

Brainstorming is a unique process by which ideas can be created and problems can be solved.

Brainstorming is an easily misunderstood term however. There is a very specific process for how brainstorming works. In the Scout Programs of Adventure Scouts USA, our Scouts use brainstorming techniques to determine where to go on camping trips, plan parties, and come up with new ideas for activities.

Brainstorming is a creative thinking process. We instill in our Scouts both creative and critical thinking. Brainstorming allows our Scouts to use their imaginations to come up with new ideas. Many businesses today refer to this as “thinking outside the box”. Brainstorming introduces our Scouts to the concept of thinking creatively.

## Objective

The first step to brainstorming is to agree on the objective. In our Scout Programs, our Scouts could agree they are picking an activity for the weekend. It is important for all members to agree upon the objective first.



## Ideas

Second, the members brainstorm by coming up with possible ideas and solutions. Brainstorming has an agreed upon time limit. For a weekend activity, our Scouts might choose camping, horseback riding, or playing video games. It is extremely important not to degrade anyone's opinion. If some solutions are considered more viable than others, those decisions are made later, and always in a respectful manner. Since we are a Scout Program by the Scouts, for the Scouts, it is essential that we respect speakers by not interrupting them or putting down their thoughts.

### Organization

Third, members take the new ideas and categorize them. Which ideas go together? Could some be done at the same time? Are some repetitious and so could be eliminated?

Our Scouts might decide that a vote to go to the zoo and a vote to visit a reptile sanctuary are close enough that they may be done together.

### Analyzing

Fourth, the members assess and analyze the results. Results are narrowed down both by viability and by popularity of the request. Ideas are also refined to see which are most doable. If our Scouts choose to go camping, where should they camp? Perhaps a trip to a local campground is more likely for the weekend than a drive to a national park. Again, it is essential that all ideas be respected.

### Voting

Fifth, the members vote. Our Scouts agree on activities by consensus, which means they discuss the issue until all the Scouts agree. Our Scouts could choose to go camping at a local campground.

### Agreement

Sixth, the members agree which actions must be taken and agree when they should be done. When our Scouts agree to go camping, they then decide where they should camp, which items need to be purchased, and when they have to be ready.

### Following Up

Seventh, the members agree to follow up at a later time. Scouts check in with each other and make sure supplies are purchased. They meet ready to go at the scheduled time and place for their camping trip.

Brainstorming is a unique process because it allows both for creative freedom of thought, and for organization, allowing our Scouts to plan their own adventures.