

Learning Guide



A Brief History of the American Southwest for Kids Episode 6: Nationalization

We hope you enjoyed learning all about the era of nationalization of the American Southwest after the region was made a territory of the US. 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

Indian Boarding Schools: Discussion Questions & Writing Prompts

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.8; NCSS Theme 1: Culture; Theme 4: Individuals, Groups, & Institutions; Theme 6: Power, Authority, & Governance

The Arrival of the Railroad: Coloring Activity, Discussion Question, & Writing Prompt

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.9; NCSS Theme 3: People, Places, & Environments; Theme 2: Time, Continuity, & Change

New Mexican Chile: Background & Recipe

NCSS: Theme 1: Culture

Celebrating Culture: Activity

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.9; CASEL: Social Awareness & Self-Awareness

Additional Resources



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<https://www.childrenshour.org/southwest-american-history/>



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. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo meant that the land we've been talking about in the past episodes became property of the United States.	
	2. After this land was purchased by the US, the border with Mexico remained strictly closed.	
	3. After the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the US government started forcing Native people out of their homes.	
	4. After the US purchased this land, people who spoke all sorts of European languages began arriving here.	
	5. The influx of US tourists to the Southwest after the railroads were created caused Indigenous art styles to change.	
	6. The United States never broke the treaties it made with Native people.	
	7. Europeans who bought land with Native people on it tried to Americanize them by sending Native kids to boarding schools.	
	8. Some of the boarding schools still exist today.	
	9. There are still nearly 100 Pueblos in the Southwest today.	



Get Set to Listen

Answer key

1. TRUE. It was Mexican territory before that, and Spanish even before that, but Native people had been living on it the whole time.
2. FALSE. There was actually lots of trade throughout the area, all the way from Mexico City to California.
3. TRUE. The US signed over 350 treaties that required Native groups to give up their large areas on land for smaller, less desirable areas.
4. TRUE
5. TRUE. Americans couldn't bring back large items, so Native people began making little trinkets that could be taken home as souvenirs.
6. FALSE! Unfortunately, the General Allotment Act was passed in the late 1800s, and it took away reservations from Indigenous people unless they conformed to American culture.
7. TRUE. Native children were treated horribly at these institutions and were severely punished for speaking their native language.
8. FALSE. The last ones were closed in the 1970s.
9. FALSE. There used to be over 100, but now there are only 19 remaining.



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.

treaty

An agreement or arrangement made by negotiation between two or more states or rulers.

reservation

A tract of land set aside by a government to house a certain group of people.



Vocabulary

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

This 1848 treaty ended the war between the United States and Mexico, giving a large amount of land to the U.S. For Native peoples living there, it often meant loss of land, changes to their legal rights, and challenges to their culture and way of life.

General Allotment Act (a.k.a. Dawes Act)

A law passed in 1887 that divided Native American land into individual plots for families, aiming to encourage farming, but it often caused Native people to lose land and weakened their communities.

El Camino Real (de Tierra Adentro)

The "Royal Road of the Interior" is the earliest trade route in the United States. Linking Spain's colonial capital at Mexico City to its northern frontier in distant New Mexico, the route spans three centuries, two countries, and 1,600 miles.

assimilate

To adopt the customs, culture, or way of life of another group, sometimes losing your own original traditions in the process.



Vocabulary

Indian boarding schools

Schools where Native American children were sent, often far from their homes, to learn English, European-American customs, and religion, usually being forced to give up their own language and culture.

endurance

The ability to withstand hardship, adversity, or stress.

resilience

The ability to recover from or adjust to misfortune or change.

Write your own vocabulary word.

Write your own vocabulary word definition.



Discussion Questions

1. Why were so many different countries—Spain, Mexico, and the United States—interested in the Southwest?
2. How did the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo change life for people already living in places like New Mexico and California?
3. What do you think it felt like for people who lived in the region when their land suddenly became part of a different country?
4. What kinds of changes did Native people experience as the U.S. expanded west?
5. How did trade routes like the Santa Fe Trail and the railroad bring new people, ideas, and goods to the Southwest?
6. What do you think students in boarding schools might have felt when they were forbidden to speak their languages or see their families?
7. Why do you think it was important for some Native communities to continue telling their stories in their original languages?
8. How does this history help us understand New Mexico and the Southwest today?
9. Were you surprised by how many different cultural groups (Spanish, Pueblo, Mexican, Italian, Chinese, etc.) shaped the region? Why or why not?

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

Narrative Prompt

1. Imagine you are a child living in the Southwest during the late 1840s, when the land changed from Mexico to the United States after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Write a story describing what one day might have been like for you.

Include:

- What language your family speaks
- What changes you notice
- What you hear adults worrying or talking about
- How you feel about the future

Extension: Create a journal with three entries—one before the treaty, one during the transition, and one after, showing how your life changes over time.

