



***"I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble."***

—Helen Keller,  
American activist



# Independence

**A**s you grow up, it's time to start taking care of yourself. It's a big task, but it can be fun to get to know yourself and what you're capable of! These steps will start you on the road to riding solo, so you can feel confident on your own, show your family they can trust you, and get comfortable striding down your path to changing the world!

## ***Steps***

1. Get transportation smart
2. Make your clothes look great
3. Break a bad habit
4. Help around the house
5. Show off your independence!

## ***Purpose***

When I've earned this badge, I'll feel more confident doing things on my own—and know how to help others be confident in me.

STEP

# 1 Get transportation smart

It's fun to get around by yourself, but first you have to know how. Get more transportation savvy in one of these ways.

### CHOICES - DO ONE:

#### Get a bike ready to ride.

Ask a bike expert to help you go through all of the parts of the bike. Use the bike safety checklist at right.

**FOR MORE FUN:** Take a short bike trip. Speak to your family about whether you need to bring an adult along—and be sure to wear a helmet, and review the rules of the road before you go!

OR

**Help take care of a car.** With a parent or car-smart adult, go over all the lights and gauges on the dashboard and what they mean. Then look under the hood for a safety check. Follow the checklist at right and see if the car is ready for an adventure.

OR

**Use public transportation.** Figure out how you'd run an errand or get to the nearest shopping center using buses, trains, or subways. Map out which bus or train you'd take, how long it would take to get there, and how much it would cost. Then, with an adult, test out the route.

**FOR MORE FUN:** Think of a place you've always wanted to visit, and plan how you might get there. Plane, train, or car? How much would it cost?

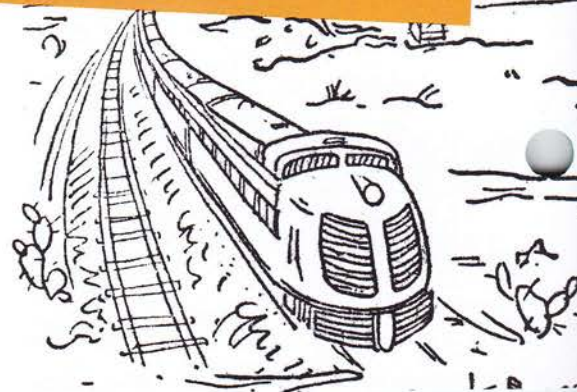
Every step has three choices. Do ONE choice to complete each step. Inspired? Do more!

### Bike Checklist:

- ✓ **Seat:** Is it the right height for you?
- ✓ **Handlebars:** Do they feel comfortable when you ride?
- ✓ **Brakes:** Are they working and not sticking?
- ✓ **Chain:** Is it oiled and working properly?
- ✓ **Tires:** Do they have enough air?

### Car Checklist

- ✓ **Oil:** Make sure the oil level is correct and find out what kind of oil your family's car takes.
- ✓ **Windshield washing fluid:** Make sure there's enough and add some if needed.
- ✓ **Lights:** Have a parent push on the brakes and turn on the headlights. Make sure they're all working.





## STEP 2 Make your clothes look great

Part of being independent is taking charge of your wardrobe.

### CHOICES – DO ONE:

- Become a laundry expert.** To be fashionable, you need clothes to wear! Get familiar with the machines, how to get out stains, and how to wash and dry different kinds of fabrics (look on clothing tags for tips about each item). Then be your family's helper and do three or more loads for practice.

**FOR MORE FUN:** Create a family quiz and try to stump them all with your super laundry skills. Look on the next page for some quiz-question ideas.

OR

- Learn two basic sewing skills—and use them as a fashion designer.** The coolest clothes are totally original—and something you make yourself is always original. Ask an expert to help you learn to sew on a button, patch, or to do a basic hand stitch. Then use your new skills to decorate old jeans, a T-shirt, or a sweater.

