

Pinnacles Field Trip: Scripted Guide

To be used as a scripted guide with the [Pinnacles Field Trip Hiking Map](#)

Point of Interest + Directions (shown in yellow on the Map)	Scripted Description and Activity
<p>Yellow Star: Bear Gulch Day Use Area- This is where you find parking, restrooms, water, picnic tables, and the nature center (open seasonally). The trail begins across from the Nature Center Parking Area at the “Reservoir, Bear Gulch Cave, and High Peaks” sign. You will walk to the left, across a wooden footbridge and through a flat, shaded picnic area to the Moses Springs trailhead.</p>	<p>-“This is where our tour of Pinnacles National Park will begin. Be sure you have your water bottle and [if visiting the caves] a headlamp or flashlight with you. You will also need your field journal [or note-taking tool] and a pencil. Now is the time to top off your water bottle or use the restroom, as there will not be an opportunity to get more water or use the restrooms until we return to this area at the end of our hike.”</p> <p>- “The hike is about 2 miles long and will take around 2 hours. Be sure to STAY with your chaperone! Let them know right away if you have any questions or if you are experiencing any issues.”</p> <p>- “STAY ON THE TRAIL! This is important for your safety and for the protection and preservation of this park. You are NOT allowed to remove anything from the park. All rocks, pinecones, flowers, and other park resources must stay here for the enjoyment of future generations and preservation of the park.”</p> <p>- “It is important that you keep your eyes on the trail so that you do not trip. However, from time to time, look up! Be sure to take in the unique Pinnacles rock formations and pay attention to how the plants change as we walk through different habitats. If you are lucky, you may even see one of the endangered California Condors soaring through the sky!”</p> <p>- “If you encounter a wild animal, DO NOT attempt to touch it or feed it. Keep the wild life wild! Alert an adult if you have concerns about the safety of a plant or animal.”</p> <p>- “Any questions before we leave? Let’s begin!”</p>
<p>Point A: Moses Springs Trailhead and Informational Panel. Walk uphill and continue walking on the Moses Springs trail. Stay to the Left at the junction for the High Peaks trail.</p>	<p>- “This is the trailhead to the Moses Springs Trail. We will begin walking uphill and enter a boulder passage with the creekbed on our right. As we walk through this area, look at the boulders and the creekbed. How do you think these got here? What are some of the geologic processes that could have caused these features to form? Write down your ideas in your Field Journals as we go.”</p> <p>[Have students share some of their ideas: Examples- The boulders come from weathering and erosion or earthquakes due to movement along the San Andreas Fault. The stream bed is in a valley due to weathering and erosion, etc.]</p>
<p>Point B: Moses Springs- Bear Gulch Caves Trail Junction. Stay to the right to stay on the Moses Springs trail. Left will take you directly to Bear Gulch Caves.</p>	<p>- “We have arrived at the Bear Gulch Caves trail junction- if we stay to the right we will visit Moses Springs, or we could go to the left into the Bear Gulch Caves. The Caves are open seasonally due to the protection of the Townsend’s big-eared bats, a threatened species that live in these caves. The caves are open to the public depending on the bat’s migration and breeding patterns. The caves are only fully open for a short time in March or April and October. You can check the Park’s website to see when the caves are open.”</p>
<p>Point C: Moses Springs</p>	<p>- “This area is called a “grotto” - weathering and erosion has carved out this niche in the rocks. The water that flows through here supports the ferns and other green plants that live here.”</p> <p>- “ If we are lucky, we may spot a threatened species in the spring: The</p>

	<p>California Red-Legged Frog.”</p> <p>- “Take a moment to look closely at this area. Look at how the plant communities have changed. Why do you think this happened? Write down your ideas in your Field Journals.”</p>
<p>Point D: Volcanic Monolith View</p>	<p>- “This gigantic rock is known as The Monolith. Using what you learned about the formation of the Pinnacles rocks, what type of rock do you think this Monolith is made from? [volcanic rock] Why do you think it looks the way it does today? [weathering and erosion]”</p> <p>- “Draw a quick sketch of the Monolith in your Field Journal. Label the type of rock [volcanic] and where the rock shows evidence of weathering and erosion.”</p>
<p>Point E: Cave Portal to Bear Gulch Reservoir. Before descending into the short cave-like passage, have students pull out their flashlights/headlamps.</p>	<p>- “We are about to enter part of the lower cave system of the Bear Gulch talus caves. The talus caves are formed when steep, narrow canyons filled with a jumbled mass of boulders from the cliffs above, and wedged in the fractures before reaching the ground. These boulders became the ceilings of the talus caves. These caves are home to several kinds of bats.”</p> <p>- “Before we go into the cave, pull out your flashlight or headlamp. Use caution when walking across the cave floor- it is uneven and can be slippery if it is wet.”</p>
<p>Point F: Bear Gulch Reservoir Dam. This is approximately the halfway point. Here you will leave the Moses Springs Trail, cross the stone dam, and follow the Rim Trail to the junction with the High Peaks Trail.</p>	<p>- “We have reached the half-way point of our journey. This is called the Bear Gulch Reservoir. The stone dam that creates the Bear Gulch Reservoir was completed in 1935 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The reservoir is an important habitat for the red legged frog, a threatened species in California. It is illegal to harass or harm them in any way. Approaching so closely that they jump is a form of harassment. Catching them not only disturbs them, but may also cause serious injury. If you are fortunate enough to see these frogs, please enjoy them from a distance.”</p> <p>- “Take a moment to sketch the reservoir in your journal. Be sure to label any areas that look like they may be habitat for the red-legged tree frog. You can use the informational sign to sketch a red-legged tree frog as well.”</p>
<p>Point G: High Peaks Trail Junction. The Rim Trail ends here. Turn Right to walk downhill on the High Peaks Trail.</p>	<p>- “Here we will leave the Rim Trail and start heading down the High Peaks Trail back towards the parking lot. You may have noticed that we have passed several “climber access trails.” These trails lead rock climbers to climbing routes on the Pinnacles Rocks. Now that you have had a chance to see the rocks up close, why do you think these rock formations might be a good place for rock climbers to come and climb?”</p>
<p>Point H: Moses Springs Trail Junction. This junction closes the “lollipop.” Continue walking down Moses Springs Trail to the parking lot.</p>	<p>- “This is our final trail junction. We will be heading back down the Moses Springs Trail to the parking lot. As we walk, reflect on some of the things you saw and experienced today. What one thing stands out to you as the most interesting thing you experienced. Write this down in your Field Journal. Be prepared to share what that is once we reach the bus.”</p>
<p>Yellow Star: Bear Gulch Day Use Area- if appropriate, you can use the picnic tables for lunch.</p>	<p>- “We have reached the end of our journey. I hope you enjoyed all the things you saw and experienced today. Let’s take a moment and share the one thing you saw or experiences that stands out to you.”</p> <p>[This can be done during lunch, in a group before getting on the bus, or on the bus.]</p>