Badge may be conducted in an off season weekend using this syllabus as you would just start at the beginning and go all the way thru the syllabus in as little as a full 6 to 8 hr. day.

For more information on how to create successful rifle shooting sports programs such as the NRA marksmanship qualification program please contact your regional BSA shooting sports chairperson or your local council shooting sports committee.

The introduction on the next few pages gives you an idea of what the NRA *FIRST Steps* program delivers to the general public and how it should be used when teaching a non- BSA Rifle Merit Badge student. The Table of Contents begins after this introduction and the table of contents outlines the syllabus by BSA camping days and lesson objectives for each day.

Once again, thank you for all you do for our BSA Scouts and future shooters.

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## NRA *FIRST Steps* INTRODUCTION

*FIRST Steps — Firearm Instruction, Responsibility, and Safety Training* — is the National Rifle Association’s response to the American public’s need for a firearm orientation program for new purchasers. New Firearm owners are encouraged to take the “first step” of obtaining training, and the NRA *FIRST Steps* Program is designed to provide a hands-on introduction to the safe handling and proper orientation of *one specific firearm model*. There are three orientations in the program: one for rifle, one for pistol, and one for shotgun.

Since *FIRST Steps* orientations are model-specific, and teach only the most basic shooting skills, they are not complete “courses” in the traditional sense of the word. They do provide a thorough introduction to firearm safety, handling, and shooting skills. These skills require regular practice. Initially, this practice should take place under the supervision of a qualified individual — like an NRA Certified Instructor or NRA Shooting Coach. For this reason, the orientation encourages participants to obtain additional training in an NRA Basic Firearm Training Course, and then to take the “next step” by participating in other local activities designed to help individuals maintain and develop their shooting skills.

### Total Participant Involvement

The *FIRST Steps* Orientation Program was the first NRA program designed for the new shooter that used the *Total Participant Involvement (TPI)* training methodology. Minimizing the use of lecture, TPI takes an experiential approach that stresses active training and learning by doing. Instructors guide participants to develop the specified knowledge, skills, and attitude through the use of hands-on exercises and practical applications. Keeping participants involved at every step of the training process engages their energy, holds their interest, and makes learning *fun!* At the same time, the performance-based training approach enables Instructors to evaluate the participants’ progress and provide appropriate feedback.

Like the lesson plans for NRA Basic Firearm Training Courses, the *FIRST Steps* lesson plans used a double column format of *content* and *instructional notes*: what to teach and how to teach it. The *FIRST Steps* lesson plans contain far more detail on *how to teach*, and use **bold print** to indicate directions to the Instructor. Involving participants is stressed throughout the orientation.

One example of involving participants is the NRA policy on how Instructors handle firearms. Each time they pick up a gun, they set the example by practicing the three rules of safe gun handling: making sure the gun is pointed in a safe direction, the finger is off the trigger, and the gun is unloaded. Instructors then involve the participants by having one of them verify that the gun is unloaded.

Another way to involve participants is through the use of the *coach-pupil method*, which has one Instructor, one firearm, and two participants at a shooting station on the range. While one participant (the “pupil”) shoots, the Instructor involves the other participant (the “coach”) in the learning process by guiding him or her to provide feedback under the Instructor’s direction. The Instructor then has the participants reverse roles and repeat the shooting exercise.

The *FIRST Steps* Program is designed for a low participant-to-instructor ratio. The three-hour orientation length is based on a ratio of one-to-one. The length of course lessons will need to be increased proportionately to allow multiple participants to complete all activities specified in the lesson plans. For example, in Lesson I, *each* participant must name the indicated firearm parts, describe their functions, and explain and demonstrate the loading and unloading procedures.

**A single instructor may conduct a *FIRST Steps* orientation for a maximum of four participants at a time in Lessons I, II, and IV, and two participants at a time in Lesson III.**

Instructors may combine students using different rifle models in the same *FIRST Steps* class, provided that all rifles are of the same action type (all bolt actions, all semi-automatics, etc.). Individual students in such classes are still trained on only their specific model rifle.

As in the case in NRA Basic Firearm Training Courses, Instructors should provide participants with a 10-minute break after every 50 minutes of instruction during a *FIRST Steps* orientation.

These *FIRST Steps* lesson plans should be placed in your *lesson plan* binder and used in conjunction with the NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook.

### **Policy Notes**

*FIRST Steps* orientations can be conducted by NRA Certified Instructors holding credentials in the discipline. They must follow these lesson plans as they pertain to learning objectives, training materials, equipment, orientation content, instructional methodology, and other specified details. Additional policies governing the conduct of the *FIRST Steps* Program will be periodically announced in the *NRA blog and email blasts*, sent to all NRA Instructors.

Since the *FIRST Steps* orientations are among the activities that NRA Certified Instructors are authorized to conduct, they will be entered into an instructor's activity record. To ensure that they receive proper credit, instructors must file a completed NRA Firearm Training Course Report Form within ten days of course completion. A separate form must be submitted for each NRA *FIRST Steps* Orientation or Basic Firearm Training Course.

In conducting an NRA *FIRST Steps* orientation, instructors must provide each participant with the items in the *FIRST Steps* Rifle Participant Packet, and the other items indicated on the "Required NRA Materials" list. The number of participants on an instructor's course report must not exceed the number of participant packets purchased by the Instructor. (Instructors are encouraged to charge a reasonable fee sufficient to recover the costs of materials and other training-related expenses.)

NRA *FIRST Steps* Orientation Completion Certificates are available only as part of the participant packet. The Instructor must indicate on the certificate the model of firearm that was used by the student in the orientation.



The owner's manual for the participant's rifle should be consulted prior to the orientation to see whether the manufacturer has any particular guidelines for its operation, dry firing recommendations, approved ammunition, and cleaning procedures. Instructors should not conduct the orientation unless they are thoroughly familiar with the correct operation of the participant's rifle model as recommended by the manufacturer. Instructors who have any questions concerning whether or not the participant's rifle is safe to shoot should have it checked by a reputable gunsmith before using it in the orientation.

The *FIRST Steps* Program is designed to provide training with one particular firearm model — preferably the participant's. However, individuals who do not yet own a firearm may attend a *FIRST Steps* orientation using a firearm provided by the instructor. If an instructor's firearm is used, however, participants should be advised that the operational and handling characteristics will not be the same on a different firearm. They should be encouraged to attend a new *FIRST Steps* orientation if they later purchase a different gun.

**No live ammunition is permitted in the classroom under any circumstances, or on the range during Lessons I, II and IV if these lessons are conducted on a range. Dummy ammunition must be visually distinguishable from live ammunition to ensure that a live round is not brought to class, or to the range except during Lesson III.**

NRA Instructors may refer to guns as "firearms," "guns," "rifles," etc. but not as "weapons." "Weapon" has a negative connotation.

Establish emergency procedures to be followed in the event of an accident. All course staff must be aware of these procedures and maintain a list of emergency telephone numbers.

### **Good Luck!**

Remember, the *FIRST Steps* Program was designed with both the instructor and the participant in mind. These lesson plans will prepare you to conduct a successful orientation, and provide your participants with an exciting and informative introduction to the world of shooting.

We thank you for your commitment to firearm education and your participation in the training programs of the National Rifle Association. Your expertise and dedication will train a new generation of American shooters to exercise their firearm freedoms safely and responsibly. If you have any questions about *FIRST Steps* or the NRA Basic Firearm Training Program, please contact the NRA Training Department, 11250 Waples Mill Road, Fairfax, VA 22030, (703) 267-1500.

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Education & Training Division  
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# ORIENTATION OUTLINE

## NRA *FIRST Steps* Rifle Orientation

**Orientation Goal:** To provide beginning shooters with an introduction to the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary to own and use a specific rifle model safely.

