

Learning Guide



A Brief History of the American Southwest for Kids Episode 3: Strangers Arrive

We hope you enjoyed learning all about the day when the A:shiwi (Zuni) people met some unexpected visitors. Extend your learning with this print-ready Learning Guide!



What's in this Learning Guide?

Get Set to Listen:

Check your knowledge before and after listening to the episode by determining if statements are TRUE or FALSE.

Vocabulary

Discussion Questions

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3-8.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3-8.3

Writing Prompts and Extension Projects

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.8

Historical Map of the American Southwest

Build a Timeline

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.5.MD.A.1 / 5.MD.A.2; CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.5.NBT.A.1 / A.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2 / W.5.8; NCSS: Themes 1-3

First Encounter: Activity

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3; NCSS: Themes 1, 2, & 4

Communicating without Language: Activity

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3; NAEA: Creating (VA:Cr2.1.5a); Connecting (VA:Cn10.1.5a); Responding (VA:Re7.1.5a); NCSS: Themes 1 & 4

Zuni Art: Coloring Page

Additional Resources



The Children's Hour
kids public radio



Get Set to Listen

1. Before listening!

Read each statement and write TRUE or FALSE based on what you already know.



2. After listening!

Based on what the experts said in the episode, write TRUE or FALSE.



Before Listening	TRUE or FALSE?	After Listening
	1. In 1639, Christian missionary Marcos de Niza was sent by the King of Spain to explore and expand their empire.	
	2. Estevanico, de Niza's companion, approached exploration in a very violent way, and his actions resulted in many deaths of indigenous people in this region.	
	3. Marcos de Niza found the Seven Cities, returned to Mexico City to inform Spanish leadership of his victory, and Spain sent out another expedition to further explore.	
	4. Indigenous groups like the Zuni hadn't seen horses before the Spaniards arrived on horseback, so they initially thought it was an alien creature with six legs, two heads, and four eyes.	
	5. Native civilizations in this region have existed for about the same amount of time as countries in this part of the world.	
	6. "The Age of Discovery", brought great benefits and advancements to everyone it impacted.	
	7. One of Spain's objectives was to convert native people away from their traditional religions to Christianity.	
	8. Along with the Spanish conquerors, diseases unfamiliar to Native people arrived that vastly diminished their population.	
	9. The Zuni reservation was completely wiped out and abandoned after the Spanish invasions.	



Get Set to Listen

Answer key

1. FALSE. De Niza and his crew were sent a hundred years earlier in 1539.
2. TRUE, unfortunately. Estevanico, perhaps the first African to explore this part of the world, used violence against the Zuni people rather than trying to have a more peaceful and productive conversation with them.
3. FALSE. De Niza did not find the famed Seven Cities because they didn't exist. However, he did lie to Spanish officials and tell them that he had found the Seven Cities, and so, in 1540, they did send out another group of explorers to investigate.
4. TRUE
5. FALSE. Many of these civilizations have been around for over 1,000 years. In contrast, most countries in this part of the Western Hemisphere haven't even been established for 300 years (including the US!).
6. Very FALSE! Although the Spanish empire gained wealth and power through its conquests, the native people whose land they pillaged were left much worse off. Many of them were even forced into slavery for Spanish masters.
7. TRUE, and they were tragically successful in doing so, forcing native people to build churches while teaching them Catholicism at the very same time.
8. TRUE
9. FALSE! There are still about 8,000 Ashiwi people living on the Zuni reservation, and they're well known for their artistic abilities.



Vocabulary

Listening for Words

1. Make a four-column chart and label the columns “I don’t know,” “I’ve seen or heard, but don’t know the meaning,” “I think I know the meaning,” and “I know the meaning.”
2. Write the vocabulary word in the column that describes how well you know the meaning of the word.
3. Listen to [the episode](#). Note how the speaker uses the words.

Matching Words with Definitions

1. Print and cut apart the word and definition cards.
2. Spread out the word cards so you can see them all. One by one, attach a definition card to each word card.

Writing with New Words

After working with the words and definitions, write a one-page essay or story that uses at least three of the words.

missionary

A person sent to spread a religious faith among unbelievers.

Pueblo

A Native American village consisting of flat-roofed stone or adobe houses joined in groups, sometimes several stories high; the term used to identify people of Native American ancestry.



Vocabulary

civilization

A group of people living together with organized cities, rules, culture, and ways of working and sharing ideas.