Informative/Explanatory Prompts

1. Explain how the Southwest changed from Spanish rule, to Mexican independence, to becoming part of the United States.

Include:

- Key events (like the treaty of 1848)
- How these changes affected Native and Pueblo communities
- How trade routes and railroads shaped the region

Extension: Make a timeline with at least five major events and brief explanations for each.

2. Write an informative piece explaining what reservations and boarding schools were, why the U.S. created them, and how they affected Native families.

Include:

- What changed for tribes
- Why these changes were harmful
- How Native communities responded and showed resilience

Extension: Create a two-column chart titled “Changes Forced on Native Communities” and “Ways They Showed Strength.”

Opinion/Persuasive Prompt

1. Do you think it is important for all students today to learn about the experiences of Native people in the Southwest during Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. rule?

State your opinion and support it with:

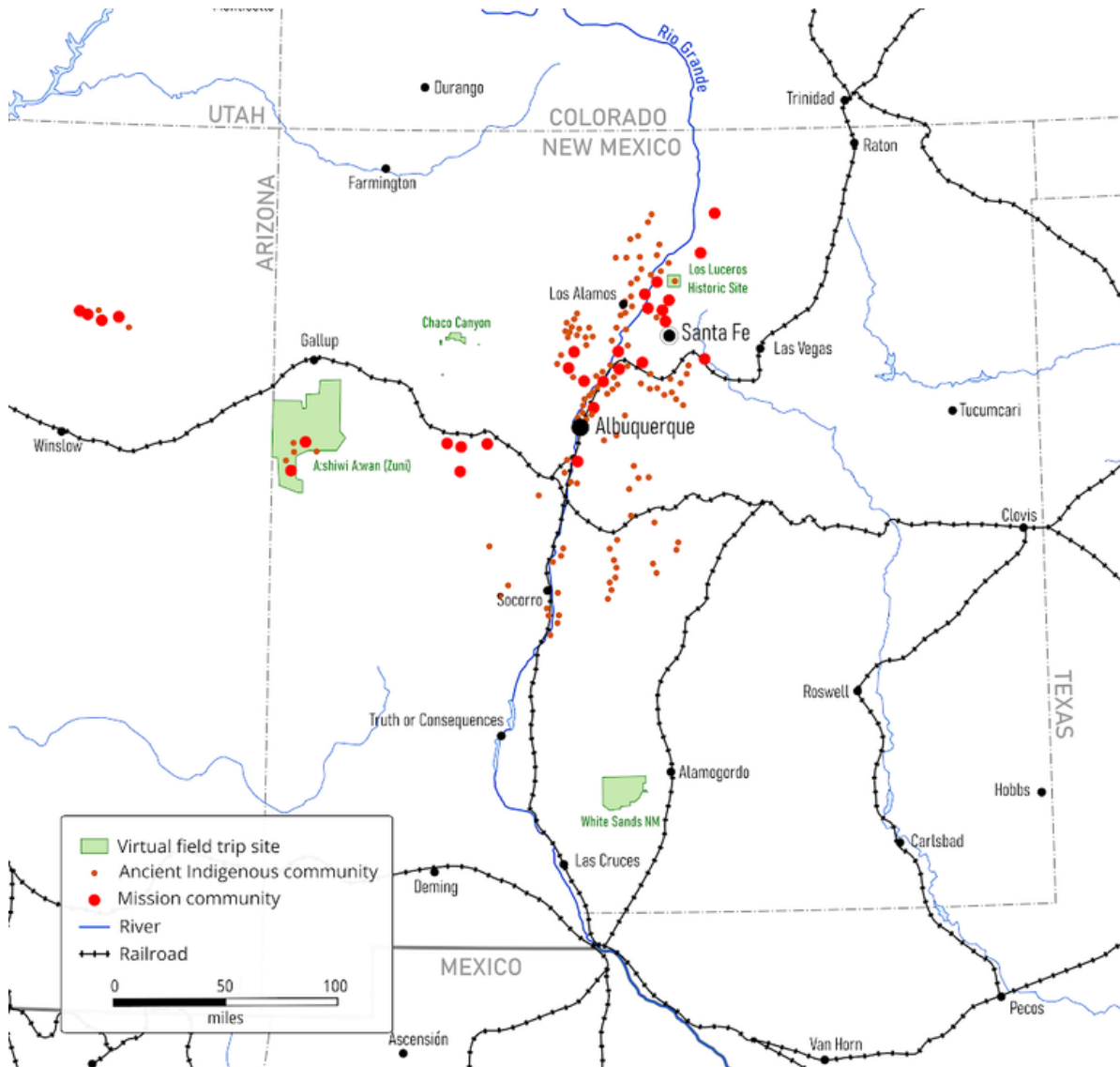
- Evidence from the passage
- Examples of how history still affects people today
- Reasons why learning this history could help us make better decisions

Extension: Write a short speech (1–2 paragraphs) that you could read to your class to persuade them why this topic matters.