**Length of Orientation:** 3 hours. (All times listed are minimums. Additional time may be needed to meet the specified learning objectives using the methodology of Total Participant Involvement. Lesson time must be increased proportionately to allow multiple participants to complete all specified activities.)

**Participant Text:** NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook.

**BSA Note:** Use the BSA Rifle Merit Badge Book instead of the NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook. Lesson times still apply.

### Orientation Lessons:

- Lesson I: Introduction to Rifle Safety, Parts, and Operation (45 minutes)
- Lesson II Introduction to Ammunition and the Fundamentals of Rifle Shooting (45 minutes)
- Lesson III: Introduction to Rifle Shooting from the Benchrest Position (60 minutes)
- Lesson IV: Introduction to Rifle Cleaning, Storage, and Training Opportunities (30 minutes)

**BOY SCOUTS:** Your attached lesson plans will be taught for 1.5 hrs. each day for 4 days for a total of 6 hrs. Teaching 1 hr. classes will not fit this syllabus. Please see the time adjustments below for covering the BSA Rifle Merit Badge.

### Orientation Lessons:

- Lesson I: Introduction to Rifle Safety, Parts, and Operation (45 minutes)  
**BSA: Teach this lesson on Day 1 for 1.5 hrs. (See syllabus)**
- Lesson II Introduction to Ammunition and the Fundamentals of Rifle Shooting (45 minutes)  
**BSA: Teach this lesson on Day 2 for 1.5 hrs. (See syllabus)**
- Lesson III: Introduction to Rifle Shooting from the Benchrest Position (60 minutes)  
**BSA: Teach this lesson on Day 3 for 1.5 hrs. (See syllabus)**
- Lesson IV: Introduction to Rifle Cleaning, Storage, and Training Opportunities (30 minutes)  
**BSA: Teach this lesson on Day 4 for 1.5 hrs. (See syllabus)**

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# REQUIRED NRA MATERIALS

## NRA *FIRST STEPS* Rifle Orientation

(See current <http://materials.nrahq.org> for item numbers and prices)

### One per participant:

NRA *FIRST Steps* Rifle Participant Packet — contains the following items:

- NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook
- NRA *FIRST Steps* Rifle Orientation Completion Certificate
- NRA Gun Safety Rules card
- NRA Basic Training Program brochure
- NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program booklet

**BSA Note:** This list does not apply to BSA Rifle Merit Badge classes. You only need this list if you are doing a regular NRA *FIRST Steps* class.

### For reference:

NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook

**BSA Note:** Anytime you see the NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook as the reference use the BSA Rifle Merit Badge Book instead

## OTHER REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

Rifle  
Rifle owner's manual  
Dummy ammunition (must be visually distinguishable from live ammunition)  
Empty cartridge box for rifle ammunition  
Fired rifle cartridge case  
Paige sighting device (if available)  
Quality factory ammunition (for use during live fire exercises on range only)  
Hearing protection  
Eye protection  
Targets Sandbags  
Benchrests (tables)  
Chairs  
Small screwdriver (for sight adjustment)  
Rifle cleaning equipment  
Lockable rifle case

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# LESSON I.

# Introduction to Rifle Safety, Parts, and Operation

**BSA Note:** Lesson I is taught on Day 1 each week of camp

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** As a result of their participation in this training session, participants will be able to:

1. State the goal of the NRA *FIRST Steps* Rifle Orientation.
2. Name the three fundamental NRA rules of safe gun handling and demonstrate them with a specific rifle model.
3. Name the three major components of a rifle and describe their functions.
4. Safely demonstrate the loading and unloading procedures for a specific rifle model with dummy ammunition.

**LENGTH:** 45 minutes

**FACILITY:** Classroom or Range

- **TRAINING AIDS:** Rifle, rifle owner’s manual, dummy ammunition, one per participant of the following: NRA Training Course Student Registration Card, NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook, *NRA Gun Safety Rules* card

**(Note: No live ammunition is to be used during this lesson. Dummy ammunition must be visually distinguishable from live ammunition.)**

**REFERENCES:** NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook.

**BSA Note:** Anytime you see the NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook as the reference use the BSA Rifle Merit Badge book instead

Content	Instructional Notes	
	Lesson Time: 10 min. max	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Registration</li> <li>2. Welcome</li> <li>3. Orientation goal</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Instruct</b> participants to fill out an NRA Training Course Student Registration Card</li> <li>2. <b>Introduce</b> self and welcome participants to the orientation</li> <li>3. <b>Review</b> the orientation goal with participants: <i>To provide beginning shooters with an introduction to the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary to own and use a <u>specific rifle model</u> safely.</i></li> </ol>	<p><b>BSA Note:</b> Have scouts fill out their merit badge card</p> <p>Items 1-10 in column 1 should only take 5 minutes to do</p>



4. Orientation schedule	4. <b>Review</b> the orientation content, and the times and locations of the different lessons of the orientation.	<b>Explain the merit badge schedule for the week</b>
5. Special considerations	5. <b>Review</b> any special considerations that are unique to the orientation, e.g., transportation arrangements to range facility.	
6. Facilities	6. <b>Point out</b> location of rest rooms, drinking fountain, telephone, first aid kit, fire exits, alarm, extinguishers, etc.	<b>Distribute the merit badge books to scouts</b>
7. Firearms	7. <b>Check</b> immediately any firearms to be used during the orientation to insure they are unloaded, and <b>have a participant verify</b> this.	
8. No live ammunition in classroom	8. <b>Note</b> that no live ammunition is permitted in the classroom, and that <u>only</u> dummy ammunition will be used during the first two lessons of the orientation. <b>Check</b> with participants to be sure they have not brought any live ammunition into the classroom.	
9. Gun fit	9. <b>Check</b> the fit of the rifle to be used during this orientation relative to the size and strength of the participants. The participant should be able to hold the rifle securely and comfortably, mount it correctly, and reach and operate the appropriate parts safely and properly.	
10. Basic handbooks	10. <b>Distribute</b> the NRA Guide: <i>Basics of Rifle Shooting</i> handbooks to participants. <b>Note</b> that the handbook will be used during the orientation, and may be used afterwards as a reference to review the material covered in class.	

<p><b>B. Introduce Lesson</b></p>	<p><b>Lesson Time: 5 min. max</b></p>	
	<p>State learning objectives for this lesson.</p>	
<p><b>C. Rifle Safety</b></p> <p>1. The importance of safety</p> <p>2. The major causes of gun accidents</p> <p>3. The fundamental NRA rules for safe gun handling</p> <p>a) <b><u>ALWAYS</u> keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.</b></p>	<p><b>Lesson Time: 10 min. max</b></p> <p>1. <b>Ask</b> participants: What do you think is our primary concern when handling firearms? <b>Discuss</b> responses briefly. State that <u>safety</u> is always the primary concern when handling firearms, whether the guns are located in the home, at the range or in the field.</p> <p>2. <b>Ask</b> participants: What do you think are the major causes of gun accidents? <b>Discuss</b> responses briefly. <b>State</b> that <u>ignorance</u> and <u>carelessness</u> are the primary causes: a lack of knowledge of firearm safety or operation (ignorance), or the failure to apply one's knowledge when handling guns (carelessness).</p> <p>3. <b>Distribute</b> the <i>NRA Gun Safety Rules</i> card to participants. <b>Explain</b> that the NRA has developed three basic rules which should always be applied simultaneously when handling or using a gun.</p> <p>a) <b>Turn</b> with participants to the three rules in the brochure. <b>Have participants read</b> the first rule aloud. <b>Ask:</b> What do you think is meant by a "safe direction"? <b>Discuss</b> responses briefly. <b>Explain</b> that this rule means that a gun must always be pointed so that even if it were to discharge, it would not cause injury or damage. <b>Note</b> that controlling the gun's <u>muzzle</u> is the key, and that common sense will dictate the safest direction. <b>Indicate</b> the safe direction(s) in the facility you are using.</p> <p><b>Demonstrate</b> this rule by <b>picking up</b> a rifle, <b>identifying</b> the muzzle, and <b>noting</b> that you have it pointed in a safe direction.</p>	
		<p>Refer Scouts to pg. 18 in MB Book</p> <p>Step 3 qualifies for teaching BSA req. 2b</p>

