

Two young men, one Black and one white, both wearing glasses and smiling, stand outdoors by a lake. They are wearing light green button-down shirts with red accents and patches. The man on the left has his arm around the man on the right. The background shows a calm lake and a dense forest of green trees under a bright sky.

Freedom Board of Review

SAMPLE QUESTIONS





Dear Freedom Board of Review Committee Members,

Thank you for choosing to utilize this resource and the guidance compiled by Freedom Rangeman Association as you play an integral part in welcoming new Freedom Rangeman to the peak of the Trail Life program. You will play a huge role in ensuring that the Trailmen candidates that stand before you have not only completed all of the requirements but demonstrate the character and Christian values of a Freedom Rangeman.

This Freedom Board of Review guide combines the recommendations of Freedom Rangemen from across the country. It contains guidance for structuring your Board, a sample checklist of "requirements", and supplemental questions you may use. It also contains general recommendations on how to make your Freedom Board of Review an optimal experience for both your committee and the Freedom Award candidate. This resource utilizes the available resources from Trail Life USA but also expands further. This guide is simply provided as a resource, not a requirement. Please make the Freedom Board of Review your own and adapt the parts of this guide to your individual, unique needs.

As previously mentioned, this guide was compiled with the help of Freedom Rangeman across the country. It was written by young men who have sat in the same seat your Freedom candidate will be sitting. We have asked ourselves what we believe every Freedom Rangeman should be able to speak diligently and confidently to, as well as what types of questions may be difficult to answer because of the vastness of experiences a Freedom Award candidate has in Trail Life. We all agree that these areas and questions are of extreme importance and should be able to be answered by anyone receiving Trail Life's pinnacle award. As Proverbs 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

Walk Worthy!

The FRA Committee Team

THE FREEDOM RANGEMAN ASSOCIATION (FRA) COMMITTEE TEAM

General Guidance

The Board of Review for the Freedom Award is different from any other Board of Review in which the Trailman has participated. The members of the Board of Review are not all from his Troop Committee. Introductions are essential, and a few "break in" questions may be appropriate.

The questions for the Freedom Award are less factual, and generally seek to aid understanding of how Trail Life USA has become an integral part of the Trailman's life. However, questions like, "Where did you learn about ..." or "Why do you think it is important for a [rank] Trailman to have this skill?" are valid.

Though one reason for a Board of Review is to help ensure the Trailman did what he was supposed to do to meet the requirements, it should be neither a retest or "examination," nor a challenge of his knowledge. It should, instead, be a celebration of accomplishment. Remember, it is more about the journey. The Freedom Award recognizes what a young man has done toward achieving the primary goal of personal growth.

The following questions are provided as a resource for Freedom Board of Review committee members to use at their own convenience. We recommend that the Board asks at least one question from each of the six categories while also asking at least one question about each "step" to the Freedom Award (i.e., Trail Badges, Worthy Life award, Freedom Experiences, Servant Service, Troop Activities, Leadership Experiences, and the Servant Leadership Project). The aim of each section is provided in this guide as a checklist; the Board may use the questions contained within each section to ensure that the Freedom Award candidate has satisfied each section's purpose.

Almost all adults would admit to nervousness if told they were to appear before a "board of review." Imagine how a boy must feel. A certain level of formality and meaningful questioning should exist, but it is important that the atmosphere be relaxed and that the review is conducted with this in mind. It may help if the Troop Leader introduces the candidate and if a few minutes are spent getting acquainted.

The Troop Leader may remain in the room, but only to observe, not to participate unless called upon. The number of "observers" at a Board of Review should otherwise be minimized. The members of the Board of Review, however, have the authority to exclude any leader or any other observers if they believe their presence will inhibit open and forthright discussion. Youth observers are not permitted at Freedom Boards of Review.



General Guidance

It is a best practice for the Trailman’s parents, relatives, or guardians to not be in attendance in any capacity—not as members of the Board, as observers, or even as the Troop Leader. Their presence can change the discussion dynamics. In cases where parents or guardians insist on attending a Board of Review, they should be counseled that their presence can change how their son addresses questions, and that the opportunity to further self-reliance and courage may be lessened. However, if parents or guardians still insist on being present, they must be permitted to attend as observers.

