The National Ranching Heritage Center
Inquiry-Based Learning Guide

The National Ranching Heritage Center is a great place to practice inquiry-based learning! Each historic structure offers up a host of questions to ask, investigate, discuss and reflect upon. The following questions will help you get started!

The historical park is in chronological order and each structure is accompanied with interpretive signage. Be sure and pick up a map or download our smartphone app in order to plan your route through the park!
Los Corralitos

- Have your students walk around the entire building and then stand in the doorway.
  **Ask:**
  - How many rooms do you see?
  - Where is the kitchen? Bathrooms?
  - The small openings are not windows. What are they?
  - How is our life similar or different to the lives of those who lived here?
  - Can adobe store heat if it is made of mud and brick?
  - Why do you think the oven (horno) has two openings instead of a chimney?

El Capote Cabin

- Historians and experts have no idea why this one-room cabin has three doors.
  **Ask:**
  - What do you think?
  - Why do you think this cabin was built using logs instead of adobe like Los Corralitos?
  - How does the mud and environment help this structure stay together?

Hedwig’s Hill Dogtrot House

- This house was built to stay cool in hot, humid weather without the use of electricity.
  **Ask:**
  - What are some architectural features that keep the house cool?
  - What do you notice above you?
  - Where did the children sleep?

Buffalo Grass

- Take a minute to read the native grass sign.
  **Ask:**
  - What does drought resistant mean?
  - Why do you think it can survive with less water?

Jowell House

- The Jowell Family’s first house was destroyed by fire.
  **Ask:**
  - Do you think this house was protected from fire? Why or why not?
  - What was the first Jowell house actually made of?

- Take a look at the smaller building (milk and meat house). This is the refrigerator!
  **Ask:**
  - How does it work?
  - Why is water underground cool?

Jowell Cemetery

- Take a minute to study the headstones. These were hard times on children and common diseases such as a cold or fever could easily be fatal.
  **Ask:**
  - What do you notice about the ages on each of the headstones?

Mail Camp

- This structure sat next to a busy trail used by the military and stagecoach lines.
  **Ask:**
  - What do you think it was used for?
**Wild Cow Corral**
- This corral was made to catch wild cows in the mountains of New Mexico.
  - Ask: – How did it work?
    – What force is used? (push, pull, etc.)

**Matador Half-Dugout**
- Walk around the entire structure.
  - Ask: – Why do you think this house is called a half-dugout?
    – This house has only one opening and is surrounded by earth on the other three sides. Do you think that helped or hurt in the winter and summer months? Why?

**Switch Grass**
- Take a minute to read the native grass sign.
  - Ask: – What is biofuel?

**Waggoner Ranch Commisary**
- This was used as a storehouse for food and supplies. Look inside the structure.
  - Ask: – What items do you see?
    – If you had a commissary next to your house, what supplies would you want it to have?

**Long S Whiteface Camp**
- Hereford Cattle were raised on the Long S Whiteface Camp. White face was a nickname for Hereford Cattle.
  - Ask: – Show your students these pictures and have them guess which cow is the Hereford.

**Native Grass Sign**
- Take a minute to read the native grass sign.
  - Ask: – What is a native grass?

**Box and Strip House**
- This house is the first you’ve seen built completely out of machine cut wood. Wood was hard to find in West Texas.
  - Ask: – What do you think delivered this wood to build the Box and Strip House?
    – How would residents have ordered items to be delivered by train?
    – Made of wood with no insulation, what would it have been like to live here?
**Bairfield Schoolhouse**

- How does the size of this building compare to your classroom? Remember that all grades went to school in one room.
  
  **Ask:**
  - Find the bathroom
  - Play a game of duck-duck-goose outside!
  - Why did the water cause disease to spread?

**Pipe Raymond Vaneless Windmill**

- Look at the windmill near the schoolhouse.
  
  **Ask:**
  - How do windmills work?
  - How are we using windmills today?

**KR Bluestem**

- Take a minute to read the native grass sign.
  
  **Ask:**
  - What does invasive mean?

**Harrell House**

- This shows the evolution of a ranch house from a single-room stone cabin to a complex dwelling.
  