<p>b) <b>ALWAYS</b> keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.</p> <p>c) <b>ALWAYS</b> keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.</p>	<p>b. Have participants read the second rule aloud. Ask: If your finger is kept off the trigger, where should it be? Discuss responses briefly. Explain that the finger should rest outside the <u>trigger guard</u> or along the side of the gun.</p> <p>Demonstrate this rule by <b>identifying</b> the trigger and trigger guard on the rifle you are holding, and <b>noting</b> that you are holding the gun with your finger off the trigger, while keeping the gun pointed in a safe direction.</p> <p>c. Have participants read the third rule aloud. Ask: How do you know whether or not a gun is unloaded? Discuss responses briefly. Explain that you check whether a gun is unloaded by removing the <u>magazine</u> (if any), opening the <u>action</u>, and visually inspecting the <u>chamber(s)</u>.</p> <p>Demonstrate this rule by <b>identifying</b> the magazine (if any), action, and chamber(s) on the rifle you are holding, and <b>noting</b> that the magazine is out, the action open, and the chamber(s) empty. Have a participant verify that the gun is unloaded.</p>	
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**BSA Note: The requirements listed below are not found in the FIRST Steps Rifle Lesson Plan.** Teach these requirements prior to continuing with the FIRST Steps Rifle Lesson Plan to Paragraph D Safe Rifle Handling Practical Exercise listed below.

**BSA requirement 1a**

Explain why BB and pellet air guns must always be treated with the same respect as firearms. Refer Scouts to *Rifle Shooting Merit Badge Book* page 27, "Air Rifles."

**BSA requirement 1b**

Describe how you would react if a friend visiting your home asked to see you or your family's firearm(s). Refer Scouts to *BSA Rifle Shooting Merit Badge book* page 19, "Store guns so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons."



<p><b>D. Safe Rifle Handling Practical Exercise</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lesson Time: 15 min. max</b></p> <p><b>D</b> Note that, when handing a firearm to another person, the three rules of gun safety must be observed simultaneously, i.e., gun pointed in a safe direction, finger off the trigger, magazine out, action open, and empty chamber(s) visible.</p> <p><b>Note</b> also that a gun should not be accepted from another person unless its magazine is out, its action open, and its empty chamber(s) visible.</p> <p><b>Hand</b> the rifle you are using in this orientation to one participant at a time. <b>Have participants demonstrate</b> the three safety rules while handling the rifle. <b>Have participants describe</b> each action they perform, i.e., that they are keeping the gun pointed in a safe direction, etc. The rifle's action must remain open during this exercise, and must not be manipulated by participants at this time.</p> <p><b>Have each participant hand</b> the rifle back to you when they are done.</p> <p><b>Offer</b> guidance, direction, encouragement, and positive feedback as appropriate.</p>	<p><b>Refer Scouts to pg. 18 in MB Book</b></p> <p><b>Step D qualifies for teaching BSA req. 2b</b></p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lesson Time: 5 min. max</b></p> <p><b>E.</b> Note that all rifles consist of three major components: the <u>stock</u>, the <u>barrel</u>, and the <u>action</u>.</p> <p>1. <b>Turn</b> with participants to the definition of the <u>stock</u> in the NRA Guide: <i>Basics of Rifle Shooting</i> handbook. <b>Have participants read</b> the definition aloud. <b>Point out</b> the stock on the rifle you are using.</p> <p>2. <b>Turn</b> with participants to the definition of the <u>barrel</u> in the NRA Guide: <i>Basics of Rifle Shooting</i> handbook. <b>Have participants read</b> the definition aloud. <b>Point out</b> the barrel on the rifle you are using.</p>	
<p><b>E. Rifle Parts: Major Components</b></p> <p>1. Stock</p> <p>2. Barrel</p>		

3. Action

3. **Turn** with participants to the definition of the action in the NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook. **Have participants read** the definition aloud. **Point out** the action on the rifle you are using.

**Lesson Time: 10 min. max**

**F. Rifle Parts**

**F. Rifle Parts**

1. Stock

1. **Review** with participants the definition of the stock by asking them to define it.

a. Butt — the rear portion of the stock which is designed to fit against the shoulder.

**Name** the rifle parts listed at left, **point out** their location on the stock of the rifle you are using, and **describe** briefly the function of each part.

b. Comb — the top portion of the stock, on which the shooter rests the cheek.

c. Grip — the area where the hand grasps the stock when firing the rifle.

d. Fore-end (or forearm) — the part of the stock that extends underneath the barrel. This is where the non-shooting hand holds the rifle to support it. When separate from the rest of the stock, it is called the forearm.

**Review** the parts of the stock. **Point** to each part, **have participants name** each one, and **have participants describe** briefly the function of each part.

2. Barrel

2. **Review** with participants the definition of the barrel by asking them to define it.

**Refer Scouts to pg. 8 in MB Book**

a. Bore — the inside of the barrel. The measurement of its diameter is called the caliber of the rifle.

b. Muzzle — the front end of the barrel where the bullet exits.

c. Breech — the rear of the barrel.

d. Chamber — the part of the barrel, located at the breech end, which holds the cartridge at the instant of firing.

e. Rifling — composed of spiral lands and grooves cut into the bore. The rifling makes the bullet spin to give it stability.

f. Sights — used to aim the rifle.

### 3. Action

a. Receiver — the backbone to which all other parts are attached.

b. Bolt/breech block — closes over the chamber to hold the cartridge in place for firing.

c. Trigger — when squeezed, activates the firing mechanism to fire the rifle.

**Name** the rifle parts listed at left, **point out** their location on the barrel of the rifle you are using and describe briefly the function of each part.

e. **Have participants turn** to the NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook for an illustration of rifling.

**Review** the parts of the barrel. **Point** to each part, **have participants name** each one, and have **participants describe** briefly the function of each part.

3. **Review** with participants the definition of the action by asking them to define it.

**Name** the rifle parts listed at left, **point out** their location on the action of the rifle you are using, and **describe** briefly the function of each part.



d. Trigger guard — designed to protect the trigger in order to reduce the possibility of an unintentional firing.

e. Magazine — holds cartridges ready for feeding into the chamber.

f. Safety — a mechanical device designed to reduce the chance of an unintentional discharge. Since a safety is a mechanical device that can fail, it must be used as a supplement to safe gun handling practices, never as a substitute.

g. Action release (if applicable) — allows a closed action to be opened

### G. Rifle Parts: Review

### H. Rifle Operation

Review the parts of the action. **Point** to each part, **have participants name** each one, and **have participants describe** briefly the function of each part

Skip G with Scouts

G. . Review all the parts of the stock, barrel, and action listed above. **Point** to each part, **have participants name** each one, and **have participants describe** briefly the function of each part.

Lesson Time: 5 min. max

H. **Explain** that, in addition to firing (which will be discussed in Lesson II), there are two basic operations of most rifles: loading and unloading. You will be explaining, demonstrating, and reviewing the operations indicated. **Refer** to the general operational guidelines in the NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook for the type of rifle you are using in this orientation. These guidelines discuss the indicated procedures in a clear, simple, step-by-step manner.