The Age of Discovery

A time when European explorers traveled to many parts of the world, leading to new connections but also causing harm to Indigenous peoples through colonization, loss of land, and unfair treatment.

Estevanico

Also known as Esteban de Dorantes or Mustafa Azemmouri, was the first African to explore North America. He was of Moroccan ancestry and born into the Muslim faith. As a slave, he accompanied Spanish expeditions through the southwestern United States.

Franciscan

Members of a Catholic religious group who traveled with explorers to spread Christianity, often playing a role in missions that changed Indigenous cultures.



Discussion Questions

1. Can you imagine what it must have been like for Native people to see a person from Africa for the first time?
2. How did Estavanico communicate with the Zuni people? What was said?
3. What do you think happened that led to Estevanico's death?
4. How do you think the Zuni people felt when they first saw the Spanish arriving on horses—animals they had never seen before?
5. The Zuni described a rider on a horse as a "six-legged, two-headed creature." What does this tell you about how people make sense of new things using what they already know?
6. Why do you think some communities choose to remember certain parts of history while focusing more on preserving culture and language today?
7. How might history be different depending on who is telling the story—Spanish explorers or Zuni community members?
8. Why is it important to listen to voices from all sides when learning about the history of the Southwest?
9. Which parts of this story challenge things you may have learned before about early explorers or Southwest history?

Group Discussion Strategies

Think Pair Share:

1. Individually, student writes down their answer to a question.
2. Students pair up and tell each other their answers.
3. Teacher calls for volunteers to share with the whole class their answer (and/or their partner's answer). Teacher notes key words/phrases on board.

Round Robin:

1. Teacher poses one question (written on top of a large page) to students, who are assembled into small groups of 3 or 4.
2. Students take turns brainstorming the answers. The recorder of the group writes down all answers.
3. The leader reads the group's ideas to the entire class. Teacher moderates.



Writing Prompts & Extension Projects

Narrative Prompts

1. Imagine you are a child living in the Southwest in the 1500s when the Spanish first arrived. Tell a story about a day that changed everything for your community. What do you see, hear, and feel? How do people react to new animals, new people, or new ideas?
2. Imagine you are a Spanish explorer. Tell a story about when you first arrived at a Pueblo. What do you see, hear, and feel? How did the people living there react to your visit?

Extensions:

- *Illustrate an important moment from your story, such as seeing horses for the first time or watching the community gather.*
- *Draw a simple map showing where your story takes place.*
- *Act out a short scene from your story with a partner or group.*

Informative/Explanatory Prompts

1. What traditions, foods, or arts do modern Zuni people still practice today that connect them to their ancestors?

Extension:

- *Find a traditional food (like corn, wheat, or a Zuni bread) and write a short paragraph about how it's made today.*

2. What were some of the changes the Spanish brought—good, bad, or complicated—to the Southwest?

Extensions:

- *Create cards showing Spanish-introduced items (horses, metal tools, religion, crops) and sort them into helpful, harmful, or both.*
- *Make a poster showing three major impacts of the Spanish arrival and label each as positive, negative, or mixed.*



Writing Prompts & Extension Projects

Informative/Explanatory Prompts cont'd

3. Why do some historians say this time is called “The Age of Discovery,” and why might that term feel different to Indigenous people?

Extensions:

- Define words like *discovery*, *exploration*, *invasion*, and *contact*. Discuss how each can tell a different story.
- Students choose a corner of the room—“Good Term,” “Bad Term,” or “Needs a New Term”—and explain their reasoning.
- Come up with a new name for this period of history (e.g., “The Age of Encounters”). Create a title card explaining why your name fits better.

4. Why did the Spanish come to the Southwest, and how were their goals different from the Native peoples’ goals?

Extensions:

- Create a Venn diagram comparing Spanish goals (like finding riches, spreading religion, expanding empire) with Native peoples’ goals (like protecting land, family, culture, and resources).
- Cause & Consequence Chart: Make a chart showing Spanish goal → What they did → How Native peoples were affected.

Opinion/Persuasive Prompts

1. Do you think the arrival of the Spanish had mostly positive or mostly negative effects on the tribes of the Southwest? Choose a side and explain your reasons. Use evidence from what you learned about new animals, religion, trade, forced labor, disease, and cultural change.

