

## *Geocacher*

## Junior *aMUSE* badge

Geocaching is your chance to be part global explorer, part detective. You'll search for treasure chests know as "geocaches," using a device called a GPS receiver to find each chest's secret hiding place. Get ready for a thrilling adventure!

### *Steps*

1. Prepare for your adventure
2. Learn to use a GPS receiver
3. Make a trade item
4. Go on a geocaching adventure
5. Take part in a bug's travels!

### *Purpose*

When I've earned this badge, I'll know how to have a geocaching adventure.

## Step 1 Prepare for your adventure

The goal of a geocaching adventure is to find a geocache, or hidden treasure box. You'll use GPS "clues" to uncover treasures that most people don't know exist. There are over one million hidden geocaches all over the world! Before you get started, get expert information.

### CHOICES - DO ONE:

With an adult, visit an official geocaching site. It might be [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) or [www.navicache.com](http://www.navicache.com).

FOR MORE FUN: Get the geocaching slang! Find out what these different terms mean: FTF, waypoint, CITO, TFTC, terrain rating.

OR

Invite a geocacher to talk to you about their adventures. Perhaps you can ask an older Girl Scout?

FOR MORE FUN: Brainstorm new activities that would use a GPS receiver. Make a cool ad that describes your new sport and encourages others to join.

OR

Attend a geocaching event. Talk to the adventurers themselves. You might ask, what's the coolest thing you've ever found in a geocache? How long have you been geocaching?

## Step 2 Learn to use a GPS receiver

To find your way to a hidden geocache, you need to zero in on its "coordinates." Coordinates are measurements called longitude and latitude. Longitude is where something is on Earth East to West. Latitude measures distances between the North and South Poles. Where these two meet gives an exact location. Practice!

CHOICES - DO ONE:

Find the GPS coordinates of three things. They could be a neighborhood stop sign, a mark on the sidewalk, and your favorite tree.

OR

Hide an item for a friend to find. Give them the GPS coordinates of the item, and help them if they get stuck. Then have them hide an item for you to find.

OR

Go on a photo hunt. Ask an adult to take photos of three things along a safe route - perhaps a mailbox, a flower, and a street sign. The adult should give you the photos in the order they appear along the route plus the coordinates for each. With your Girl Scout friends, go out and find the things in the photos!

For More Fun: Make it a challenge - ask for two sets of photos along the same route, and see who can find all her targets first.

## Step 3 Experience daily life

Before you start out on an adventure, you need to carry an item that you'll leave at the geocache. This item has to be small enough to fit inside the box and should not be expensive. Some common items are sports trading cards and small toys.

CHOICES - DO ONE:

Make something that represents Girl Scouts. Is there a symbol of something that your group did together? It might be a patch or a SWAP. Or you could create an object that inspires others to Take Action, like a list of recycling tips.

OR

Make a piece of jewelry. Why not make a prize for someone to wear? Know a friendship bracelet or work with charms to make a bangle. (Need more inspiration? Try the Jewelry Badge!)

OR

Make something that represents you. You could make a drawing, a collage of magazine pictures, or a painted seashell. To be safe, don't leave personal photos of any kind.

### *Safety Tip*

Remember, when making a trade item, never include personal information (like your name, phone number, or address).

## Step 4 Go on a geocaching adventure

Now it's time to get out there and find a geocache! With an adult, log on to a geocaching website and create a screen name for yourself or your group. Find out how many geocaches are within a 25 mile radius of where you are. Then pick a choice to help you decide which geocache to go after – and how to plan your Adventure Day!

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Make it a hiking adventure. Get out of your community and into the wild. Track down a cache that is a little bit off the beaten trail. Maybe you can explore a new place you have always wanted to visit, and pack a picnic!

OR

Take a multi-cache adventure. They can be a little more work, but twice the fun. Could you bring a special snack to munch when you find each geocache?

OR

Go on a themed adventure. Some geocaches are themed from the clues to the container to the prizes inside. See if you can find a geocache that has a theme – it may be about a movie or an animal.

### *More to Explore*

Have a "Cache In Trash Out" hunt. "Cache In, Trash Out" (CITO) is a hunt where geocachers collect litter along the trails and properly dispose of it after finding a geocache. See if there's a CITO event in your community to join or have one with your Junior friends.

## Step 5 Take part in a bug's travels!

A Travel Bug™ travels from cache to cache - sometimes all across the world. Each bug wears a "tag" with a special number. When you enter the number on [geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com), you can see everywhere the bug has gone. (Whoever hides the bug decides where they want it to travel called a goal. When a geocacher finds the bug in a cache they move the bug to help it reach the goal.)

### CHOICES - DO ONE:

Make a bug go around the world. Get a Travel Bug ([shop.groundspeak.com](http://shop.groundspeak.com)), log on to [www.geocaching.com/track/how\\_to.aspx](http://www.geocaching.com/track/how_to.aspx) and follow the instructions for "Dropping off a Travel Bug.™" (Answers to common questions can be found at: [www.geocaching.com/track/faq.aspx](http://www.geocaching.com/track/faq.aspx) ) and make its goal international travel. You could write "Please, take me to the Great Wall of China" or "This bug would like to take a tour of London."

For More Fun: Attach your Travel Bug™ to a small stuffed animal or doll. What about a doll you make yourself?

OR

Have your bug follow the girls! Hide a bug with the goal to travel to Girl Scout or Girl Guide places around the country or the world. Your instructions could be, "I would like to make it to Our Chalet in Switzerland" or "I would like to be found by Girl Scouts in Georgia."

OR

Track a bug's travels. Go to [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com) and find a Travel Bug™ that's been to at least four places. On a map (existing or draw your own), chart the bug's voyage. What can you find out about each area it's visited?

For More Fun: See if you can find a geocache with a Travel Bug™ in it. Track your find online then help the bug reach its goal.

### Add the badge to your Journey

When you do step 3, try making something that inspires whoever finds it to think about stereotypes that impact girls – and bust them, too. You could make a Dez the spider trade item, and imagine what she would say to those who find her.

### Not that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Teaching my friends how to use a GPS receiver
- Creating a photo hunt for younger girls
- Start a geocaching club at my school

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*I'm inspired to.*