The following is a suggested order for the Freedom Board of Review:

1. Trailman arrives for the Freedom Award Board of Review on time, in Uniform. The tone of the Board of Review should be “friendly but business-like.”
2. Trailman announces himself and purpose, “Trailman Jake Dodson reporting for my Freedom Award Board of Review.” The Trailman should address adults by last name with Mr., Mrs., or Ms.
3. Trailman is asked to pray and recite the Trailman Oath before being invited to be seated.
4. Chairman of the Board introduces the Board members, indicating any relationship that would be familiar to the Trailman.
5. Board then spends time asking a series of questions related to the Trailman’s journey in Trail Life. Please note that “this process is not intended as a defense of the Trailman’s previously documented achievements, but rather to assess the overall readiness of the Trailman to achieve the sought-after rank or award.” (Parent and Leader Leader Guide, 2023, page 81)
6. The Trailman is asked to step outside while the Board deliberates. This is not a “rubberstamp” process. Approval can be deferred by the Board if they found any response lacking or the Trailman was not engaged in the Review.
7. The Trailman is then asked to return. The spokesman for the Board will announce to the Trailman if they have been approved or been deferred. If the Board has decided to defer approval, they will instruct the Trailman what they felt was lacking, and instruct the Trailman to discuss it with their Adventurer Advisor.



Board of Review Checklist

OATH & MOTTO

The Freedom Award candidate is able to recite the Trail Life Oath and Motto and explain how these are applied in his life.

VALUES

The Freedom Award candidate understands the values of a Trailman and is living according to the Biblical standard given in God's Word.

ADVANCEMENT

The Freedom Award candidate has gained useful knowledge and skill from Trail Badges and other Trail Life experiences.

LEADERSHIP

The Freedom Award candidate has demonstrated Christian leadership in his Troop, community, and family. He has gained skills and learned lessons from his experiences.

IMPACT

The Freedom Award candidate has been impacted by the Trail Life USA program and both has and will continue to positively impact others.

FUTURE

The Freedom Award candidate has a positive, Christ-centered outlook on his future. The aim of this section is not for the candidate to necessarily have a clear plan for his future in terms of college and career.

WORLDVIEW

The Freedom Award candidate has a solid worldview according to Trail Life USA's Principles of a Christian Worldview and has the foundation needed to stand firmly on his Christian convictions.

Board of Review Questions

VALUES (Trail Life Oath & Motto, Worthy Life)

- Can you please recite the Trail Life USA Oath and Motto?
- What does the Trail Life Oath mean to you?
- How have you applied the Trail Life USA Oath and Motto in your daily life?
- How have you grown in your knowledge of Jesus Christ through Trail Life?
- How have you served God and your country throughout your time in Trail Life?
- Explain why you chose the activities you did for the Adventurer Worthy Life award?
- What did you learn from your Devotional Activity for the Adventurer Worthy Life award?

ADVANCEMENT (Trail Badges, Freedom Experiences)

- What is the most useful skill you learned through Trail Life?
- What Rank was the most challenging to earn and why?
- How have you used skills and knowledge from the Trail Badges outside of Trail Life?
- Which Trail Badge would you go back and do over to learn more from and why?
- If you had to make one of your Elective Trail Badges required, which one would you choose and why?
- Why did you choose the Freedom Experiences you did?

LEADERSHIP (Leadership Experiences, Servant Service, Servant Leadership Project)

- What leadership roles and responsibilities helped prepare you for your Servant Leadership Project?
- What do you think is the most important skill for a leader and why?
- Why did you choose the Servant Leadership Project you did?
- What part of your Servant Leadership Project was the most challenging and why?
- If you were to manage another project similar to your Servant Leadership Project, what would you do differently to make the project better or easier?
- What is one lesson you learned in a Trail Life leadership experience?
- How have you been a servant leader in the community?



IMPACT (Troop Activities, Servant Service, Leadership Experiences)

- What type of impact do you think you have left on younger Trailmen? How?
- What is your most memorable camping experience?
- How has the knowledge and skills you gained in Trail Life affected other parts of your life?
- Other than your parents, who do you think has influenced your life the most? Why?
- What experiences have you had that you wish every other Trailmen would have?
- How have you left an impact on your community?
- What is your favorite thing about your Troop?
- If you had the power to change one thing about your Troop, what would you change and why?
- What about your Troop's outdoor program maintained your interest in Trail Life?
- How is Trail Life valued in your home, patrol, school, church, and community?
- If you had the power to change one thing about Trail Life, what would you change and why?
- What do you think is the single biggest issue facing Trail Life in the future?

FUTURE (Freedom Experiences, Trail Badges, Leadership Experiences)

- How has your experience in Trail Life prepared you for your future aspirations?
- Which Freedom Experience has prepared you the most for your future career?
- Did any Trail Badges teach you skills that you will use regularly in the future?
- Where do you see yourself in one year? Five years? Ten years?
- Do you plan to stay involved in Trail Life after earning the Freedom Award? How?
- How do you plan to be a leader in the future?
- Where do you feel God is calling you?
- How do you plan to serve your country and community in the future?

WORLDVIEW

- What does the Bible say about a man's role in the family? What about in society?
- How can you live according to God's law when man's law is contradictory?
- How should Christians live in an evil society?
- What does it mean to be a good steward of creation?
- Why do bad things happen if a perfect God exists?