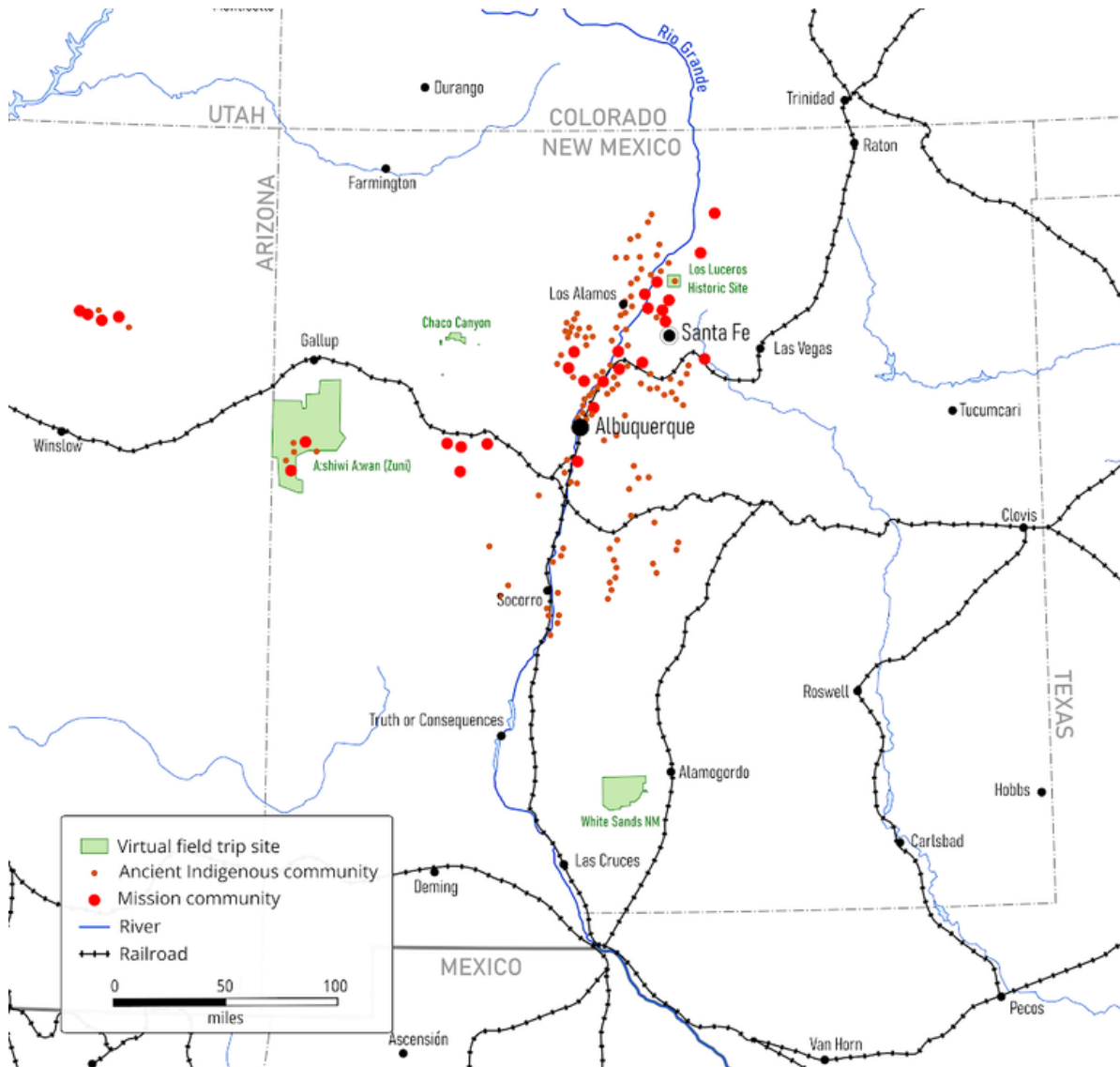
Extensions:

- Make a T-chart with two sides—“Positive Impacts” and “Negative Impacts”—and sort at least 8 pieces of evidence.
- With a partner, debate whether the Spanish arrival helped or harmed the region more.



Historical Map of the American Southwest

On this map, the places that we “visited” with our experts are shown in green. Each place was important in the history of the American Southwest. Have you ever been to any of these locations?



Along with the modern cities, you can also see where the many ancient communities existed, long before the Spanish colonizers arrived (shown as orange dots). How many can you count?