**Consult** the owner's manual of your participant's rifle to see whether the manufacturer has any particular guidelines for its operation.

**Do not conduct** the orientation unless you are thoroughly familiar with the correct operation of the participant's rifle as recommended by the manufacturer.

Use only dummy ammunition during this practical exercise. Dummy ammunition must be visually distinguishable from live ammunition.

**Be sure to observe, cite, and reinforce** the applicable NRA rules of safe gun handling throughout the exercise. **Note** that ammunition that falls to the ground must remain on the ground until it may be safely retrieved by someone who is not handling a firearm (the instructor or another participant under the instructor's direction).

1. Loading

1. **Explain, demonstrate, and discuss** the loading procedure of your participant's rifle in a clear, simple, step-by-step manner. Then **have participants repeat** the steps back to you as you repeat the demonstration.

2. Unloading

2. **Explain, demonstrate, and discuss** the unloading procedure for your participant's rifle in a clear, simple step-by-step manner. Then **have participants repeat** the steps back to you as you repeat the demonstration.

**Lesson Time: 15 min. max**

**I. Rifle Operation  
Practical Exercise**

**I. Review** with participants the three fundamental NRA rules for safe gun handling. Then **have participants explain and demonstrate** the correct loading and unloading procedures for the specific rifle model used in this orientation.

It is important that participants explain what they are doing during the demonstration. This will indicate to you whether or not they have learned the steps correctly, and help to reinforce the skills they are performing.

	<p>Observe participants closely. <b>Be sure</b> all applicable safety rules are followed. <b>Offer</b> guidance, direction, encouragement, and positive feedback as appropriate.</p>	
<b>J. Conclude Lesson</b>	<b>Lesson Time: 5 min. max</b>	
<p>1. Summary</p> <p>2. Questions</p> <p>3. Preview</p>	<p>1. <b>Ask</b> participants to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">a. State the goal of the orientation</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">b. Name the three NRA fundamental rules of safe gun handling.</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">c. Name the three major components of a rifle and describe their function.</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">d. Describe the loading and unloading procedures for the specific rifle model used in this orientation.</p> <p>2. <b>Ask</b> participants what questions they have about this lesson. <b>Answer</b> questions.</p> <p>3. <b>Preview</b> next lesson briefly.</p>	



## Lesson II.

# Introduction to Ammunition and the Fundamentals of Rifle Shooting

**BSA Note:** Lesson II is taught on Day 2 each week of camp

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** As a result of their participation in this training session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the three items they need to check to determine the proper ammunition for their rifle.
2. Identify and define the three major types of cartridge malfunctions and explain how to respond safely when they occur.
3. Determine their dominant eye.
4. Explain the five fundamentals of firing the shot and demonstrate them from the benchrest position.

**LENGTH:** 45 minutes

**FACILITY:** Classroom or Range

- **TRAINING AIDS:** Rifle, rifle owner's manual, dummy ammunition, empty cartridge box for the rifle being used, fired case for the rifle being used, sighting device (if applicable), NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook, *NRA Gun Safety Rules card*

**(NOTE: Dummy ammunition must be visually distinguishable from live ammunition. Live Ammo is used after lesson D1-D5 when scouts do live fire shooting)**

**REFERENCES:** NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook.

Content		
A. Introduce Lesson	<b>Lesson Time: 5 min. max</b>	
	A. Review the previous lesson briefly. State learning objectives for the current lesson.	

<p><b>B. Rifle Ammunition</b></p> <p>1. Ammunition compatibility</p>	<p><b>Lesson Time: 10 min. max</b></p>	<p><b>Refer Scouts to pg. 35-36 in MB Book</b></p> <p><b>Step B1 qualifies for teaching BSA req. 2c</b></p>
	<p>1. <b>Turn</b> with participants to the <i>NRA Gun Safety Rules</i> card. <b>Have them read</b> the paragraph discussing the rule, “Use only the correct ammunition for your gun.”</p> <p><b>Ask</b> participants: How do you know what type of ammunition should be used for a particular gun? <b>Discuss</b> responses briefly. <b>Explain</b> that most firearms have the ammunition type stamped on the <u>gun</u> itself.</p> <p>Following the NRA gun safety rules, <b>show</b> participants the ammunition designation on the rifle being used for this orientation.</p> <p><b>Ask</b> participants: How do you know whether the ammunition you have is the correct type for your gun? <b>Discuss</b> responses briefly. <b>Explain</b> that the ammunition type is identified on the <u>box</u>, and sometimes on the <u>cartridge</u> as well.</p> <p><u>Show</u> participants the ammunition designation on an empty cartridge box, and on a fired case for the rifle used for this orientation.</p> <p><b>Ask</b> participants: What three items should you check to be sure that you are using the correct ammunition for your gun? <b>Review</b> that the <u>gun</u>, the ammunition <u>box</u>, and the ammunition <u>cartridge</u> should be checked to make sure the ammunition is compatible with your gun.</p> <p><b>Note</b>, if appropriate, the ammunition with a different designation may be compatible with the participant’s gun. <b>Refer</b> to the rifle’s owner’s manual for specific recommendations endorsed by the manufacturer.</p>	



<p>2. Cartridge malfunctions</p> <p>a. Misfire</p> <p>b. Hangfire</p> <p>c. Squib load</p>		<p>Refer Scouts to pg. 37 in MB Book</p> <p>Step B2 qualifies for teaching BSA req. 2d</p>
	<p><b>Lesson Time: 10 min. max</b></p>	
	<p>2. <b>Explain</b> to participants that there are three major types of ammunition malfunctions which may occur:</p> <p>a. A <u>misfire</u> is a failure of the cartridge to fire.</p> <p>b. A <u>hangfire</u> is a perceptible delay in the ignition of a cartridge.</p> <p>c. A <u>squib load</u> is the development of less than normal pressure or velocity after ignition of the cartridge.</p> <p><b>Explain</b> that, if a cartridge fails to fire immediately, it will not be known at first whether the problem is a <u>misfire</u> or a <u>hangfire</u>. Since the problem may be a hangfire, you should wait at least 30 seconds while keeping the gun pointed in a safe direction. After that time, the rifle may be unloaded carefully.</p> <p><b>Explain</b> that, if anything unusual is noticed when a shot is fired, such as a difference in recoil or noise, a squib load may have been fired, and you should <u>stop firing immediately</u>. Squib loads can result in the bullet failing to exit the barrel. The firing of another shot could cause serious injury or damage.</p> <p><b>Explain</b> that, if a squib load is suspected, you must point the gun in a safe direction, unload it, and check the chamber to be sure that it is empty. Then, with the gun pointed in a safe direction and the action open, you must carefully run a cleaning rod through the barrel to be sure a bullet is not stuck in the barrel. If the barrel is obstructed, <u>the gun must not be fired</u> until the barrel has been cleared.</p>	

<p><b>C. Determining the Dominant Eye</b></p>	<p><b>Review</b> the definitions of misfire, hangfire, and squib load with participants. <b>Have them explain</b> the correct actions to take if these malfunctions occur.</p>	<p><b>Refer Scouts to pg. 39-40 in MB Book</b></p>
	<p><b>Lesson Time: 10 min. max</b></p>	
	<p><b>C. Explain</b> to participants that each individual has a <u>dominant eye</u>: the eye that determines the direction of vision. <b>Note</b> that the dominant eye is used to aim the rifle, so each participant must determine his or her dominant eye before learning the fundamentals of rifle shooting.</p> <p><b>Have participants perform</b> the dominant eye exercise as described in the NRA Guide: <i>Basics of Rifle Shooting</i> handbook. <b>Have participants note</b> which of their eyes is dominant.</p> <p><b>Note</b> that right-handed participants with a right dominant eye should shoulder the rifle on the right side. Left-handed participants with a left dominant eye should shoulder the rifle on the left.</p> <p>If a participant is <u>cross-dominant</u> (i.e., is right-handed with a left dominant eye, or vice versa) <b>have the participant try</b> shouldering the rifle on the same side as the dominant eye during the mounting exercise below. If the participant feels more comfortable using the shoulder opposite the dominant eye, he or she may do so. In this case, you may need to block the dominant eye with a piece of translucent tape on the inside of the non-shooting lens of the shooting glasses.</p>	

Lesson Time: 15 min. max

### D. Shooting Position

a) The position of the body:

(1) The position should be comfortable, balanced, relaxed, provide maximum bone support, and be properly aligned with the target.

