



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



Q2 • Storytelling • Middle School

Local Hero Interview

Theme: New Mexico's Contribution

Time Required: 2–4 class sessions + independent research time

Materials Needed:

- Research materials (books, articles, online resources)
- Notebooks and pencils
- Optional recording device (phone or tablet)
- Construction paper or cardstock with art supplies
- Bulletin board or display materials

Activity Overview

In this activity, students explore storytelling through oral history and interviews. They will identify a local hero, someone whose actions have positively impacted their community and conduct an interview to learn about that person's life and contributions. Students discover that history is built from many voices, not just famous figures, and that every story adds to the rich tapestry of New Mexico's past and present.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Learn how to conduct and document an oral history interview.
- Identify and describe diverse community contributions within New Mexico.
- Practice research, questioning, and note-taking skills.
- Reflect on how storytelling connects individual experiences to history.

Essential Questions

- Who are the heroes in our communities today?
- Why is it important to record and share their stories?
- What can we learn about history through personal experience?
- How do local voices help us understand the larger story of New Mexico?



How to Implement

1. Discuss local diversity: Review the many cultural communities that have shaped New Mexico — from early Indigenous peoples to more recent groups such as Buffalo Soldiers, post-WWII European immigrants, and Asian and Pacific Islander families who arrived in the 20th century.
2. Choose a hero: Encourage students to select a local hero from the present or recent past — veterans, Indigenous leaders, founders, cultural figures, scientists, first responders, or community helpers.
3. Prepare interview questions: Use resources like “Top 10 Questions to Ask a Local Hero.”
4. Conduct the interview: Obtain permission, record (if appropriate), or take notes during the conversation.
5. Write and share: Summarize the interview in writing and present findings through a short essay, poster, or digital presentation.
6. Send a thank-you note: Encourage students to write or email their interviewee to express gratitude for sharing their story.

Educator Tip

- Review oral history interviewing techniques before starting.
- Model respectful listening and question-asking.
- Remind students that heroes come from all backgrounds and walks of life.
- If possible, invite a local librarian or historian to speak about researching local heroes.

Connection to Statewide Theme

This activity supports the NM250 Storytelling: New Mexico’s Contribution initiative, highlighting the power of personal stories to connect generations. Schools may connect these interviews to a Storytelling Assembly or share excerpts using the #MyNMStory hashtag.