SCOUTS BUSHCRAFT

Bushcraft Survival Challenge
60-Minute Lesson Plan

Practical outdoor skills • Teamwork • Problem-solving • Leave No Trace

Duration	60 minutes	**Group**	Scouts
Location	Woodland, campsite or suitable outdoor area	**Format**	Practical, team-based activities

1. Lesson aim

To challenge Scouts to put their bushcraft knowledge into practice through a sequence of supervised activities involving outdoor equipment, shelter, fire and water awareness, navigation, woodland observation and teamwork.

2. Learning objectives

- Identify essential items of outdoor and emergency equipment.
- Explain the basic principles of shelter, fire safety and safe water treatment.
- Demonstrate basic compass awareness and follow a short, marked route.
- Recognise common woodland features, trees or wildlife signs.
- Work cooperatively, communicate clearly and make sensible decisions.
- Explain why the outdoor environment should be left tidy and undamaged.

3. Equipment required

- Tarpaulin, shelter ropes and suitable pegs or poles
- Compass, map and a short pre-planned route
- Natural tinder samples in a display tray or container
- Fire-safety equipment if a separately authorised fire activity is planned
- Clean water container and examples of approved water-treatment equipment
- Rope or cordage, tree-identification sheets and wildlife-sign cards
- First aid kit, challenge scorecards, pencils and timer

4. Lesson timetable

Time	Activity	Leader instructions and Scout tasks
00–05 **5 min**	**Introduction**	Introduce the Survival Challenge and session aims. Discuss staying calm, listening to instructions, working as a team and following safety rules.
05–15 **10 min**	**Survival equipment**	Show a selection of kit. Explain the purpose of each item. Team task: choose five useful items and explain why they were selected.
15–25 **10 min**	**Shelter building**	Show simple lean-to or A-frame tarp options. Discuss safe site selection and weather protection. Teams work together to pitch a small tarp shelter.
25–35 **10 min**	**Fire and water awareness**	Identify tinder samples and explain the fire triangle. Discuss safe fire procedures. Demonstrate water collection concepts and explain that a homemade filter does not make water safe to drink.
35–45 **10 min**	**Navigation and woodland skills**	Demonstrate basic compass direction and map orientation. Follow a short marked route. Identify three common trees or plants from samples/cards and look for wildlife signs without disturbing them.
45–55 **10 min**	**Ultimate team challenge**	Teams complete a short combination task: identify five kit items, complete a shelter task, identify two tinder samples, and follow a simple compass route. Award points for safety, teamwork and explanations.

Time	Activity	Leader instructions and Scout tasks
55–60 5 min	**Review and close**	Ask what Scouts learned, what went well and what they would improve. Record scores, recognise achievements and check that the site is left tidy.

5. Challenge scoring and assessment

Assess through observation, participation and short questions. Encourage effort and safe decision-making rather than speed.

Skill area	Evidence of learning	Achieved
Equipment knowledge	Identifies useful kit and explains its purpose.	■
Shelter building	Contributes to a stable, suitable tarp shelter.	■
Fire and water awareness	Explains fire triangle, fire precautions and safe water treatment.	■
Navigation	Uses compass direction and follows the marked route.	■
Woodland skills	Identifies trees/plants or signs using a guide.	■
Teamwork	Communicates, shares tasks and supports others.	■
Conservation	Avoids damage and leaves the area tidy.	■

6. Safety and leader preparation

• **Before the session:** inspect the site, check weather and ground conditions, confirm permissions, prepare the route and complete the appropriate activity risk assessment.
• **Supervision:** maintain suitable adult supervision, clear boundaries and headcounts. Explain stop signals and emergency arrangements.
• **Fire:** no live fire unless separately authorised, risk assessed and supervised in accordance with current Scouts guidance and site rules. Keep water and fire-control equipment available; extinguish fully.
• **Tools:** any knife, saw or other cutting-tool activity must be separately planned, age-appropriate, authorised and supervised under current rules. This lesson does not require Scouts to use cutting tools.
• **Water:** do not drink untreated water. A homemade filter is for demonstration only; it does not reliably remove pathogens or chemical contamination. Use potable water or an approved treatment method exactly as directed.
• **Foraging and plants:** use photographs or samples for identification. Do not taste or eat wild plants or berries during this session.
• **Weather and terrain:** adapt or stop activities in severe weather, high winds, lightning, extreme temperatures or unsafe ground conditions.
• **First aid:** have a suitably stocked first aid kit, a named first aider and a clear emergency contact/location plan.

7. Expected learning outcomes

Scouts should finish the session with increased confidence in basic bushcraft concepts, a clearer understanding of outdoor safety, and experience applying practical skills as a team. They should also understand that preparation, sound judgement and asking for help are important parts of staying safe outdoors.

8. Leader review

What went well?	
What would you change next time?	
Follow-up skills to practise	

Leader note: Adapt timings and activities to the age, experience, abilities and needs of the group. Follow current Scouts UK guidance, local rules and the site operator’s instructions.