

## Observation Skills for Scouts

### Kim's Game

Ever heard of Kim's Game? It has been part of Scouting ever since Scouting for *boys* was written. It is an excellent way to develop some sense skills among your Scouts.

The original Kim's Game is described in Chapter nine of *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling. Its purpose was the development of powers of observation by progressive training. In Scouting for *boys* Camp Fire Yarn 1, the story of Kim is retold in brief. Kim's Game is the basis of all Scout observation training. There should be some form of it, however small, in every Troop program. There are of course, innumerable variations, increasing in difficulty and complexity according to the standard of the Scout.

The Scoutmaster's *guide from A to Z* (Rex Hazelwood) gives the following list of variations, some of which may be new to you

1. Fasten 20 suitable objects by clothes pegs to a rope tied from side to side of the room.
2. Use 20 different ties.
3. Play in darkness, lighting up each object in turn with a strong torchlight.
4. Take articles from a bag - show them in your hand while you count to 10 - and put them in another bag.
5. After the Troop have viewed the 20 objects for a moment, substitute other objects for five of them. ("Winning" Scouts are those who can first produce a list of the five substitutions).
6. Arrange your objects at different heights.

7. Spin a yarn bringing in the objects (and showing them as you mention them). Probably 10 items will be as much as you can manage!

8. Different objects, but all of one colour.

9. Arrange a Kim's game around a subject - e.g. 20 articles to do with cooking, pioneering, motoring etc. (This is a useful variation of the original Kim's Game)

10. Arrange a different number of marbles on each of six chairs. Patrols try and (a) reproduce it, and (b) while Patrols "turn around" marbles are changed and Patrols must say what changes have taken place.

11. 20 playing cards are shown for a moment. While the Patrols "turn around", change two (or three or four) of the cards, Patrols to tell you which

12. Ask a friend to visit your Troop and perhaps say a few words of greeting. After he has gone ask such questions as: colour of tie; height; size of shoes; number of buttons on jacket; colour of handkerchief in breast pocket; colour of hair etc. 13. Let a Patrol form a "Victorian photo-" group, in various attitudes - sitting, kneeling, standing, with caps on or coats or with an umbrella or book etc. After a minute's glance, while the rest of the Troop "turn around", Patrol alters positions and accessories. Troop to record changes. (NB - should be rehearsed and changes noted).

14. Twelve different-shaped bottles in a row. Scouts observe them for one minute, and then turn their

backs, while games leader moves two bottles into each other's places. First Scout to give correct change (e.g. "bottle five has changed places with bottle eight") gains points. When Troop becomes quick at spotting two bottle changes, try three bottle changes. There are plenty of different shaped bottles nowadays.

15. This starts out as an ordinary relay game, with each Scout running up and placing something out of his pockets or off his person in a chalk circle on the floor. Points for first Patrol to finish. The Scouter stands before each circle in turn and calls out to the Troop the objects in that circle.

As soon as each circle has been described, cover it with a Scout hat or something like that: and 16 Scouts by then realise, they have been playing as Kim did, another variation of his game!

### Other variations

These are just the tip of the iceberg in relation to the many ways Kim's Game can be developed. For example:

Make a tape of various music tracks and after playing it. ask questions about the sequence of tracks; some of the lyrics; or maybe even some of the instruments used.

Do the same for everyday sounds in and around the home or city.

Try a bit with smells, like herbs, or everyday cooking items and see if your Scouts can identify or remember what order they appear in. It is a very good skill to have - the power of observation, so let's develop it as much as we can.