



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



Q4 • Tourism Fair

Middle School • All School

Activity Overview

Geography plays a crucial role in understanding history, identity, and culture. The Q4 Middle School activity invites students to explore New Mexico's natural, cultural, and historic sites through research, creative representation, and public presentation.

By studying significant locations across the state, students examine how geography influences settlement, movement, economic development, cultural traditions, and historical events. Through collaboration and presentation, students share how these sites reflect New Mexico's shared identity and common ground.

Students work in small groups to create a diorama representing a selected New Mexico site. Each group researches the geographic features, historical use or major events, and cultural importance of their location. Dioramas are displayed in a schoolwide gallery organized by theme (e.g., natural wonders, cultural sites, historic landmarks).

Before the Activity

Teachers plan the event schedule and determine presentation space and viewing logistics. Students are introduced to the purpose of the project: exploring how geography shapes communities, history, and identity.

Groups are formed and provided with a list of approved New Mexico sites. Teachers ensure selections represent geographically, culturally, or historically significant locations. Students are guided in research methods using books, atlases, and trusted online sources.

Expectations for accuracy, creativity, collaboration, and respectful presentation are reviewed.



During the Activity

- Students engage in structured research, planning, and creation.
- Groups gather information about geographic features, historical events, and cultural importance.
- Students sketch plans for their presentation or diorama, including labeled features and accurate spatial relationships.
- Creative building or display preparation takes place in class.
- Teachers support accuracy while encouraging thoughtful design.
- For gallery-style events, displays are grouped by theme and include clear labels, site names, and written summaries.

After the Activity

Following the Tourism Fair or Diorama Gallery, educators facilitate reflection through discussion or writing. Guiding questions may include:

- What did you learn about New Mexico's geography?
- How does geography influence culture and community development?
- What surprised you about your site or another group's site?

Students consider how geographic features influence identity, movement, and shared experience across the state.

Educator Notes

This activity is adaptable based on time, resources, and presentation format. Middle school implementation emphasizes research depth, collaboration, and connections between physical geography and cultural development.

The goal is geographic reasoning, historical understanding, and recognition of shared spaces, not artistic perfection.

Additional tourism resources, atlases, historic site databases, and environmental materials are available in the Educator Resources document.

Connection to Statewide Theme

The State Site Diorama Gallery supports the theme of Common Ground and Historical Identity by helping students examine places that define New Mexico. Through research and presentation, students recognize that natural landmarks, historic sites, and cultural spaces serve as shared reference points that connect communities across the state. Geography becomes a lens for understanding how identity and history are rooted in place.