(2) The participant sits behind the bench or table facing the target.

(3) Both elbows rest on the bench.

(4) The non-shooting hand is supported by sandbags.

(5) The shooting hand is positioned to grasp the rifle grip.

(6) The head is erect.

1. **Ask** participants: What do we mean by “shooting position”? **Discuss** responses briefly. **Explain** that shooting position refers to the way you hold your body and the way you hold the rifle when firing the shot. The shooting position is the platform from which all the shooting fundamentals shall be executed.

**Note** that in this orientation, only the benchrest position will be taught, a position in which the shooter sits at a table and fires the gun with the non-shooting hand supported by sandbags.

**Refer** participants to the NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook for an illustration.

a. **Explain and demonstrate** the elements of a proper position as described at left, and in the rifle handbook.

**Have participants practice** the proper benchrest position without a rifle. **Have participants describe** the elements as they get into position. **Block** the dominant eye if a cross-dominant participant feels more comfortable using the opposite shoulder.

Follow steps a and b



b) The position of the rifle

(1) The rifle should be positioned against the shoulder so that you can look through the sights with your dominant eye comfortably and naturally. The cheek should rest firmly against the comb of the stock.

(2) The grip of the stock should be grasped with the lower three fingers, lightly resting the thumb on the top of the stock. The hand must be positioned so that the index finger is clear of the stock and can squeeze the trigger straight to the rear. The wrist must remain straight.

(3) The fore-end should lie across the palm of the non-shooting hand between the thumb and index finger with the other fingers relaxed. It is best not to grip or squeeze the fore-end, though this may be necessary in larger caliber rifles in order to maintain control when firing.

**Observe** participants closely. **Offer** guidance, direction, encouragement, and positive feedback as appropriate.

b. **Explain and demonstrate** the elements of proper rifle position as described at left, and in the rifle handbook.

With participants seated in the benchrest position, **have them practice** the position using an empty gun. **Have participants describe** what they are doing as they bring the rifle into position.

**Observe** participants closely. **Be sure** all applicable safety rules are followed.

**Offer** guidance, direction, encouragement, and positive feedback as appropriate.

**Note:** The NRA *FIRST Steps* program does not have participants shooting until lesson three. The goal of the BSA Rifle Merit Badge program is to have Scouts shoot on the second day of the merit badge. Therefore, this syllabus has Scouts shooting on the second day prior to lesson three. If you are doing the merit badge as part of the year-round program you should stick to the NRA lesson plan and have Scouts shoot as part of lesson three.

**Note:** Steps E1-E5 and that should take 8 scouts about 15 minutes. The remaining time should be used for live fire for scouts to experience their first shot. No scoring just pull the trigger and get the first experience. This would satisfy BSA because the scout will shoot on Day 2.

Lesson Time: 40 min. max

**E. Fundamentals of Firing a Shot**

**1. Aiming**

- a. For open sights with a post or bead front sight, the front sight should be centered in the rear sight notch and the top of the front sight must be even with the top of the rear sight.
- b. For aperture sights, the front sight ring (or top of the front sight post) must be centered in the rear aperture.

**Explain** to participants that, although broken down into individual components, the fundamentals blend together into one integrated act of firing a shot. **Explain** that “fundamental” means “basic” or “essential.”

**Explain** and **demonstrate** the following fundamentals of shooting:

Aiming consists of two steps. The first step in aiming is to properly align the front and rear sights with the dominant eye. This process is referred to as “sight alignment.”

- The relationship between the eye, the rear sight, and the front sight (or scope).

**Note:** Maintaining proper sight alignment is crucial to accurate shooting.

The second step is “sight picture.”

- The relationship between the aligned sights (or scope) and the target.

Refer Scouts to pg. 39-44 in MB Book

Step E qualifies for teaching BSA req. 2e

- c. For telescopic sights, the eye must be positioned so that you can clearly see the entire field of view when looking through the scope.
- d. As with a telescopic sight, electronic sights that generally resemble a telescopic sight externally, but use a battery illuminated dot or reticle for aiming, eliminate the need to align a rear and front sight.

## 2. Breath Control

The eye can only focus on one object at a time. It cannot keep the rear sight, the front sight, and the target in focus simultaneously. The shooter must focus, both visually and mentally, on the front sight. The front sight should appear sharp and clear, the rear sight should look less sharp, and the target should look blurred. For telescopic sights, the scope reticle is simply centered on the target (and the target is not blurred).

- Ideally, it is best to keep both eyes open while aiming. An equal amount of light is available to both eyes and depth perception is better. Facial contortions and muscle tension are also eliminated.
- There will always be some movement of the aligned sights (or scope/dot) relative to the target. The shooter should try to maintain proper sight alignment while keeping the movement of the gun to a minimum.

To minimize movement of the rifle, the breathing must be stopped while the shot is fired.

Interrupting our normal breathing cycle while firing a shot is called "breath control."

- Before each shot, take a breath. When you are pointing the front sight at the target, exhale and stop breathing. Do not breathe until after the shot is fired.
- The shot should be fired within six to eight seconds of when you have stopped breathing. If your breath is held too long, muscle tremors may start. Point the gun in a safe direction, take your finger off the trigger, put the gun down, relax, take a few breaths, and begin the cycle again.

**Have participants exercise** proper breath control from the benchrest position. **Have them note** how movement of the gun and body is reduced during the interruption of the breathing cycle.



### 3. Hold Control

**Note** - The first step in minimizing movement is to get into a stable shooting position, which, as discussed previously, is the platform from which all the fundamentals are executed. An arc of movement will barely be noticeable in the bench rest position.

Hold control is the process of maintaining the correct relationship between the shooter, gun, and target.

- The “hold” is the movement of your aligned sights in relation to the target that you see while aiming. The amount and speed of movement shows how well you are controlling your hold. Your task is to hold the gun as still as possible, which is best done by relaxing and letting your position do the work for you. Concentrate on holding your body and the gun as still as you can.
- It is impossible to attain a perfect sight picture all the time. This motion of the gun/body combination as seen through the sights on the target is called the “wobble area” or “arc of movement.”
- The shooter needs to concentrate on the sight alignment and holding as still as possible in order to exercise effective hold control.

### 4. Trigger Control

**Ask** participants where the trigger is *located* and what its function is. **Discuss** responses briefly. **Review** the location of the trigger on the gun being used in this orientation.

Trigger control is the process of pulling or pressing the trigger smoothly and straight to the rear firing the firearm while maintaining as near perfect sight alignment as possible and an acceptable sight picture.

The best finger placement will allow the shooter to pull the trigger straight to the rear without causing the front sight to move in the rear sight when the trigger “break” occurs.

- The middle of the pad on the fingertip – the most sensitive part of the finger – is the preferred position for finger placement. But, maintaining the best possible sight alignment as the shot is fired is much more important than putting the trigger finger in a “preferred position” on the trigger.

