



**NEW MEXICO
SPIRIT**
1776 + 2026

ACTIVITY CHECKLIST



Q2 • Storytelling • Middle School

Local Hero Interview

Before the Activity

- Review the Activity Overview for this activity.
- Select short oral history excerpts to introduce the project (e.g., Lasting Echoes, Out of the Mouths of Slaves).
- Coordinate with other educators/admin to determine where completed oral histories will be stored (school website, library, local history orgs).
- Prepare materials: brainstorming sheets, question worksheet, interview planning sheet, research organizers.
- Set expectations and project timeline (Middle School = one interview).

During the Activity

1. Introduction to Oral History

- Ask students what stories they know about family or community members.
- Explain oral history: learning about events from people who lived them.
- Read excerpts and discuss: What makes oral history powerful?

2. Identify a Local Hero

- Brainstorm categories: everyday heroes, emergency responders, founders, cultural leaders, community organizers, local government, scientists, athletes.
- Students generate a list of possible heroes from the present or recent past (~50 years).
- Students choose one specific person (not just a job/role).
- Educators collect names to avoid duplicates and suggest alternatives when needed.



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3. Begin Background Research

- Students research their hero using books, school library sources, or online resources.
- Collect newspaper articles or reliable websites; ask librarian for help if needed.
- Students identify:
 - What the hero did
 - Why they are considered a hero
 - Qualities that contributed to their impact

4. Prepare Interview Questions

- Brainstorm class questions:
 - What happened during an important event?
 - What do you enjoy most about your work?
 - What challenges do you face?
- Provide the interview questions with space for student-written questions.
- Discuss interview best practices (respect, listening, follow-up questions).

5. Planning the Interview

- Students check with adults for help with:
 - Contact information
 - Technology or phone use
 - Library visits
 - Internet safety
- Students decide how they will conduct the interview:
 - In person (recommended)
 - Virtual meeting
 - Phone
 - Written notes (least recommended)
- Practice contacting an interviewee using class-modeled phone/email scripts.



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6. Conduct the Interview

- Students bring their questions, take notes or record (if permitted), and confirm permission to use the narrative.
- Encourage professionalism and respectful communication.

7. Write Up the Interview

- Students write a profile including:
 - Background of the hero
 - What makes them a hero
 - What actions or qualities demonstrate heroism
 - What they learned from the interview
- Include a brief quote or detail shared during the interview.
- Proofread and revise.

After the Activity

- Share in partners, small groups, or a class presentation.
- Create a bulletin board or digital display showcasing student work.
- Students write a thank-you note to their hero or anyone who supported the project.