**FOR MORE FUN:** Have a fashion show with friends to show off your designs.

OR

- Try on the role of clothes-organization guru.** Find a book or website with tips on organizing space, and use them to organize your closet (or the area where you keep your clothes). You might sort by color or length, make a shoe rack, use labeled clear plastic boxes or shoe boxes to hold different kinds of items (or accessories), decorate hangers . . . the ideas are endless.

**FOR MORE FUN:** Do some “design consulting” by helping a friend organize her clothes, and ask her to consult for you.



### *Fashion Design Idea*

**Switch out buttons on a sweater. Instead of them being all the same, mix and match and sew on new ones that fit your personality.**



## Life is Like Laundry . . . Loads of Fun!

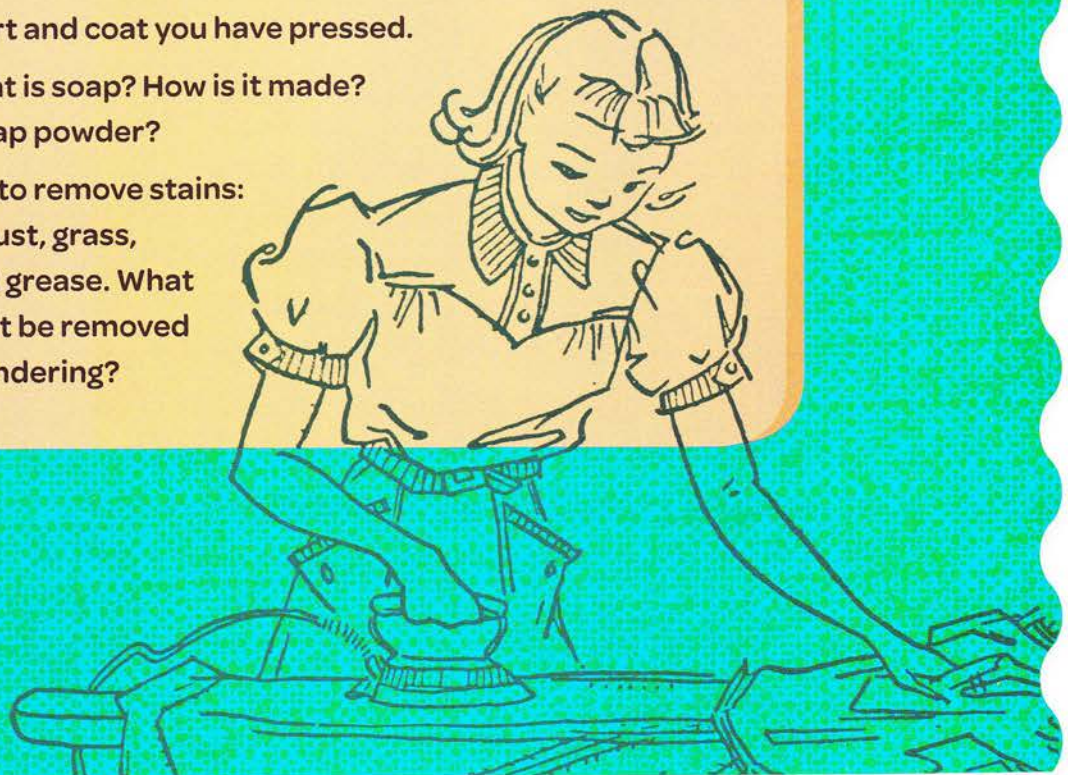


Laundress badge  
1913-1938

It might not seem exciting at first, but knowing how to take care of your own clothes is a skill you'll always be glad to have. If you sing a song, put on some **great music**, or make the chore a kind of meditation, it'll be **fun**. Some people like to post inspirational quotes in their laundry area to remind them to take a load off . . . what would **inspire** you?

If you chose to become a laundry expert in step 2, here's some inspiration—serious laundering skills past Girl Scouts learned to earn the **Laundress badge**. Some might be great additions to your super laundry quiz.