After the Spanish arrived, they built missions (shown as red dots). How many of these mission communities were located near the Rio Grande?

To learn the names and locations of the 19 modern Pueblo nations, you can study [this map](#). Can you label the Pueblo nations on this map?



Build a Timeline

Make a timeline using a piece of string! The length of the string will show how much time has passed. You can use it to see how long Indigenous peoples have lived in the American Southwest compared to the shorter time since Spanish colonists first arrived.

Materials

length of string (of at least 23m); tape measure; scissors; pen and paper; marker; paper clip or clothespin

Timeline Math

1. On a piece of string, mark out 1 cm from the end using a marker and a tape measure. This will represent 10 years of time.

What time span does 25 cm represent? _____

2. For more practice converting cm to years, complete the table below:

20 cm = 200 years	1.0 cm = 10 years	200 cm = 2,000 years
25 cm = _____	1.5 cm = 15 years	300 cm = _____
30 cm = 300 years	2.0 cm = 20 years	400 cm = _____
40 cm = 400 years	2.5 cm = 25 years	500 cm = 5,000 years
50 cm = _____	3.0 cm = 30 years	600 cm = _____
60 cm = 600 years	4.0 cm = _____	
70 cm = _____	5.0 cm = 50 years	1,000 cm = 10,000 years
80 cm = _____	6.0 cm = 60 years	2,000 cm = _____
90 cm = _____	7.0 cm = _____	3,000 cm = 30,000 years
100 cm = 1,000 years	8.0 cm = _____	4,000 cm = _____
	9.0 cm = 90 years	5,000 cm = 50,000 years
	10.0 cm = _____	6,000 cm = _____

3. Now practice converting years to cm:

What length of string would represent 100 years? _____

How long would an 80-year lifespan be on your string? _____



Build a Timeline

Make the Timeline

1. You will need 2,300 cm (23 m) of string to represent 23,000 years. Measure and cut this length of string. If need be, tie together segments of string to achieve this length. Stretch out the string (outdoors if necessary) to appreciate its full length.
2. Calculate how many years ago the year 1539 was:
Subtract 1539 from the current year. [Current year _____] - 1539 = [_____ years ago]
3. Take this “years ago” time span and convert it to cm: _____. Use this value in the next step.
4. From one end of the 2,300 cm string, measure _____cm. Affix a paperclip or clothespin to mark the spot.
5. Hang your timeline on the wall or ceiling. Use the “American Southwest Timeline” to add more events, calculating and measuring to place them in the right spots on your string timeline.

Scientists have found that people have been living in North America, including the White Sands area, for at least 23,000 years! Under the ground, they discovered human footprints in layers of dirt. Around these footprints were very old grass seeds that scientists dated to more than 21,000 years ago. Some footprints even show that people walked alongside Ice Age animals. You can think of a string as a timeline: the whole string shows how long Indigenous people have lived in the area, and the part from a clip or clothespin to the end shows the time since 1539, when the first Spanish people arrived.

Discuss

How would you describe the length of time since the Spanish people arrived compared to the time that Indigenous people have lived in the region?

Does this timeline change the way you think about history?

What other clips (events in history) would you add to the timeline?



American Southwest Timeline

21,000 BCE

Humans and megafauna lived in the White Sands region (Lake Otero).

850-1250

Chaco Canyon was a thriving destination for culture and trade.

1539

Spanish expedition (Friar Marcos de Niza and Estevanico) came to Zuni.

1680

Pueblo Revolt

1692

Spanish returned to Santa Fe.

1703

Los Luceros site was claimed by the Spanish.

1846-1848

Mexican-American War



First Encounter

Imagine you are a Zuni person who was there the day the Spanish first arrived on horses. Describe how it felt and what you thought.

Draw a picture of a “six-legged, two-headed creature.”



Upload your drawing to our Instagram [@tchradio](#), TikTok [@thechildrenshourradio](#), and [Facebook page](#), and check out others' designs!



Mail your drawing to:
The Children's Hour
PO Box 70236
Albuquerque, NM 87197



Record a Voice Message
This might be used on The Children's Hour!



