

Texas White House Virtual Tour

Worksheet

How can artifacts help us understand a person or a time period? With this question in mind, let's travel back in time to the 1960s and visit the Texas White House! As you take a virtual tour of the Texas White House, look for those artifacts in each room that can help you answer the questions below.

OFFICE

1) During his time in Washington, DC, President Johnson would often retreat to his Texas ranch to relax, rejuvenate and work remotely. He spent nearly a quarter of his presidency at his ranch. When he ascended to the presidency, he knew he would need to upgrade technology at his ranch in order to perform his duties. Communication systems were crucial to his ability to stay connected to the world. What are three different forms of communication found in the office?

2) To sign the Civil Rights Bill of 1964 into law, President Johnson had to gain support from politicians who did not agree with his views. President Johnson used his political influence, as well as relying on friends and allies to persuade people in Congress to vote for his bill. Who was one of President Johnson's allies who helped him gain support for the bill?

3) As Johnson's political career advanced, important changes were made to the house to allow him to fulfill his duties. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson moved into this house in 1952, when he was serving in the U.S. Senate. The addition of the office provided him with a workspace separate from the rest of the house. What can the floor plan of the house and features of the office tell us about his career path?

DINING ROOM

1) President Johnson loved hosting visitors at his ranch. Important political figures, foreign dignitaries, entertainers and everyday citizens all came to the Johnson ranch and experienced the rural way of life in 1960s Texas Hill Country. For many visitors, the ranch offered a glimpse into his values of family, place and honor. Who was one historical figure who dined with President and Mrs. Johnson at the ranch?

2) Food can serve an important role in bringing people together. The Johnsons became well-known for their barbecues at the ranch. Mexican President Adolfo Lopez Mateos and German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer were a few of the guests who attended these special events. How can informal social gatherings impact political relationships? What food would you serve to bring people together?

3) President Johnson's chair at the head of the dining table is notably different from the others. Its pattern is reminiscent of the image of a Western rancher. Johnson's connection to the rural Texas Hill Country and his family's ranching heritage were incredibly influential in the design of his ranch. What are three other objects in the Texas White House that contribute to this image?

KITCHEN

1) As technological innovation boomed in the 1960s, President Johnson frequently installed and upgraded electronics and appliances in the ranch. He used technology not only for his duties as Senator, Vice President and President but also to support ranch operations and host visitors. What is one object in the kitchen that helped kitchen staff during large gatherings at the ranch?

2) Why do you think President Johnson sometimes had his meals in the kitchen instead of the dining room? Who do you think he interacted with in the kitchen?

DEN

1) Giving gifts was very important to President Johnson. He gave everything from pens and toothbrushes labeled with the presidential seal to busts of himself! Gifts often demonstrate goodwill, respect and even love. What are two gifts found in the den and who gave them?

2) How are these gifts important to the Johnson family?

YELLOW SITTING ROOM

1) Throughout his political career, Lyndon Johnson used a “person-to-person” approach in meeting others. He demonstrated this style in meeting people outside of the office and interacting with ordinary citizens around the world. Speaking of his childhood growing up in rural Texas, he would empathize with those living in poverty during his travels. How many countries did Mr. Johnson visit as Vice President?

2) What items in this room can help you understand Johnson's personal connection to his family past and to the Texas Hill Country?

3) What object in your house can help you tell your family story? Why?

PRESIDENT JOHNSON BEDROOM

1) There are several features in President Johnson's bedroom that might make more sense in his office. He often worked throughout the night, so much so that Mrs. Johnson had her own bedroom so she could sleep while he worked. What two things do you see in the President's bedroom that would help him work at all hours?

2) Why do you think President Johnson had to work long hours through the night? What were some of the issues the nation was facing during Johnson's presidency?

3) The President's bedroom is decorated with artwork depicting the Texas Hill Country of his grandparents' time as well as his cherished grandchildren. His family heritage was incredibly important to him, and President Johnson aspired to cultivate a Western cowboy image like that of his rough, cattle-droving grandfather Sam Johnson, Sr. What animal business did both President Johnson and his grandfather participate in?

MRS. JOHNSON BEDROOM

1) Widely recognized for her environmental efforts as First Lady, Mrs. Johnson had a deep appreciation for the natural world. She continued to be a champion for conservation and beautification after her time as First Lady. What research center found in Austin did Lady Bird help fund?

2) Shortly after her husband's ascension to the presidency, Mrs. Johnson began using a tape recorder to capture her days as First Lady. Later and with the help of assistants, she transcribed her recordings. Over a period of five years, she would capture 1,750,000 words in her journals. In addition to a tape recorder, what are two objects found in Mrs. Johnson's bedroom that can be used for documentation?
