

# Girl Scout Troop Government

## What is Troop Government?

Troop government is an easy, structured way for girls to govern and manage their Girl Scout troop decisions and discussions. Troop leaders can use this guide to learn how to implement troop government and help girls take the lead.

## Troop Government is Hands-On Learning

Troop government is designed to be progressive, building on the skills learned in previous years, i.e. girl-led, learning-by-doing, and cooperative learning. Using a democratic form of troop government is one way to implement these processes because it gives girls the opportunity to lead the planning, decision-making, and activities, in their troop.

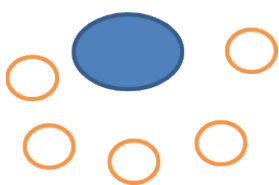
## What if girls have little or no experience in Troop Governance?

If older girls have not experienced making group decisions on their own, use a single-topic version of troop government styles. For instance the Town Meeting format and discuss what service project they would like to do, or use the Brownie Ring for talking and brainstorming. Once older girls are comfortable with these different styles, try adopting the Patrol system

## The Five Types of Troop Government

There are five traditional forms of Girl Scout troop government based on program grade-levels. Daisies can participate in the Daisy Circle and Brownies can form the Brownie Ring. Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors can choose from the Patrol, Executive Board, and Town Meeting system.

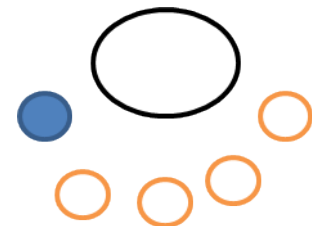
## 1. Girl Scout Daisy Circle



Girl Scout Daisies can help make some of the decisions about their troop through the Girl Scout Daisy Circle. Girls sit in a circle, with the troop leader as moderator. This should only last 5 to 10 minutes. Remember that Daisies need structure, so pick two or three choices at this age, for instance where to go for a fieldtrip.

## 2. Girl Scout Brownie Ring

The Girl Scout Brownie Ring is very similar to the Girl Scout Daisy Circle. Girls will sit in a ring. A girl ringleader begins the discussion with the leader's guidance. Girls can brainstorm ideas and activities. Be sure to give this leadership opportunity to every girl in the troop at some point during the year.

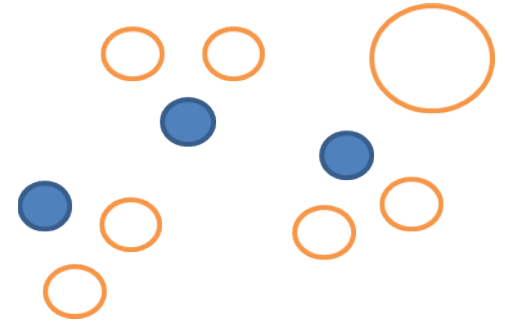


Brownies need structure and will need a set of rules to follow. Establish a structure for discussion time such as:

- Using a “talking buddy” – pick an object and the person holding it is the only one who should talk.
- Teach the girls the “quiet sign” – when someone raises their right hand, everyone must do the same and become quiet.
- Establish a troop rule that nobody criticizes any ideas that anyone offers in the group.

### 3. The Patrol System

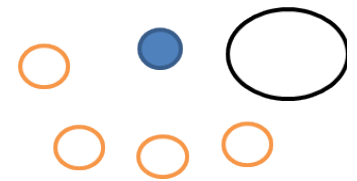
The Patrol System is one of three common forms used for older Girl Scouts and the most versatile of the systems of government. In the Patrol System, girls learn communication and decision-making skills by participating in smaller group discussions and then selecting a lead to represent their group. The troop is divided into smaller units called patrols. The ideal patrol size is about 5-8 girls. Each Patrol elects a Patrol Leader responsible for running their patrol meetings, and an Assistant Patrol Leader in case the Patrol Leader cannot make the meeting. All troop business can be handled in these patrols. Attendance and dues can be recorded by the patrols. For any given outing, chores may be divided up with each patrol responsible for its own task. The Patrol System works well for larger troops.



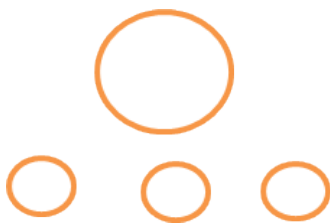
For the troop to run smoothly and as a group, Patrol Leaders should come together periodically (at least once a month) to discuss troop issues, plan events, and make group decisions, under the mentorship of the troop leaders, who can guide the decision-making process. This is called the "**Court of Honor**". Prior to the Court of Honor meeting, each patrol gives their input to the Patrol Leader who presents their viewpoint at the Court of Honor. Also included in the Court of Honor are any other troop officers such as Secretary and Treasurer. Patrol leaders communicate all decisions made in the Court of Honor back to their patrols. The Patrol System can be very successful, but only if the girls are given skills with which to succeed. Members of the patrol should rotate as Patrol Leaders so that everyone has an opportunity throughout the year.

### 4. Town Meeting

In a Town Meeting, the entire troop makes its decisions together. A Moderator is generally needed to lead group discussions. Officers such as Secretary and Treasurer may be elected if the troop feels that there is a need. This generally only works well in small groups but can work in large groups if the girls can stay on task.



### 5. Executive Board



The Executive Board consists of one leadership team, called "officers" of the troop. Girls should elect board positions, such as President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Job descriptions should be agreed upon as well as the duration of office. It is important, especially at the beginning of self-government, that everyone can participate at some time throughout the year. The Board holds meetings outside of the regular troop meetings to discuss troop matters. The Board should report to the troop on a regular basis regarding decisions made, and also seek feedback and input from the troop before final decisions are made. A simple suggestion box at troop meetings works well.

#### **Have patience and adjust as needed!**

The first few meetings may not be perfect and the discussions may not go as planned. Adjust how your meetings work based on the needs of you, your girls, and the troop as a whole.