# Capitol Grounds Challenge

**#1. Start** at the Capitol Visitors Center. Find the cornerstone on the northeast corner. This building originally housed the General Land Office. It was built over 30 years prior to the Capitol! The cornerstone of the building was laid on Saturday, August 30, 1856.

At the ceremony of the laying of the cornerstone, The State Gazette reported that the building, "...will command the South-East view of the Capitol, and contrast well with the Governor's Mansion on the opposite site."

Could you see the Governor's Mansion from the front of the building?

In the box below, etch any part of the writing or carvings from the cornerstone.
#2. **Follow** the sidewalk west until you see the large monument with a series of statues on a Sunset Red granite base. This monument pays tribute to Tejanos, the early Spanish and Mexican pioneers who settled Texas.

How many animals are depicted on the monument? ________________

How many have horns? ________________

Bonus: The vaquero and longhorns represent the Tejano contribution to what well-known Texas enterprise? ________________________

#4. **Look to your left** at the tree with the number 3. This tree is a Bald Cypress. The Bald Cypress is known for growing along river beds and in swamps where it can develop peculiar cone-like structures off of the roots known as “knees.”

Describe the color and texture of the tree trunk:

#3. **Move north** on the sidewalk and find the historical marker titled "Grotto and Lagoon." This area once looked like this post card. Can you imagine this area being filled with water?

What type of flowers and plants do you think might have lived in the grotto and lagoon?

#5. **Move up** the sidewalk to the light and bench. This was a water fountain located on top of an artesian well. This replica cast iron fountain is missing the metal cup from which the public once drank.

What do you have to do now to get a drink from the fountain?
#6. **Go** to the top of the Capitol steps and find the State Seal. This terrazzo Seal was installed during the 1936 Texas Centennial celebration and consists almost entirely of Texas stone. The seal features an olive branch to symbolize peace and a live oak branch to represent strength.

What is the single star in the center of the Texas Seal called?

#7. **Travel south** down the Great Walk to the bush near the Heroes of the Alamo monument. This is a Texas Mountain Laurel.

A pea-like bluish purple flower appears in the Spring. The flower is said to smell like grape-flavored Kool-Aid. The hard fruit has a bead-like appearance.

Native Americans would use these beans as barter or money. If you had to use something in nature for currency, what would you use?

#8. **Move back** to the Great Walk and go south towards 11th Street. Find the plaque that says "Capitol of 1852-53." This plaque marks the location of the steps leading up to the old limestone Capitol. This limestone structure was the second Capitol in Austin, but the first statehouse to be built on Capitol Square. It was also the first Capitol of Texas constructed of stone.

The 1850s limestone Capitol was completely destroyed by fire in 1881. A nationwide competition was held where contestants submitted designs for a new Capitol.

In the box below, draw your own Capitol design.
#9. Walk northwest to the Cowboy Monument. To the right of the monument is the spiky shrub known as the Yucca. Yucca plants have adapted to several climates ranging from rocky desert to tropical forests. The creamy-white flowers bloom best in full sun, during mid-to late-summer, with some Yucca growing as tall as 10 feet high.

How tall do you think this Yucca is? 

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When was this monument placed on the Capitol Grounds?

_________________

#10. Follow the sidewalk south along the drive then west until you find the tree numbered 23. This is a Southern Magnolia tree. This tree is widely planted for its beautiful leaves and flowers. The leaves can stay on the tree for almost two years! What do the leaves feel like? __________________________________

#11. Move north until you reach the Capitol drive then follow the sidewalk up the hill until you find the plaque that reads West Ground Lake. A small lake once occupied the large depression that still exists west of here and at one time was supplied by an underground spring in the area.

How did Cherokee Indians use roses?

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_________________

Bonus: Why would roses be effective in marking trails?

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#13. Move east towards the Capitol until you reach the freestanding Capitol gate. This gate marks the northernmost extent of the grounds in 1888. Face north. Can you imagine the houses that once stood on what is now the north grounds? There was even a church just to the east of this gate!

Look at the six seals above the entrance of the Capitol. How many of the seals feature an animal or bird? __________

**Bonus:** The seals represent the six sovereign nations that have ruled over Texas. Can you name all six?
__________________________  __________________________
__________________________  __________________________

How old do you think this tree is?
__________________________

Why do you think this tree is leaning?
__________________________

Create your own Texas scene under this Live Oak and take a photo.

#14. Walk southeast and find the Live Oak tree marked number 13. This species of tree has a very long life span. As a result, many important Texas events have centered around trees like this. After the battle of San Jacinto, Mexican President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna surrendered to Texas General Sam Houston under a large oak tree like this one. To see a depiction of this scene, view William Henry Huddle’s painting “The Surrender of Santa Anna” located in the South Foyer of the Capitol.

How old do you think this tree is?
__________________________

Create your own Texas scene under this Live Oak and take a photo.
#16. Find this obscure cement block on the east grounds. It sits on the walkway between the State Library and the east entrance to the Capitol. Why is this block here? __________________?

This block holds a U.S. Geodetic Survey marker, which mark key survey points on the Earth’s surface. The Capitol Visitors Center once held the General Land Office, where land surveyors had their notes and measurements converted into maps.

When you return to the Visitors Center for your stamp, go up to the exhibits on the second floor to learn more about land surveyors of the General Land Office.

Place your paper over the marker and etch the marker in the box below.

#15. Find the marker entitled "Capitol Greenhouses." This greenhouse was built at this location in 1908 and burned down in 1925. Another greenhouse was rebuilt in the same location but was later moved to the Texas Cemetery. What kind of flowers do you think they grew in the greenhouses? ___________________

Design your own greenhouse below.
Congratulations on finishing the Capitol Grounds Challenge!

If the Capitol Visitors Center is open, take this booklet there and have it stamped. Or write the date and time of completion in the box below.