- Know the heights at which you can, with the least fatigue, use a laundry tub and an ironing board.
- Show that you can wash cotton, woolen, or silk stockings.
- Show a blouse that you have starched and folded.
- Show a skirt and coat you have pressed.
- Know: What is soap? How is it made? What is soap powder?
- Know how to remove stains: ink, fruit, rust, grass, cocoa, and grease. What stains must be removed before laundering?



## STEP 3 Break a bad habit

Part of being more independent is practicing good habits. Work on changing one bad habit—experts say it takes two weeks to create a new one to replace it. Choose a habit you have and want to work on from one of the categories, and follow the steps to change it.

### CHOICES – DO ONE:

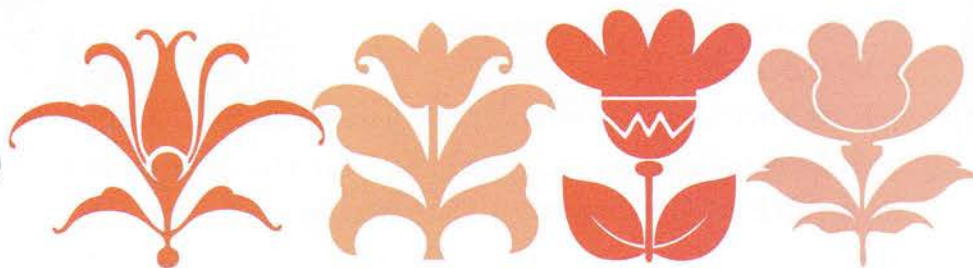
**At school.** Habits like putting schoolwork off until the last minute, forgetting to study for a quiz, or being disorganized when bringing schoolwork to and from home.

OR 

**At home.** Habits like forgetting to brush your teeth, not putting away your clothes, arguing with siblings, or eating too much junk food.

OR 

**With your friends.** Habits like being bossy with your friends, talking too much about yourself, or interrupting when your friend is talking.



## STEPS TO CHANGE A HABIT

1. It's easier to break a habit when you know why you do it in the first place. Ask yourself when you do it, and how you feel before, during, and after. The answers should give you some clues to your why.
2. Think about the effects of your habit. How does it make you feel? How does it affect others? How would you both feel if you changed that habit?
3. Now, find something positive to replace the habit. The key is to break the old routine around that habit.
4. Practice, practice, practice! Practice your new habit until you can't remember what it was like to do the old one.

*Tip:* Reward yourself for success. At the end of one week, do something nice for yourself. At the end of two weeks, reward yourself again. You can also look and listen to find inspiration around you—has anyone noticed your improvement?



## STEP 5 Show off your independence!

Now that you've been working on being more independent for a few weeks, you're ready to be responsible for yourself. Check with your family when choosing an activity—you may need to adjust a choice based on family rules.

### CHOICES – DO ONE:

**Stay home alone.** Hang out at home for a few hours while your family is gone. Before they go, talk about who you should call in an emergency and rules of the house. You could use the quiet time to de-stress or watch a movie, or play your favorite music and make up an independence dance.

