



**NEW MEXICO
SPIRIT**
1776 + 2026

ACTIVITY CHECKLIST



Q3 • Common Ground & Historical Identity • Elementary Upper Discovering Personal Cultural Uniqueness

Before the Activity

- Review the Activity Overview for this activity.
- Review the below Teaching the Five Historical Eras of New Mexico
- Gather materials:
 - Stories from Exploring New Mexico: A Student's Guide to the Land of Enchantment (pp. 17-20)
- Select one story from each era to read over a week or month.
- Prepare 5 short discussion questions to use consistently after each story.
- Introduce key concepts: era, history, culture, tradition, community

Teaching the Five Historical Eras of New Mexico

1. First Peoples (Time Immemorial – CE 1540)

- Explain that all people in NM were Indigenous during this era.
- Optional: Introduce evidence from White Sands (20,000+ years).
- Ask students to name Indigenous groups they know.
- Read the book: Ancient Dwellings of the Southwest
- Discuss after reading.

2. Spanish Colonial (1540–1821)

- Explain who the Spaniards were and how they arrived.
- Introduce the Pueblo Revolt in simple terms (Indigenous resistance + regained rights).
- Read the book: The Eyes of the Weaver
- Discuss after reading.



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3. Mexican Era (1821–1848)

- Provide simple historical context: New Mexico becomes part of Mexico after independence from Spain.
- Use maps or visuals to show the shift from Spanish to Mexican rule.
- Read & discuss: Meet Josefina

4. U.S. Territorial Era (1848–1912)

- Explain that after the Mexican–American War, NM became a U.S. Territory.
- Introduce diverse groups who arrived (Black, Chinese, Italian, Jewish, German).
- Introduce: Buffalo Soldiers & Blackdom (simple age-appropriate terms).
- Read and discuss the books: Elan, Son of Two Peoples and The Santa Fe Trail: From Independence, Missouri to Santa Fe, New Mexico

5. Statehood to Present (1912–Now)

- Explain that NM became a state 124 years ago (adjust year as needed).
- Introduce new groups who arrived (Vietnamese, Korean, Filipino, Kuwaiti families).
- Discuss cultural diversity and changes in population.
- Read and discuss the book: Where Butterflies Fill the Sky

During Each Story

- Remind students which historical era the story belongs to.
- Invite students to take turns reading pages aloud
- Facilitate post-reading discussion:
 - What was the most exciting part?
 - How did the story make you feel?
 - Why is this story important for NM today?



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Traditions Sharing Activity

- Define “tradition” and provide examples (holiday foods, family routines, roasting chiles, “Christmas” chile).
- Brainstorm traditions with the class; check if each fits the definition.
- Students identify a family or cultural tradition with their adults
- Students bring:
 - The object, OR a photo OR a drawing of the tradition
- Students share in circle time or small groups:
 - What the object is
 - What the tradition is
 - What culture/family it comes from
- Optional: Discuss whether the tradition is NM-based, new/old, or evolving.