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?



Indian Boarding Schools

Can you imagine what it must have been like to be sent away to boarding school? What if someone today told you that you must change the way you wear your hair and clothes? How would you feel? What would you do?

Listen

to [The Children's Hour, "A Brief History of the American Southwest for Kids, episode 6: Nationalization"](#) (segment 7:47-10:28) to learn about Indian boarding schools.



Discuss

1. Why was language such an important part of Native identity, and why was losing it so harmful?
2. Why do you think it was important for some Native communities to continue telling their stories in their original languages?
3. Mary Weahkee and others talk about Native resilience. What examples of strength or endurance do you remember from the episode?
4. How have Native people worked to keep their culture alive even after so much hardship?
5. What can we learn today from the way Native communities protected their land, languages, and traditions?

Write

- Write an informative piece explaining what reservations and boarding schools were, why the U.S. created them, and how they affected Native families. Include what changed for tribes, why these changes were harmful, and how Native communities responded and showed resilience

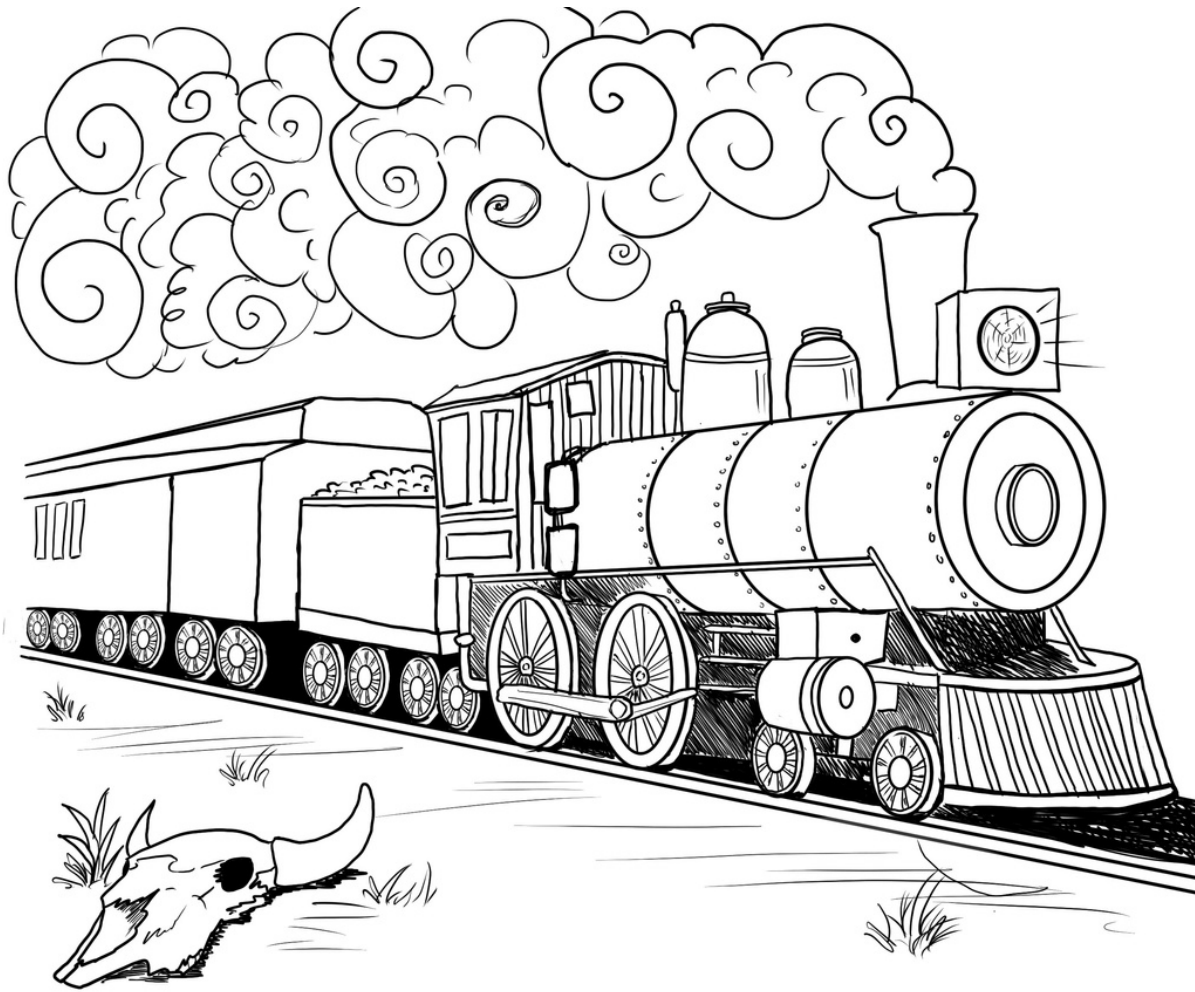
Extension: Create a two-column chart titled “Changes Forced on Native Communities” and “Ways They Showed Strength.”