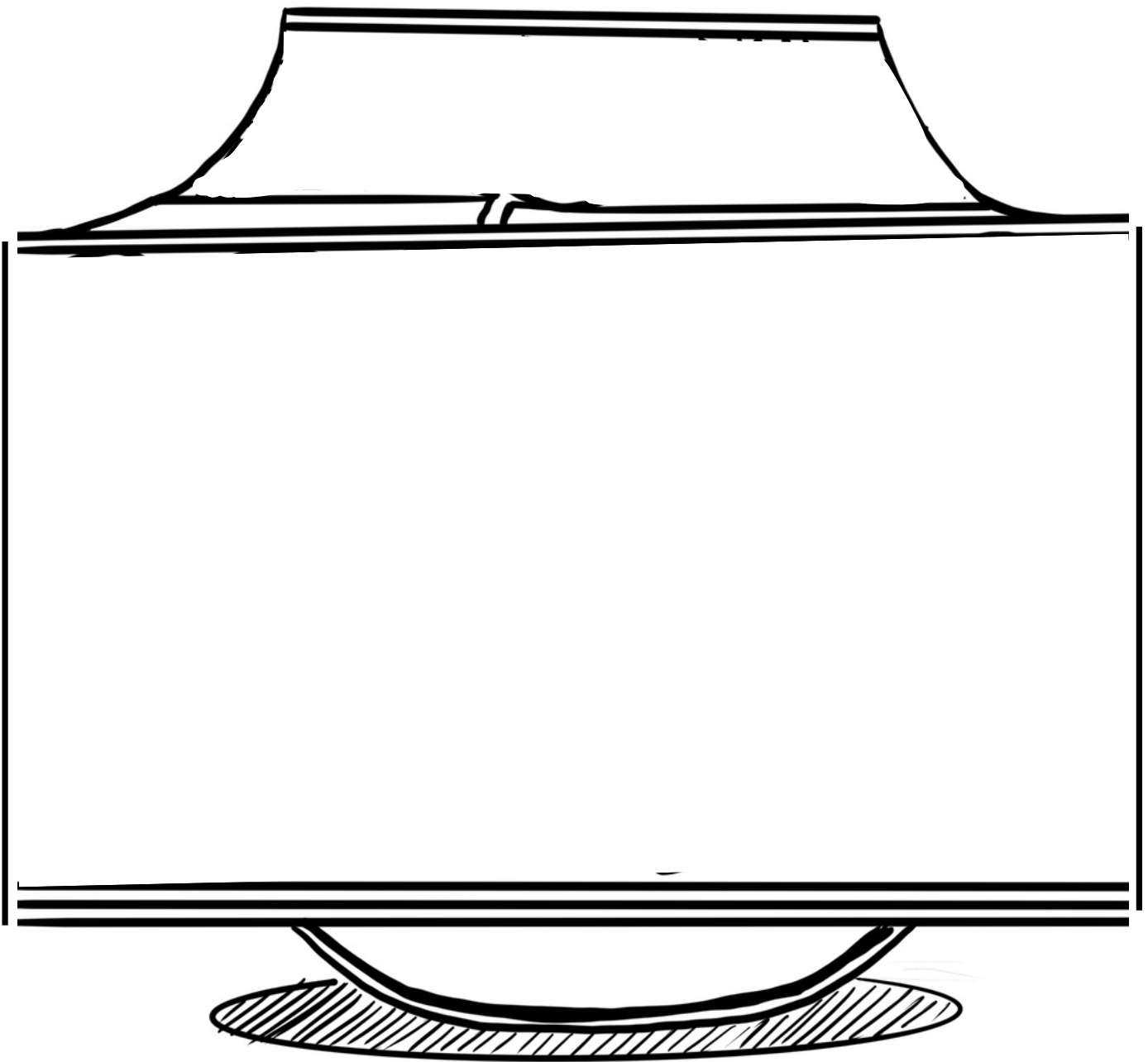


Communicating w/o Language

Zuni and Spaniards did not have a common language, so they communicated with signs and gestures. Try communicating something that happened to you using only gestures.

