

The National Unit Election Script

*[This script must be rehearsed in advance and read verbatim.
It should not be memorized.]*

OA Member A:

Fellow Scouts, we are here to help you elect candidates for membership in the Order of the Arrow. Our purpose is to support Scouting units by honoring the example of those who best live up to the Scout Oath and Law. The OA provides those you elect with an adventure experience to deepen their understanding of these principles and inspire them to greater service.

The only way a Scout can become a member of the Order of the Arrow is to be elected for this honor by the members of their unit. To be eligible, a youth must fulfill the camping requirement and hold the *[select one:]*

- Scouts BSA First Class rank
- Venturing Discovery Award
- Sea Scout Ordinary rank

or higher.

If you are elected, you become a candidate for membership. As a candidate, you are asked to undertake four tests in a day-long Ordeal. If you meet these challenges successfully, you will become an Ordeal member in _____ lodge. Our lodge has its own activities and projects, but your unit will remain the focus of your service.

During the six months after becoming an Ordeal member, you will begin to see the true value of the Ordeal experience. At the end of that time, if you are ready, you can seal your membership by choosing to become a Brotherhood member. Brotherhood membership opens up new horizons in Scouting.

OA Member B:

An Order of the Arrow election is not a popularity contest. We ask you not to vote for a Scout just because they are your friend, or because they are a good athlete, or because they are older. We ask you to vote for those you believe are best at following the Scout Oath and Law.

Campaigning in an Order of the Arrow election is not permitted. You must think for yourself and not let others influence your decision. The election is by secret ballot and no discussion is permitted, so no one will know for whom you are voting. This important decision about your fellow Scouts is entirely up to you.

All registered active members of this [troop / crew / ship], except those 21 or older, are entitled to vote. To be elected, a Scout must receive votes on at least half of the ballots submitted.

Before we announce the names of those eligible and begin the election, are there any questions?

[Answer any questions about the nature and purpose of the Order of the Arrow and the election procedure.]

The following members of this unit have met the camping and advancement requirements and are eligible for election, as certified by your unit leader. Please stand and form a line as your names are called.

[Point out a place to line up and read the list slowly. Arrange the eligible Scouts in a line facing the voters at the place indicated; the line can be semicircular if the eligible group is large. Write each name on a chalkboard or flip chart as it is called.]

You may vote for all of these eligible Scouts, or only some of them, or none. But listen to the following questions. Your answers will help you choose who should receive your votes.

OA Member C:

[Read slowly.]

Who in this group is a friend to all? Who is pleasant and easy to get along with? Are they kind and helpful? If you were a new Scout, would you like to hike and camp with them?

Who is cheerful, even when they have tiresome jobs to do? Who smiles whenever they can? Who obeys promptly and cheerfully? Do they control their temper? If you were at camp with them for several weeks, do you think you would enjoy it?

Who is always ready to give wholehearted service to others? Who, in serving others, can forget their own desires and interests? Who has served your unit all year round, faithfully attending your meetings and helping with your service projects? Do you think they will continue their service in the future? If you were their leader, could you depend on them?

Ask yourselves: who in this group, by living up to the Scout Oath and Law, serves your fellow Scouts with such an example of brotherhood and cheerfulness that you look up to them with respect and admiration?

OA Member B:

[To the eligible Scouts:]

You may be seated.

[Wait for them to be seated before continuing.]

On the ballot you will be given, print the first and last names of those on the list you think have set the best examples of brotherhood, cheerfulness, and service.

If you feel that no one is worthy, turn in an unmarked ballot. If you are new in the unit and do not know these Scouts well enough to vote wisely, you may abstain by not turning in a ballot at all, and this will not affect the final result. Those eligible for election also vote, and may vote for themselves if they feel worthy.

When you are finished, fold the ballot in half and give it to any member of the election team.

[Distribute election ballots and pencils at the start of voting, and collect them at the end. Count the votes in private with the unit leader and determine those who received votes on at least half of the ballots turned in. If a Scout or Scouts were elected, the election team then conducts the following Candidate Recognition before leaving the unit meeting. This recognition fulfills the requirement that candidates receive public recognition prior to the Ordeal, but the lodge/chapter may also conduct a call-out if desired.]