- Many Native languages were almost lost because of the boarding school era. Write an opinion piece explaining whether you think modern schools should help teach or preserve Native languages. Include reasons, evidence, and examples of how language connects to culture.

Extension: Design a poster encouraging your school to support Native language programs.



The Arrival of the Railroad



Listen

to [The Children's Hour, "A Brief History of the American Southwest for Kids, episode 6: Nationalization"](#) (segment 5:34-7:43) to learn about how America got the land needed to build the railroads as well as what happened as a result of the railroads.

Discuss

- How did railroads change the American Southwest?

Write

Tell a story from the point of view of someone watching the first train arrive in their community. Describe:

- What kinds of new people and goods arrive
- How the community reacts
- What surprises or confuses you

Extension: Illustrate a "Before and After the Railroad" scene showing the changes the narrator sees.



New Mexican Chile

For hundreds of years, chiles have been an important food in the American Southwest. The Spanish first brought chile peppers to the region. Over time, Pueblo peoples began growing and eating them, and chiles became part of everyday meals. Today, chiles are still very important in New Mexico. The state's high desert climate and soil help give them their special flavor. During harvest season, people can often see chile roasters outside stores, filling the air with the smell of roasted green chile.

Red Chili Sauce Recipe

[video link to recipe](#) from chefnite2015

Ingredients

10-12 cleaned and seeded dried New Mexico chile pods
1/2 of a white medium onion
2- garlic cloves
4- cups of water
1- heaping tablespoon of lard or vegetable oil if vegetarian
1- teaspoon dried oregano
garlic salt to taste

Procedure

1. In a medium pot on medium heat, add your dried chile pods, onion, garlic, and cover with 4 cups of water and simmer for 5-10 minutes.
2. In a blender, place all ingredients except for the water, and add beef or chicken stock and a dash of salt; blend until smooth. For a vegetarian option, add the water that you simmered the chile in.
3. In a skillet on low heat, add the lard and melt before pouring the puree through a strainer to catch any remaining bits and pieces.
4. Simmer on low for 30-40 minutes, stirring frequently until it has thickened—season with oregano and garlic salt to taste. Cumin can be added by choice. Enjoy!





Celebrating Culture

Resilience

Listen to [The Children's Hour, "A Brief History of the American Southwest for Kids, episode 6: Nationalization"](#) (segment 10:35-11:29).

Despite many hardships and injustices, Natives have shown **resilience** and **endurance** to preserve their culture, family, and land. How do you celebrate and protect your culture?

Draw something you do to celebrate your culture:



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

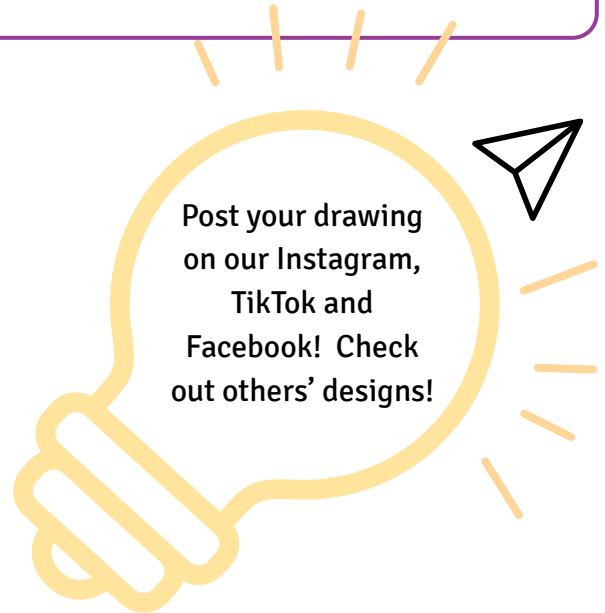


Mail your drawing to:
The Children's Hour
PO Box 70236
Albuquerque, NM 87197



Record a Voice Message

This might be used on The Children's Hour!



Post your drawing
on our Instagram,
TikTok and
Facebook! Check
out others' designs!



Additional Resources

[The United States Government's Relationship with Native Americans](#)

Read a brief overview of relations between Native Americans and the United States Government.

[Map of the United States at the beginning of the Mexican-American War, 1846](#)

[Map of the Mexican Cession of lands after the Mexican-American War, 1848](#)

Videos

[Red Chili Sauce Recipe](#)

Red chile sauce is made from dried New Mexico red chile pods and tastes great on enchiladas, burritos, rellenos, and many other Southwestern foods.