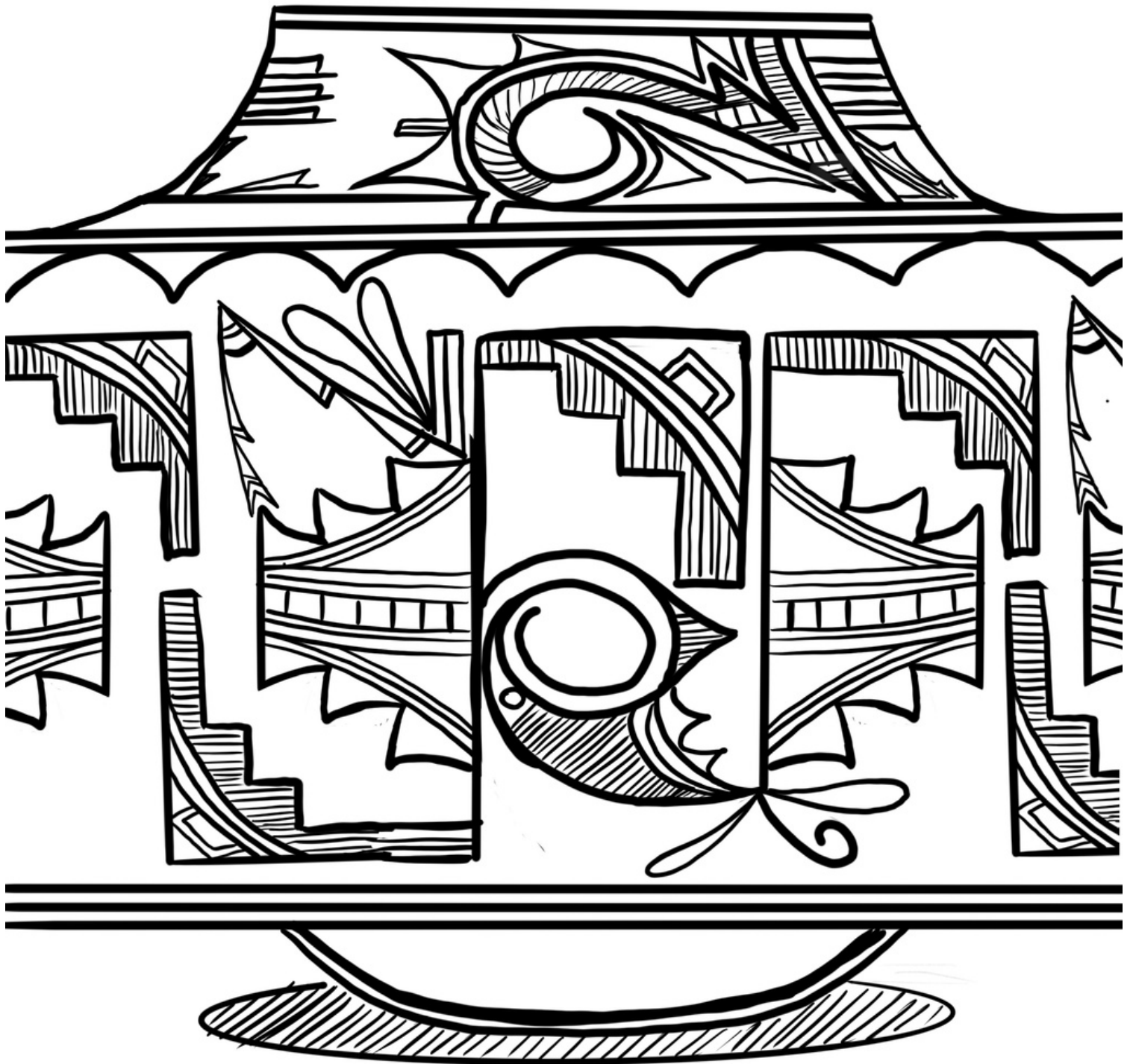
Zuni recorded their experiences on pottery, songs, dances, and stories.

Study the designs on the “Coloring Page: Zuni Art”, and then create your own design inspired by Zuni art to tell the story of something important that happened to you.





Coloring Page: Zuni Art

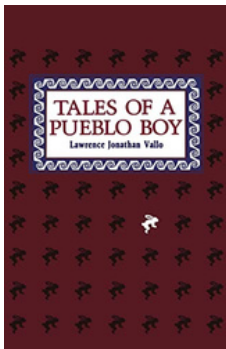




Additional Resources

[A:shiwi A:wan Museum & Heritage Center](#)

At the A:shiwi A:wan Museum & Heritage Center, the Zuni people provide learning experiences that emphasize A:shiwi ways of knowing.



Tales of a Pueblo Boy

by Lawrence Jonathan Vallo

Written for young readers but enjoyable for all ages, this book follows Rabbit as he learns from his Pueblo elders how to grow into a responsible adult, based on stories shared by author Lawrence Jonathan Vallo of Jemez and Acoma Pueblos.