We have a mystery to solve class! I found this near the school last week. Find out what it is, and you’ll earn a spot on the “Great Discoveries” wall!

I’m going to figure this out!
What is this, Mrs. Miller? I’ve never seen one of these before.

That’s for you to find out, Benjamin. You might want to talk with Mr. Gonzales at the feed yard. He may be able to help.
Benjamin! Nice to see you. You are just in time to help feed. Let's go!
We feed cattle a healthy diet here at the feed yard. We make sure they have space to move and be with other cattle too. So what brings you out here?

My teacher found something interesting near school. Do you know what it is?

I know what that is! But you’ll want to talk to Mrs. Lee down the road. She’ll be able to tell you more.
Hi Mrs. Lee! I have a mystery to solve. Can you help?

Sure thing Benjamin. But I need your help too. Come on over!
We built this pond last year on our stocker ranch. It gives water to the cattle and makes a great home for birds! The cattle grow here before I sell them to Mr. Gonzalez. Help me count the ducks today!

I see 7!

Thanks Benjamin! How can I help?

My teacher found something interesting near school. Mr. Gonzales at the feed yard said you might know what this is.

I know what that is! But you’ll want to talk to the Faria family down the road to find out more.
Welcome to the cow-calf ranch Benjamin! What can we do for you?

My teacher found something interesting near school. Mrs. Lee said you might know what it is.

I know what that is! Come on back and we'll show you.
We raise mother cows that have calves. When the calves get big enough, we sell them to Mrs. Lee's ranch. After they eat on Mrs. Lee's fine grass, she sells them to Mr. Gonzales. Do you see anything familiar on these animals?

That's right Benjamin. That mark is called a brand. It shows that these animals are from our ranch.

The mark on their hip! It matches my picture.
Brands have been used since 2700 BC! Egyptian hieroglyphics show animals with brands. This is my father's brand. That is my grandfather's brand.

That's right. Brands are like a family crest. That brand must have fallen out of my truck as I drove to town last week!

So each ranch has a different brand?
Mystery solved! These are my friends. This brand is a tool they use to do their job. They work hard every day, so we can have good food to eat. Brands have been used for thousands of years.