Candidate Recognition

OA Member A:

Before we read the names of the Scouts you have elected, look around you. Look at the faces of your friends, your fellow Scouts: those who are younger than you, those who are older. *[Pause.]*

What would it feel like if they said to you:

“I trust you. I watch you and learn from you.”

“I notice how you treat others, how you go out of your way to help them.”

What would it feel like if you knew they were following your lead—if they looked to you to set the example?

Each of you will experience this feeling sometime in your lives—perhaps many times. But the first time you realize your behavior is influencing the behavior of others may feel uncomfortable. You may not feel ready for the responsibility. You might begin to look inward, to really examine yourself, to consider whether you are truly being the kind of person you yourself would want to follow. But when you receive the regard of others it is also uplifting.

It is a “vote of confidence” in you.

This is the meaning of an Order of the Arrow election: you have given [one / some] among you a “vote of confidence.” You have also challenged them to undertake a journey, a quest to discover within themselves that which inspires us to be the best we can be.

OA Member B:

[Speaking to eligibles, but so that all can hear.]

If you are eligible but have not been elected this time, do not leave with a heavy heart. Instead, between now and the next election, accept the challenge and resolve to show that you are indeed worthy of this honor!

[Speaking to all.]

Scouts, you have selected the following as candidates for membership in the Order of the Arrow. When I call your name, please come forward and stand facing your fellow Scouts:

[Read the names, giving each time to come to the front before calling the next.]

We will now present [each of] you with a white ribbon that signifies you are [a candidate / candidates] for OA membership. Your candidacy is valid for one year from the date of this election. The ribbon represents the OA sash before the Arrow is revealed. You may wear it while you are a candidate on the right pocket of your uniform shirt until you complete the Ordeal.

[All members of the election team and any other OA members may present the ribbons. Presenter(s) will attach the ribbon, congratulate the candidate, and give them the Scout Handclasp.]

The white ribbon serves a very temporary purpose and is not intended as official uniform wear. It reminds elected Scouts that they are invited to an Ordeal, and reminds Scouts in their unit of the election, and that they marked that individual as worthy of the honor.

Each lodge makes their own ribbons from 7/8” wide plain white satin, polyester, cotton or grosgrain ribbon cut in 5” lengths. The ribbon may be attached with a safety pin to the right shirt pocket flap or, with a lengthwise slit near one end, buttoned onto the pocket button so that it hangs vertically.]

OA Member C:

[Speaking to the candidates, but so that all can hear.]

Friends, for you the journey begins here.

You may have thought no one was paying attention when you did the right thing, but you now know that others have noticed your friendliness, your cheerfulness, your readiness to serve—and they respect your example.

In honoring you, your friends have opened the way for you to undertake a personal adventure unlike anything you have experienced. From here, the path to membership leads first through the day of the Ordeal, continues through six months during which you will practice what you learn, and then to the firelight at the very heart of Brotherhood. It is a high adventure of the spirit. This is the gift the Order of the Arrow has offered every candidate for more than one hundred years. It is now our privilege to offer it to you.

Accepting this gift is up to you. But your companions have given you “a vote of confidence.” They believe in you. They know you can succeed.

OA Member A:

[To all the Scouts:]

Scouts, thank you for hosting us, and for participating in this significant event. We look forward to seeing more of you earn this honor in years to come. This concludes the election. Good camping and good night [day].

[Elected candidates are taken into a separate room where the election team again congratulates them, records necessary data, gives them a packet of information, and instructs them as to the dates, times, and location(s) of upcoming opportunities to participate in a Callout and/or Ordeal.]*

** The candidate’s information packet may include:*

- a. The fourfold purpose of the Order of the Arrow*
- b. A short history of the Order of the Arrow within Scouting*
- c. A short history of the local lodge*
- d. A letter of recognition and welcome from the Lodge Chief*
- e. Spirit of the Arrow booklet #1*
- f. Pertinent information about upcoming Ordeals*

The unit election team provides a visitation survey to the unit, and submits the results of the election to the appropriate lodge/chapter committee as promptly as possible.