

Middle School Reading Article

Meet the Teenage Girl Who Wants to Be a Boy Scout (1180)

Instructions: COMPLETE ALL QUESTIONS AND MARGIN NOTES using the CLOSE reading strategies practiced in class. This requires reading of the article three times.

Step 1: Skim the article using these symbols as you read:

(+) agree, (-) disagree, (*) important, (!) surprising, (?) wondering

Step 2: Number the paragraphs. **Read** the article **carefully** and **make notes in the margin**.

Notes should include:

- Comments that show that you **understand** the article. (A summary or statement of the main idea of important sections may serve this purpose.)
- Questions you have that show what you are **wondering** about as you read.
- Notes that differentiate between **fact** and **opinion**.
- Observations about how the **writer's strategies** (organization, word choice, perspective, support) and choices affect the article.

Step 3: A final quick read noting anything you may have missed during the first two reads.

Your **margin notes** are part of your score for this assessment. Answer the questions carefully in **complete sentences** unless otherwise instructed.

Student _____ Class Period _____

Meet The Teenage Girl Who Wants to Be A Boy Scout

According to the Boy Scout Law, "a Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent." But does a Boy Scout *have* to be a boy?

Sydney Ireland has been involved with scouting since she was four years old, when she began tagging along with her older brother to Cub Scout meetings. Since then, she has been an unofficial, but enthusiastic, member of Troop 414 in Manhattan.

Now she is 16, and she's pushing Boy Scouts of America to allow girls like her to become official members. Over the years, Sydney's activities with the troop have included camping trips, hiking, archery, ice climbing and, yes, knot-tying. As a city kid, she has learned to cherish a connection to the outdoors and she credits the Boy Scouts for helping to foster it.

But although the local troop has welcomed Sydney's participation, she is not able to officially earn merit badges and advance in rank along with the boys around her, because she is a girl. According to national policy, the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts only enroll boys — including transgender boys, as of earlier this year.

But Sydney is a girl. And, to her, the policy doesn't feel fair. For the last few years, she has been asking the Boy Scouts of America to let girls officially join through letters to national leadership, public op-eds and a Change.org petition. "I just want to see a change," she said. "Right now they're discriminating against girls, and I'm just calling it as it is."

Notes on my thoughts, reactions and questions as I read:

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The Boy Scouts of America declined an interview and would not comment on whether the organization plans to review their policy. However, Director of Communications Effie Delimarkos did say that the organization "continually works with Scout Executives to evaluate and improve programs to better serve youth participants."

Delimarkos also wrote: "We understand the values and lessons of Scouting are attractive to the entire family. The Boy Scouts of America serves boys and young men through the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, which are year-round programs specifically for boys in the first grade through age 18."

Delimarkos noted that the Boy Scouts of America does offer co-ed programs, such as an outdoor adventure initiative called Venturing. But Venturing starts only at age 14, and it does not offer the same opportunities to earn merit badges as the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts do. Sydney specifically wants a shot at becoming an Eagle Scout, like her older brother, Bryan.

Sydney has earned ample support for her endeavor, including from fellow scouts and the National Organization for Women. But her critics inevitably ask the same question: Why don't you just join the Girl Scouts? "I know that almost everything that the Boy Scouts do, I want to do," Sydney said. "And if they're identical programs, then why are they separate?"

The Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts are two distinct, private organizations. While there may be some overlap in activities or their core missions of fostering leadership skills, they offer different programs. Even the Girl Scouts say as much. "No, we're not meant to be the girl equivalent of the Boy Scouts," said Andrea Bastiani Archibald, who serves as the "Chief Girl Expert," at Girl Scouts of the USA.

Archibald does tout the Girl Scouts as a group that is welcoming to all girls and their interests, be it art or the outdoors. "But if it doesn't feel right for them," Archibald said, "I really laud their parents and those girls for finding space that is."

Sydney takes scouting and the skills involved so seriously that she has sought membership in troops outside the U.S. She is a full, dues-paying member of a troop in Ontario, Canada — one of dozens of countries with co-ed scouting. In fact, Sydney recently earned the Chief Scout's Award, Canada's highest honor in scouting, and has the badge and a letter of congratulations from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to show for it.

But she is determined to become an Eagle Scout as a full member of Troop 414, reaching the top achievement of an organization she has been part of nearly her entire life.

Notes on my thoughts, reactions and questions as I read:

This article addresses the following CCSS ELA Standards in addition to those noted.

*7/8.W.1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
7/8.L.1,2,3,4,5,6,
7/8.SL.1,2,3,4,5,6*

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Comprehension questions – answers may be in phrases.

1. *What specific Boy Scout program is available beginning at age 14?*
2. *List three methods Ireland has used to convince the Boy Scouts to let her join.*
3. *Define **laud** as used in the article.*
4. *What country allows girls to join the scout troops?*
5. *Define **sought** as used in the text.*

7/8.RI.4,5

Answer each question in one or more complete sentences and by providing complete explanations.

1. *Explain the use of the italicized word in paragraph one.*
2. *Explain the purpose of each comma in paragraph one.*

7/8.RI.4

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3. *You are an executive in the Boy Scouts organization and are tasked with writing a one-paragraph statement in support of or against allowing Sydney Ireland to be an official Boy Scout. Clearly state your position in a well-developed paragraph citing evidence from the text.*

7/8.RI.1,3,6,8

4. *In what year did Sydney Ireland begin “tagging along with her brother” to scouting activities? State your answer in a complete sentence; show your work.*

7/8.RI.1,5