

THE GRAND ADVENTURE!

Welcome Travelers

Welcome to the grand adventure! Lessons on El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro will lead all involved in a traveling experience unlike any other. The four lessons take the traveler from the present to the past and from Mexico City to Santa Fe. Travel through time on highways, back roads, and trails. Discover what was bought, sold, and traded. Learn how a time of exploration shaped our lives today.

Project Goals

The principal goal of this project was to create a set of four lessons relating to the history of travel and trade on El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, the 1,550-mile road that linked Mexico City to Santa Fe during Spanish colonial and later times. The lessons have been designed to be used in both New Mexico and Mexico, in English-only, English-as-a-second-language, bilingual, and Spanish-only classrooms.

Much has been written about El Camino Real, a rugged, often dangerous trail that served for almost three centuries as the major trade route north from Mexico City. Documentary sources that we have used in preparing the lessons include journals, maps, official and informal lists of items carried on the road, and descriptions of events that took place along the way. The journals are an especially interesting source and include private diaries, official military accounts, and the observations of professional merchants.

Most of the people traveling El Camino Real were men, and it is primarily from their accounts that we know the history of the road. But other perspectives are also represented, and there are other histories to be told. A secondary goal of these lessons is to introduce students to the idea that history often extends beyond what a textbook might provide, and that alternative perspectives on events and people sometimes exist side-by-side with the conventional understanding. Where possible, these alternative perspectives have been incorporated into the background materials and activities.

Using These Lessons

The lessons in this unit relate to New Mexico history, U.S. history, and world history. They can be used as stand-alone activities, or to supplement traditional classroom texts and existing units. Each lesson is tied to a set of concepts and can be used by itself, in relation to other topics, or as part of a larger unit on El Camino Real. A minimum of additional materials are required, and all are either inexpensive or already available in the classroom. The goal is to make these lessons as flexible and easy to use as possible.

Relation to Project Archaeology Materials

The lessons included in this unit relate to many of the lessons in both *Intrigue of the Past: A Teacher's Activity Guide for Fourth through Seventh Grades* and *Discovering Archaeology in New Mexico*. *Intrigue of the Past* contains 28 lessons relating to archaeology and archaeological ethics. *Discovering Archaeology in New Mexico* contains essays covering 12,000 years of cultural history, written at the fifth-grade level. El Camino Real is only superficially covered in the latter text. The essays presented here are specific to the topic, and the activities relate directly to it.

Relation to Educational Standards

For a lesson to be useful in a classroom, it must relate to state educational standards and benchmarks. The subjects covered in each of the lessons presented here have been correlated with the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks for grades 5–8. Learning objectives are also linked to Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. The student reading material supplied with this unit has been correlated to the Edward Fry Readability Graph. The graph offers a determination of approximate grade level for the materials based on the number of sentences per 100 words and the number of syllables per 100 words. All student materials fall between fifth- and seventh-grade reading levels.

Initiating the Unit and Evaluating Student Progress

Students should begin the unit by creating a journal. Journals were kept by only a small portion of the people who traveled El Camino Real, but some of what we know about the road comes from the variety of perspectives from which these diaries were written. As part of the unit, students will write down the day's events, including their own observations and thoughts. They are responsible for organizing the information that they gather and for the progress of their own learning. For the teacher, the journal will serve as a portfolio of each student's work and a tool for evaluating the student's progress. Prior to the first lesson, each student should be provided with the materials necessary to create their own journal. This process may be as basic as providing students with construction paper and lined writing paper or something more intricate such as designing cloth-covered journals. The journaling process introduces students to the

basics of observing and recording, processes that are essential to historical archaeology, the documentation of the past, and to understanding how historical accounts become “history.”

Sponsorship

This project was sponsored by a grant from the New Mexico Office of the Bureau of Land Management, administered by the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division. All materials may be copied for classroom use. For all other uses, please contact the author for permission.

Acknowledgments

The greatest thanks go to Glenna Dean, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division, and Stephen Fosberg, New Mexico Bureau of Land Management, for sponsoring this project. They are to be commended again for their continued support for the development of archaeological and historical education materials. Scott O’ Mack, Statistical Research, Inc., conducted background research and wrote the teachers’ background section on which all materials are based. Thanks to those who granted permissions for the use of photos and images, and to Chris Dore, Statistical Research, Inc. for creating the student worksheet maps from actual satellite images. Several colleagues read the manuscript and offered helpful suggestions. Thanks to Joe Watkins, Department of Anthropology, University of New Mexico, and to Terry Klein and Lynne Sebastian, SRI Foundation, for their assistance and enthusiastic support. June-el Piper did a superb editing job. Thanks to Sherry Fletcher, Truth or Consequences Public Schools, for reviewing the materials from the perspective of an educator and an administrator. Carole Nagengast, Department of Anthropology, University of New Mexico assisted by locating a translator in Mexico. Thanks to Aurora Muñoz, Mexico City, Mexico for translating the unit into Spanish, thereby expanding its usability. And lastly, thanks to you, the teachers who use these lessons in your classrooms. Through your efforts, your students receive a unique view into the past.