- Hand size and shooter finger strength may be another factor on the exact placement of the trigger finger.
- When squeezing the trigger each shot should come as a surprise.
- Trigger squeeze and sight alignment must be done simultaneously while keeping the movement of the gun to a minimum.

**Have participants practice** proper trigger squeeze using an empty rifle. **Have participants describe** what they are doing while they are placing their finger on the trigger and squeezing it. *(Consult the rifle's owner's manual to see whether the manufacturer approves dry firing. If not, use dummy ammunition or "snap caps" to protect the rifle from damage.*

**Observe** participants closely. **Be sure** all applicable safety rules are followed. **Offer** guidance, direction, encouragement, and positive feedback as appropriate.

## 5. Follow-through

Ask participants how follow through is used in sports such as tennis or golf? Discuss the response briefly.

In golf and tennis, follow-through is the continuation of a motion after the golf club or tennis racket hits the ball. The same principle applies in shooting.

- "Follow-through is simply maintaining aiming, breath control, hold control and trigger control before, during and after firing the shot
- Follow-through is the "glue" that holds the other fundamentals together and makes firing the center shot possible
- If the shooter focuses on the front sight and follows-through correctly, the shooter should be able to "call the shot," i.e., indicate its location on the target before looking at the bullet hole



**Have participants practice** proper follow-through using an empty rifle. **Have participants describe** what they are doing after the trigger breaks and why.

**Observe** participants closely. **Be sure** all applicable safety rules are followed. **Offer** guidance, direction, encouragement, and positive feedback as appropriate.

**Lesson Time: 5 min. max**

**F. Conclude Lesson**

1. Summary

1. **Ask** participants:

a. What three items need to be checked to make sure you are using the correct ammunition for your gun? What two ammunition designations need to be checked?

b. What are the three major types of cartridge malfunctions? What should you do if they occur?

c. Which of your eyes is dominant? What is the dominant eye used for in shooting?

d. What are the five fundamentals of firing the shot? On what must you focus, visually and mentally, while firing?

2. Questions

2. **Ask** participants what questions they have about this lesson. **Answer** questions.

3. Preview

**Preview** next lesson briefly

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# Lesson III. Introduction to Rifle Shooting from the Benchrest Position

**BSA Note:** Lesson III is taught on day 3 each week of camp

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** As a result of their participation in this training session, participants will be able to:

1. Explain the three basic range commands, the procedures to be followed if one has a problem with a firearm or drops ammunition, and any applicable range rules which apply to the facility being used.
2. Discuss and explain the eight NRA gun safety rules to be followed when shooting and storing a rifle.
3. Safely shoot a target from the benchrest position using the fundamentals of rifle shooting.

**LENGTH:** 60 minutes

**FACILITY:** Range

- **TRAINING AIDS:** Rifle, rifle owner's manual, factory ammunition, hearing and eye protection, blank targets, sandbags, benchrests, chairs, small screwdriver (for sight adjustments), NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook, *NRA Gun Safety Rules card*

**REFERENCES:** NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook.

Content	Instructional Notes
A. Introduce Lesson	<b>Lesson Time: 5 min. max</b>
	A. Review the previous lesson briefly. State learning objectives for the current lesson



**Lesson Time: 10 min. max**

**B. Range Safety and Shooting Facility Orientation**

1. Range layout

1. **Point out** to participants the layout of the range: the location of the firing points, firing line, ready area, etc. **Explain** the activities that are permitted in each area.

2. Range personnel

2. **Introduce** participants to the range personnel, e.g., the chief range safety officer, other range safety officers, etc., and describe their functions.

3. Range commands and procedures

3. **Name** the three basic range commands and **explain** what they mean:

a. "Load"

a. **Explain** that shooters may load their rifles only after this command has been given. **Emphasize** that this command authorizes shooters to load their rifles, and nothing more. Shooters must still keep their fingers off the trigger.

b. "Commence firing"

b. **Explain** that, after this command has been given, shooters may fire their rifles when they are ready. **Emphasize** that shooters are not required to begin firing immediately.

c. "Cease firing"

c. **Explain** that, when this command is given, shooters must stop shooting immediately, remove their fingers from the triggers, keep their guns pointed in a safe direction, and await further instructions from the range safety officer. These instructions may include such commands as, "Unload . . . Magazines out . . . Actions open . . . Guns on the bench."

**Emphasize** that the "cease firing" command may be used during normal range operation or in an emergency situation. Anyone observing an unsafe situation may use the "cease firing" command.

<p>d. Problem with firearm</p> <p>e. Dropped ammunition</p> <p>4. Range rules</p>	<p>d. <b>Explain</b> that a shooter who has any type of problem with the rifle must take their finger off the trigger, keep the gun pointed in a safe direction, and raise his or her hand for assistance from one of the range personnel.</p> <p>e. <b>Remind</b> participants that ammunition that falls to the ground must remain on the ground until it may be safely retrieved by someone who is not handling a firearm (the instructor or another participant under the instructor's direction).</p> <p><b>Review</b> by asking participants: What is the meaning of the command, "Load"? "Commence firing"? "Cease firing"? Who may issue the "cease firing" command? What procedures should be followed by a shooter who is experiencing a problem with a rifle? What should you do if you accidentally drop ammunition?</p> <p>4. Explain and discuss the range rules for the range you are using.</p>	<p><b>Refer Scouts to pg. 17-19 in MB Book</b></p> <p><b>Step C qualifies for teaching BSA req. 1c and 2f</b></p>
<p><b>Lesson Time: 10 min. max</b></p>		
<p><b>C. Rules for Safe Shooting</b></p> <p>1. Review of the three fundamental NRA rules for safe gun handling.</p> <p>2. NRA rules for using and storing a gun</p> <p>a. <i>Know your target and what is beyond.</i></p> <p>b. <i>Know how to use the gun safely.</i></p> <p>c. <i>Be sure the gun is safe to operate.</i></p>	<p>1. Review the three fundamental NRA rules for safe gun handling by asking participants to name them.</p> <p>2. Turn with participants to the rules for using and storing guns in the <i>NRA Gun Safety Rules</i> card. Have participants read the first rule aloud, and then have them read the rest of the accompanying paragraph to themselves. Ask participants to explain the importance of the first rule. Repeat this procedure for each of the remaining rules.</p>	

- d. *Use only the correct ammunition for your gun.*
- e. *Wear hearing and eye protection as appropriate.*
- f. *Never use alcohol or drugs before or while shooting*
- g. *Store guns so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons.*
- h. *Be aware that certain types of guns and many shooting situations require additional safety precautions.*

**D. Preparation for Shooting Exercises**

**Lesson Time: 10 min. max**

D. Prior to the range session, **inspect** the participant's rifle for overall appearance, fit of parts, function, and operation. If it is a new-in-the-box rifle, it should be cleaned before shooting. If there is any question concerning whether or not the rifle is safe to shoot, **have it checked** by a reputable gunsmith before using it in the orientation.

Use quality factory ammunition.

**Inspect** the ammunition to be used during the shooting exercises to be sure it is clean, free of obvious defects, and compatible with the gun. **Keep** the ammunition under your control. If there is any question concerning whether or not the ammunition is safe to use in the participant's rifle, **check** with a reputable gunsmith before using it in the orientation.

