

Today's malls--a relic of the past or a central and vital part of today's society? Most communities have a central shopping area, which not only provides convenient shopping, but also a wonderful opportunity for learning. Go explore and consider what a mall really has to offer.

Girls should select, either individually or as a troop/group, which requirements they would like to do from the two sections below, appropriate to their age level:



Requirements:

- Girl Scout Junior: Complete four requirements - two from each section.
- Girl Scout Cadette: Complete five requirements – three from Educate and two from Experience section.
- Girl Scout Senior: Complete six requirements – three from each section.
- Girl Scout Ambassador: Complete seven requirements – four from Educate and three from Experience

Section I: Educate

We all know that a mall is a place to shop, but what is the importance of a mall to a community? How do you think it is determined that a mall will be built? Pick an existing mall and look into its history. What obstacles did it encounter when it was proposed? What pros and cons were discussed? Has it lived up to the expectations of the community and the developer? How does it generate and recycle revenue? What environmental concerns are involved in the creation of a mall?

While visiting a mall, notice its layout and architectural design. Discuss with an architect, or architectural student, the importance of a mall's design. Are there any special ideas or reasons behind its design? Is it easily accessible to the general public by car or public transportation? Does it have ample parking spaces? Is it designed to accommodate the physically disabled? How important is the landscaping to the appearance and appeal of the mall?

The "behind the scenes" of a mall can be fascinating. Make arrangements with a representative of a mall's/store's management team to discuss with you some of the following: their usage of computer technology for security, communications, energy conservation, electricity and its costs. Who is responsible for running and paying for these operations? Where does the revenue come from?

With more and more people becoming aware of the importance of ecology and recycling, find out how a mall, or a store in the mall, participates in the recycling process and waste management. How do they reduce and reuse their paper and plastic items? How is the waste dealt with each day?

The mall offers a vast number of career and job opportunities. Select one that might interest you and research the skills and training required to obtain that position. Are men and women equally represented in this field? What are the benefits offered? What are the opportunities for advancement?

Discuss with an older parent, grandparent, or a person in your community, what shopping was like when they were your age. Was there a special day they shopped? Where did they shop and did they have to travel a long distance to shop? What were the stores like? How were they served in the stores? How has this changed over the years?

Section II: Experience

When looking through advertisements, you will often see the phrase “Manufacturer’s Suggested Retail Price.” Find at least four advertisements with items of clothing, or cosmetics, or dishes, or bedding, or anything that has a selling price or “Manufacturer’s Suggested Retail Price” listed. Try to find the same items at several different stores and compare the actual selling price to that of the advertised price. Is the price the same as, or is it higher or lower than the advertised price? Would you always buy the item at the lower price?

Most of the larger malls have food courts that represent menus from many different countries. Sample something that you have never tasted before and see if you like it. How are the ingredients different to what you are used to? Does the climate, economy, or geographic location, from which the food originates, have anything to do with the way the ingredients are used or the way the food is prepared?

The mall is a place in which thousands of people pass through each day. Therefore it could offer a wonderful opportunity for you to promote an activity, program or product. Help set up a Girl Scout display. Not only could this be fun, it may also be a great recruiting, registration or selling project. Check first with the management of the mall whether they are willing to accommodate this.

Help plan a scavenger hunt at the mall. The hunt should not consist of items hidden in the stores, but rather lead you around the mall. Use the Mall’s Directory to guide you. You may plan the scavenger hunt for a younger group or divide your own group in half and have one group plan a scavenger hunt for the other group, and vice versa.

Health and nutrition have become an increasingly important concern for many people today, as is reflected by the increase of naturally grown foods and health stores. Discuss with your parents, or doctor, or school nutritionist, the importance of good nutrition. Which vitamins and food groups are required to satisfy your daily needs? Visit a health/nutritional store and examine the products sold in these stores. How do they relate to what you have learned about your daily nutritional needs?

How do you picture the mall of the future? Will it be the center of the community, or will it be a relic of the past? Individually, or as a group, design a “Mall of the Future.”

Visit an environmental or an import store. Note how many different products there are, and of what they are made. Make a list of the different countries from which these products come. Try and make your own version, i.e.: a rainstick, a drum, paper, a candle, or jewelry.

Either individually or as a troop/group, plan and carry out your own experience “on the mall”!

Written by Senior Girl Scout, Lisa Howard April 1, 1995, as part of her Gold Award project.