**OR** 

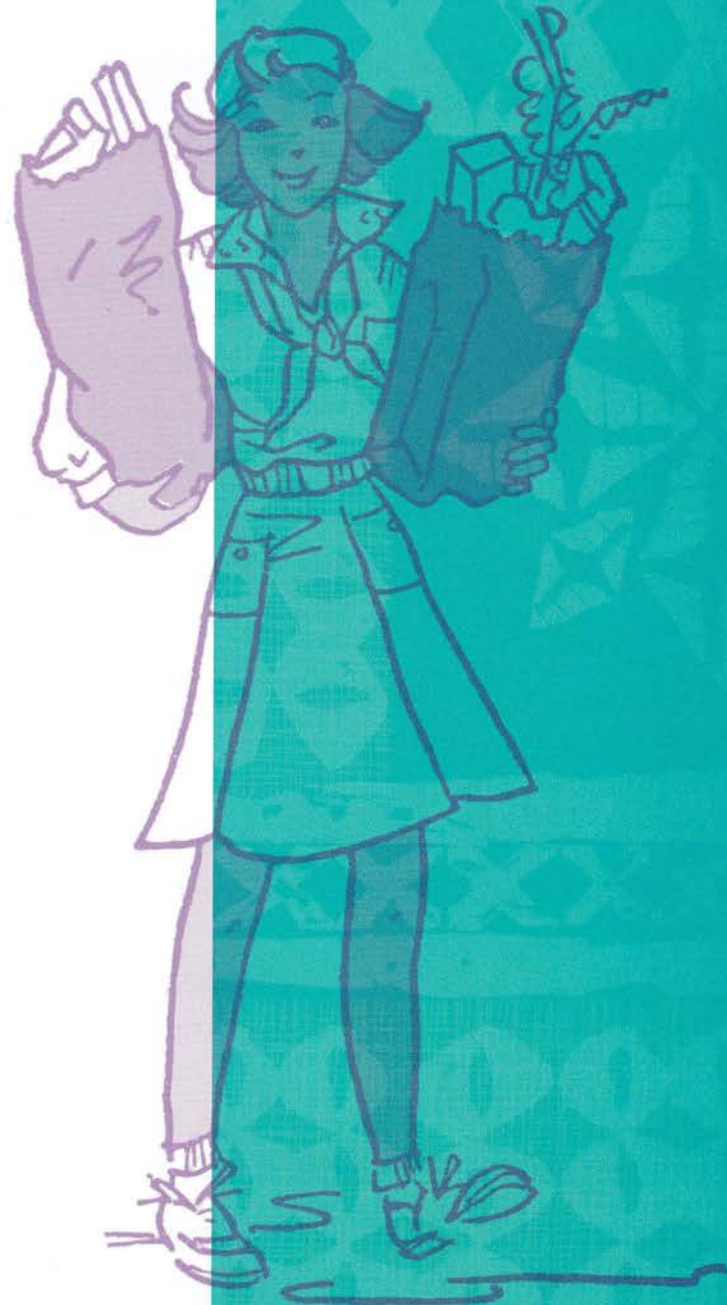
**Run a family errand.** Part of being independent is letting others know they can depend on you. Show you're dependable by mastering an errand. You could make a grocery list, then have a parent drop you off to shop and pick you up when you're done—or ask them to spend time at a place close by while you do the errand.

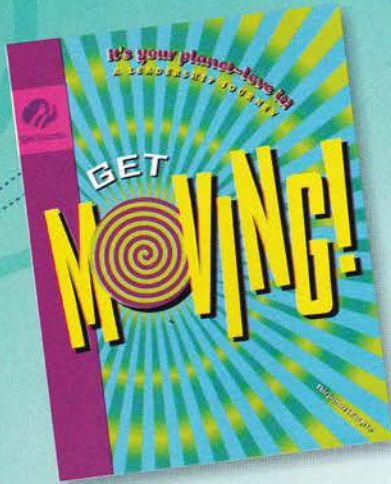
**OR** 

**Go out with a friend.** Go out to see a movie or eat a meal. If you aren't yet allowed to go alone, see if you might be allowed to sit by yourselves and order by yourselves. Then figure out what kind of money is needed to pay and tip, and how much change you should get.

### Words Worth Knowing

To **TROUBLESHOOT** means to solve problems. You'll notice the term in the instruction manuals for appliances.





### *Add the Badge to Your Journey*

Make your energy pledge by adding “and save energy” to any of the five steps in this badge—or to each of them. How much energy can you and your family save, and how much fun can you have doing it? Walking to school? Hanging up clothes to dry? Fixing a drafty window? Heading toward independence gives you a chance to take the lead.

### **Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:**

- Helping a friend hang her favorite poster
- Sharing in the family errands
- Riding my bike to save gas



*I'm inspired to:*