**Be sure** that you and participants are wearing hearing and eye protection before entering the range. **Prepare** the firing point with the



	<p>necessary equipment: a benchrest, chair, sandbags, and the rifle. <b>Have</b> a copy of the NRA Guide: <i>Basics of Rifle Shooting</i> handbook and the owner's manual for your participant's rifle handy for reference.</p> <p><b>Set</b> a relatively large <u>blank</u> target approximately 50 feet in front of the firing line.</p> <p>In the case of multiple participants, there should be one NRA instructor per firing point, one rifle per firing point, and no more than two participants per firing point. <b>Be sure to increase range time proportionately if there are two participants at a firing point.</b></p> <p><b>Use</b> the "coach/pupil" method with multiple participants: while one participant (the "pupil") shoots, <b>involve</b> the other participant (the "coach") in the learning process by guiding him or her to watch the "pupil" and offer feedback under your direction.</p>	
	<p><b>Lesson Time: 45 min. max</b></p>	
<p><b>E. Shooting from the Benchrest Position</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Study benchrest position</li> <li>2. Practice position without rifle</li> <li>3. Practice position with rifle</li> </ol>	<p><b>E. Instruct</b> participants using the NRA eight-step method for teaching beginning rifle shooters.</p> <p>At each step, <b>observe</b> participant closely. <b>Be sure</b> all applicable safety rules are followed. <b>Offer</b> guidance, direction, and positive feedback as appropriate.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Turn</b> with participants to the NRA Guide: <i>Basics of Rifle Shooting</i> handbook. <b>Review</b> the details of the benchrest position and <b>demonstrate</b> the position for participants.</li> <li>2. <b>Direct</b> <u>one</u> participant to practice what he or she has just read, heard, and seen. The gun is not yet used so the participant can concentrate totally on the position of the body.</li> <li>3. <b>Add</b> the rifle once the participant has achieved the correct body position. <b>Review</b> the elements of the position of the rifle, and <b>be sure</b> the participant performs them properly. If the participant's rifle is a semi-automatic, <b>be sure</b> that the participant keeps the fingers away from any recoiling parts.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Refer Scouts to pgs. 52-55 in MB Book</b></p> <p><b>Step E qualifies for teaching BSA req. 2g</b></p>

<p>4. Align position with target</p> <p>5. Dry fire exercise using the fundamentals of rifle shooting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Aiming</li> <li>b. Breath control</li> <li>c. Hold Control</li> <li>d. Trigger control</li> <li>e. Follow-through</li> </ul> <p>6. Live fire exercises</p>	<p>4. <b>Be sure</b> the participant is positioned so that the gun points naturally at the center of the target. <b>Check</b> natural point of aim by having participant lower eyes away from the sights momentarily, and then look back at the sight picture. The aligned sights should still be on target. If necessary, <b>direct</b> the participant to adjust the position.</p> <p>5. <b>Direct</b> participant to practice the fundamentals of rifle shooting by dry firing the rifle. (<b>Consult</b> the rifle’s owner’s manual to see whether dry firing is approved by the manufacturer. If it is not, <b>use</b> dummy ammunition or “snap caps” to protect the rifle from damage.)</p> <p><b>Review</b> the fundamentals. <b>Emphasize</b> focus on the front sight and the importance of squeezing the trigger while maintaining proper sight alignment. After the participant has demonstrated reasonable skill and confidence in dry firing the rifle, <b>move on</b> to the next step.</p> <p>6. <b>Supply</b> participant with one round of ammunition at a time. <b>Direct</b> participant to “load.” When the participant is ready, <b>direct</b> him or her to “commence firing.” Then <b>instruct</b> participant to “cease firing” and unload. <b>Have participant fire</b> a three- or five- shot group on the target.</p> <p><b>Observe</b> participant closely. <b>Watch</b> the gun and shooter, not the target. <b>Be sure</b> all applicable safety rules are followed. <b>Offer</b> guidance, direction, and positive feedback as appropriate. <b>Involve</b> another participant (the “coach”) in the learning process by guiding him or her to watch the “pupil” and offer feedback under your direction.</p>	
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<p>7. Adjust sights</p> <p>8. Resume live fire exercises</p>	<p><b>Supply</b> participant with three or five rounds of ammunition. <b>Direct</b> participant to “load.” When the participant is ready, <b>direct</b> him or her to “commence firing.” <b>Be sure</b> the participant rests between shots. After the group has been fired, instruct participant to “cease firing” and unload.</p> <p><b>Observe, offer</b> feedback, and <b>involve</b> the other participant as before.</p> <p><b>Have participant fire</b> additional groups as time permits</p> <p>7. <u>If time permits, and if participant has shot groups of a reasonably small size, explain</u> the rule for adjusting sights: “Move the rear sight in the same direction that the hits on the target should move.” <b>Direct</b> participant to make sight adjustments as necessary.</p> <p>8. <b>Have participant fire</b> additional groups as time permits. If you are using the coach/pupil method, <b>have participants reverse</b> roles and <b>repeat</b> the eight steps.</p>	
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**BSA Note:** The list below uses the BSA Rifle Merit Badge book page 5 to cover requirements 2k and 2l. These requirements are not found in the NRA *FIRST Steps* Lesson Plans.

**BSA Requirement 2k**

Using a .22 caliber rimfire rifle and shooting from a benchrest position or supported prone position at 50 ft., fire five groups (three shots per group) that can be covered by a quarter. Using these targets, explain how to adjust sights to zero a rifle.

**BSA Requirement 2l**

Adjust sights to center the group on the target and fire five groups (five shots per group). According to the target used, each shot in the group must meet the following minimum score:

- (1) A-32 targets-9; (2) A-17 or TQ-1 targets-7; (3) A-36 targets-5



<b>F. Review of Shooting Practice</b>	<b>Lesson Time: 5 min. max</b>
	<b>F. Ask participants what they learned from the day's shooting practice. Discuss responses briefly. Supplement their comments with positive feedback as appropriate.</b>
<b>G. Conclude Lesson</b>	<b>Lesson Time: 5 min. max</b>
	<b>1. Summary</b>
	<b>1. Ask participants:</b>  a. What are the three basic range commands? What do they mean?  b. What are the eight NRA safety rules for using and storing a gun?  c. What have you learned from your practice of the fundamentals of rifle shooting?
	<b>2. Questions</b>
<b>3. Preview</b>	<b>2. Ask participants what questions they have about this lesson. Answer questions.</b>  <b>3. Preview next lesson briefly.</b>

# Lesson IV. Introduction to Rifle Cleaning, Storage, and Training Opportunities

**BSA Note:** Lesson IV is taught on day 4 each week of camp

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** As a result of their participation in this training session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the materials needed to clean a rifle.
2. Outline the three safety guidelines to be followed when cleaning a rifle.
3. Explain and demonstrate how to clean a rifle safely.
4. Name the NRA rule for safe firearm storage, and discuss options for applying this rule when storing a rifle.
5. Discuss the three hygienic guidelines following exposure to airborne particulate lead and cleaning solvent residue.
6. Discuss the benefits of receiving additional rifle training through the NRA Basic Firearm Training Program.