  **Ask:**
  - Can you find the part of this house that was built first? What do you think was built last?
  - Look in the different rooms and find the “Victrola” (a hand-wound record player). What do you use to listen to music?

**80 John Wallace House**

- 80 John Wallace was a rancher and very smart businessman. He was also the architect of this house.
  
  **Ask:**
  - What type of room do you think he liked the best?
  - What is similar about this house and the Harrell House you just saw?
    - Different?
    - What woke 80 John up when he slept on the east side of the house?

**Masterson JY Bunkhouse**

- This bunkhouse was housing for cowboys in the time of open range.
  
  **Ask:**
  - What activities took place here? (use furniture for clues)
  - Do you think cowboys spent a lot of time inside the bunkhouse?
  - What could you see out of the west window every evening?

**Las Escarbadas**

- This structure was a division headquarters for the XIT Ranch, which had 335 windmills.
  
  **Ask:**
  - Windmills were a very important part of a ranch. What were they used for?
  - How many windmills are at the NRHC? (Let students use the Walking Tour map or have them count as they tour the rest of the site.)
JA Milk and Meat House

• The JA Milk and Meat House shows how settlers preserved their food.
  Ask:  – What do you use to preserve your food today?
           – Charles Goodnight ran the JA Ranch for many years. What else is he known for?

Matador Office

• Look at the yard around the Matador Office. This area is different from other parts of the park.
  Ask:  – What makes it different?
           – Which part of the park looks like it would have looked in 1880?

Barton House

• The plans for this house were bought from a magazine. Many of the other materials ordered, such as doorknobs, locks and mirrors were in a catalog.
  Ask:  – Look around the Barton House. What do you notice that makes this house different from the others you have seen?
           – Did you know that this structure was moved to the NRHC in one piece? How?

Renderbrook- Spade Blacksmith Shop

• The blacksmith shop was a necessary structure and often the first thing built on a ranch.
  Ask:  – What types of necessary items do you think were made in here?

U Lazy S Carriage House

• This structure was used to store items such as buggies, which were used for transportation.
  Ask:  – What part of a house would you compare the carriage house to?
           – What form of transportation did you use to travel to the NRHC?
           – Name other forms of transportation that people use (past or present).
           – Why do buggies need to be kept in a garage? (weathering)

Canon Ranch Sheep Hospital Shed

• Sheep were a big part of the lives of early settlers.
  Ask:  – What type of fabric is made using sheep fur?

• Have them take a walk around the building.
  Ask:  – Do you think this building was meant to keep something in or something out?
           – What are they keeping out? What do insects carry?
Locomotive and Ropes Depot

- Look at the railroad cars.
  **Ask:**
  - What do you think traveled in these cars?
  - Where does coal come from? (plants, swamps, fossils)
  - What is coal classified as? (fossil fuel or non-renewable)

- Look at the Ropes Depot ticket office.
  **Ask:**
  - Do you know what the items on the counter were used for?
  - What energy does a telegraph use or produce? (mechanical, produce sound)

Spudder

- This is a portable drilling rig that helped ranchers to pump oil.
  **Ask:**
  - Do you still see oil being pumped out today?
  - How does the Spudder compare to those oil rigs?
  - What, besides oil, is gathered on ranch lands today?
  - What is oil? Where do we use oil today? What happens when we run out?

6666 Barn

- Bathroom Break! View the barbed wire exhibit and brands.
  **Ask:**
  - What would your brand be?

Picket and Sotol

- This house shows the creativity of settlers who used whatever was available to them to build a home. Look around the NRHC and notice the natural materials throughout the park.
  **Ask:**
  - What would you use to build a house?
  - Do you think gravel was a good insulator?

Pitchfork Cookhouse

- This structure was used as a place to feed the Pitchfork Ranch cowboys until just a few months before it was moved to the NRHC.
  **Ask:**
  - Compare this structure to where you eat at home or school. How is it similar? How is it different?
  - Why do you think all the plates on the table are upside down?
  - What energy did they use to cook...there is no electricity.

Cactus

- Look around at the cactus.
  **Ask:**
  - How are so many cactus alive and growing when we haven’t had much rain?
  - What adaptations do they have?