**LENGTH:** 30 minutes

**FACILITY:** Classroom or Range

- **TRAINING AIDS:** Rifle, rifle owner’s manual, rifle cleaning equipment, lockable rifle case, NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook, one per participant of the following: *NRA Marksmanship Qualification* booklet, *NRA Gun Safety Rules card*

**REFERENCES:** NRA Guide: *Basics of Rifle Shooting* handbook.

Content	Instructional Notes
A. Introduce Lesson	<b>Lesson Time: 5 min. max</b>
	<p><b>A. Review</b> the previous lesson briefly. <b>State</b> learning objectives for the current lesson.</p>

		Lesson Time: 40 min. max
<p><b>B. Cleaning a Rifle</b></p> <p>1. Importance of cleaning</p> <p>2. Materials</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. Cleaning rod and attachments (tips and bore brush)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b. Cloth patches</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">c. Bore cleaning solvent</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">d. Gun oil</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">e. Clean cloth</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">f. Small brush</p> <p>3. Safety guidelines</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. Ammunition must not be present in the area</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b. The gun must be unloaded</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">c. The action must be open</p> <p>4. Practical exercise</p>	<p>1. <b>Turn</b> with participants to the <i>NRA Gun Safety Rules</i> card. <b>Have participants review</b> the rule, “Be sure the gun is safe to operate” and the paragraph that follows. <b>Discuss</b> the importance of regular cleaning and proper storage as part of a gun’s general upkeep as stated in the brochure. <b>Note</b> that a gun should be cleaned after every shooting session.</p> <p>2. <b>Display</b> the materials necessary to clean a rifle. <b>Identify</b> each of the items listed at left, and <b>explain</b> their use in cleaning a rifle.</p> <p><b>Have participants note</b> manufacturers’ guidelines for the use of gun cleaning products.</p> <p>3. <b>Ask</b> participants: Based on our discussions of gun safety, what are some of the safety guidelines you think should be followed when cleaning a rifle? <b>Discuss</b> responses briefly. <b>State</b> that, when cleaning a rifle, the guidelines listed at left <u>must</u> be followed.</p> <p>4. <b>Conduct</b> a cleaning practical exercise by having participants clean the rifle under your direction. <b>Be sure no ammunition is present in the area during the cleaning exercise.</b></p>	<p><b>Refer Scouts to pg. 30 in MB Book</b></p> <p><b>Step B qualifies for teaching BSA req. 2h</b></p> <p><b>Refer Scouts to pg. 31-32 in MB Book</b></p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Attach brush to cleaning rod and apply bore cleaner to brush.</li> <li>b. Run brush through bore 8-10 times.</li> <li>c. Run wet patch through bore.</li> <li>d. Run dry patch through bore.</li> <li>e. If dry patch dirty, repeat first four steps until dry patch comes out clean.</li> <li>f. Run lightly oiled patch through bore.</li> <li>g. Use small brush and solvent to clean other parts of gun.</li> <li>h. Wipe rifle with lightly oiled cloth.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Follow</b> the cleaning guidelines outlined in the NRA Guide: <i>Basics of Rifle Shooting</i> handbook. (The guidelines are summarized briefly at left.) <b>Note</b> that the rifle bore should be cleaned from the breech end whenever possible.</p> <p><b>Inform</b> participants that some rifles need to be partially disassembled prior to cleaning. <b>Have participants consult</b> the rifle's owner's manual for disassembly/reassembly directions and for any specific recommendations the manufacturer may have regarding cleaning.</p>	<p><b>Step 4 qualifies for teaching BSA req. 2i</b></p>
<p><b>Lesson Time: 5 min. max</b></p>		<p><b>Refer Scouts to pg. 56 in MB Book</b></p> <p><b>Step 4 qualifies for teaching BSA req. 1h</b></p>
<p><b>C. Hygienic guidelines following exposure to airborne particulate lead or cleaning solvent residue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, applying makeup, or otherwise placing your hands and/or fingers in proximity to your mouth or nose while on the range or while cleaning a gun.</li> </ul>	<p><b>C. Ask</b> participants: What hygienic practices should be followed during and after a shooting or gun cleaning session? <b>Discuss</b> responses briefly.</p> <p><b>Explain</b> the three hygienic guidelines at left. <b>Note</b> that they should be practiced by individuals who were present or otherwise exposed at the range even if they did not participate in the shooting session.</p>	

2. After leaving the range or cleaning a gun, wash your hands and face thoroughly before eating, drinking, smoking, applying makeup, or otherwise placing your hands and/or fingers in proximity to your mouth or nose.

3. Change and wash clothing after a shooting or gun cleaning session so that exposure to airborne particulate lead or solvent residue may be further minimized.

#### D. Storing a Rifle

1. NRA rule for safe firearm storage

2. Options for safe rifle storage

**Lesson Time: 5 min. max**

1. **Turn** with participants to the *NRA Gun Safety Rules* card. **Have participants review** the rule, “Store guns so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons” and the paragraph that follows. **Note** that there is not a universally applicable method for applying this rule, and that storage options must take into account each individual’s particular situation.

2. **Discuss** some of the options available for rifle storage, such as gun cases, cabinets, safes, etc. **Show** participants a lockable rifle case as an example of a storage device.

**Note** that ammunition should generally be stored separately from guns, and should likewise be stored so that it is inaccessible to unauthorized persons. **Note** also that there may be state or local laws governing the storage of guns and ammunition.

Refer Scouts to pg. 23-27 in MB Book

Step D qualifies for teaching BSA req. 2j

**E. The "Next Step":  
Additional Rifle Shooting  
Activities**

**Lesson Time: 5 min. max**

1. The NRA Basic  
Firearm Training  
Program

1. **Discuss** the advantages of receiving additional rifle training in an NRA Basic Rifle Shooting Course. **Provide** participants with a schedule of upcoming NRA Basic Course in the area, and **encourage** them to attend.

2. Additional  
NRA training  
opportunities

2. **Inform** participants that the NRA has developed additional rifle training opportunities, including advanced marksmanship clinics for competitive shooters. **Note** that the NRA also has special programs available for young shooters, such as the NRA National Junior Rifle Camp.

3. The National  
Rifle Association

3. **Distribute** copies of NRA membership applications. **Discuss** the advantages of NRA membership and review several programs available to the shooters from the NRA, and **invite** them to join.

4. Other  
shooting activities -  
Discuss local  
activities in which  
participants may  
practice and develop  
their shooting skills  
after they receive  
additional training.  
Refer participants to  
your NRA-affiliated  
shooting clubs, and  
local shooting ranges.

4. **Distribute** *NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program* booklets. Briefly **describe** rifle programs.



**BSA Note:** Instead of teaching Lesson E above, teach merit badge requirements 1d thru 1f and 1g and 1i of the BSA Rifle Merit Badge book.

**Time length to teach this section is 20 minutes max.**

**BSA Requirement 1d**

Give the main points of the laws for owning and using guns in your community and state  
Consult local and state law enforcement for this information

**BSA Requirement 1e**

Explain how hunting is related to the wise use of renewable wildlife resources  
Reference BSA Rifle Shooting merit badge book pages 80-82, "Conservation, Recreation, and more"

**BSA Requirement 1f**

Obtain a copy of the hunting laws for your state. Explain the main points of hunting laws in your state and give any special laws on the use of guns and ammunition.  
Reference BSA Rifle Shooting Merit Badge book pages 82-83

**BSA Requirement 1g**

Identify and explain how you can join or be a part of shooting sport activities  
Reference BSA Rifle Shooting Merit Badge Book pages 86-89, "Olympic Games and Shooting"

**BSA Requirement 1i**

Give your counselor a list of sources that you could contact for information on firearms and their uses.  
Reference BSA Rifle Shooting Merit Badge book pages 95-96, "Shotgun Shooting Resources"

After teaching the requirements above you are done with DAY 4....

**DAY 5- AS TIME ALLOWS**

Continue qualification shooting as needed for the merit badge. If a Scout has met his shooting qualifications for the merit badge, have him continue shooting to qualify for the NRA Marksmanship Qualification program awards. You can download the awards book from the internet.

**F. Orientation Review**

**G. Orientation Certificates**

G. Ask participants what questions they have about anything that was covered during the orientation. **Answer** questions.

**H. Thank you**

H. **Distribute** completed NRA *FIRST Steps* Rifle Orientation Certificates to qualified participants. **Congratulate** students on their accomplishments, and invite them to attend your next NRA Basic Shooting Course.

I. A special thanks needs to go to the NRA Foundation and its generous donors for helping make this course possible.

**Thank** participants for their interest in firearm education and for their participation in the training programs of the National Rifle Association.

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