## **DISCOVER AMERICA** Teacher Guide



### Striking Gold: The Impact and Legacy of the American Gold Rush



# Table of **Contents**

3	Themes & Values
	Learning Objectives
4	Key Terms
5	Introduction
9	Lesson
15	Activity: Building History: The Transcontinental
	Railroad and the End of the Gold Rush
17	Activity: Challenge Cards
21	Assessment: Gold Rush Impact Analysis Project
23	Assessment: Gold Rush Impact Analysis Project
	Rubric
25	Student Text
26	Resources
27	Images
35	Notes



### **Key Themes**

- Dreams of Prosperity
- Persistence and Perseverance
- The Journey West
- Economic Boom and Bust
- Global Impact

### **Core Values**

- Community
- Life
- Liberty



### **Learning Objectives**

#### Students will be able to

- Identify who the "49ers" were and why they traveled so far to reach California.
- Explain what life was like for miners during the Gold Rush, including the tools they used and the challenges they faced.
- Identify how the Gold Rush changed California, such as the rapid growth of towns.
- Discuss basic economic principles by learning how the demand for resources like gold influenced people's decisions to move and set up businesses.
- Examine the diverse effects of the Gold Rush on various groups, including miners, local indigenous populations, and immigrants.
- Explain why James Marshall and John Sutter initially wanted to keep the discovery of gold a secret.
- Critically assess how Sam Brannan's decision to show gold to the people in San Francisco influenced the spread of the Gold Rush.

# Key Terms

- 0 1 **49ers:** the nickname for those who flocked to northern California in 1849 hoping to take advantage of the Gold Rush.
- 0 2 **gold miner:** someone who digs or sifts through dirt to find gold, a shiny and valuable metal.
- 0 3 **Gold Rush:** a time period when many people moved to California between 1848 and 1855, seeking their fortunes by searching for gold.
- 0.4 **sawmill:** a place where big logs are cut into boards and planks for building things.
- 0 5 **sluice box:** a tool used in gold mining to separate gold from gravel and sand by allowing water to wash away lighter materials while the gold, being heavier, settles behind riffles along the bottom of the trough.
- 0 6 **waterwheel:** a type of device that takes advantage of flowing or falling water to generate power by using a set of paddles mounted around a wheel.

#### **TELL** Students

Today, we are going to learn about an important period in American history. Please listen to this riddle and work with your neighbor to try to figure out our learning topic! Here is the riddle: *In lands of dust and dreams, seekers abound,* 

I'm sought by all, yet by few, I'm found. In streams that glitter with hope's bright gleam, I lie hidden, a secret of the golden dream.

#### **ASK** Students

What am I?

#### TELL Students 🙆 🎤

Today, we are diving into the exciting era of the Gold Rush! Gold is a precious metal that shines brightly and is highly valuable. The **Gold Rush** was a time period when many people moved to California between 1848 and 1855, seeking their fortunes by searching for gold. During this time, people wanted to find gold to buy all sorts of things. **[Reference Gold Rush Image]** So, they packed up their belongings and embarked on a long journey to California to search for it. However, finding gold was much harder than they imagined. Miners had to dig deep into the earth, sift through sand and gravel, and sometimes even get quite dirty in their quest. A **gold miner** is someone who digs or sifts through dirt to find gold, a shiny and valuable metal.

#### **ASK** Students

Why did people during the Gold Rush travel all the way to California, and what challenges did they face while searching for gold?

#### TELL Students 🙆

During the Gold Rush, people traveled to California in hopes of finding gold, which was a highly sought-after and valuable metal. They believed that discovering gold could lead to great wealth and the ability to purchase many luxuries. This excitement and the promise of riches drove them to undertake a challenging journey from their homes, often traveling long distances and facing many hardships along the way.

#### **TELL** Students (continued)

The journey to California was not easy. **[Reference Miners Image]** Miners had to cross rough terrain, including mountains and deserts, and many faced difficult conditions such as extreme weather and limited supplies. Once they arrived, the work of finding gold was even tougher than the journey. Miners had to dig through deep layers of earth, sift through large amounts of sand and gravel, and use various tools to separate the gold from other materials. This labor-intensive process was physically demanding and often left them covered in dirt. Despite their efforts, not everyone found gold, and those who did had to deal with the high costs of living and the competition from other miners. This period was marked by both great opportunities and significant struggles, as people navigated the harsh realities of mining life in pursuit of their dreams.

#### **ASK** Students

Now, let's think about the miners who faced these challenges. Imagine you are one of these miners. How would you prepare for such a demanding journey, and what strategies might you use to overcome the difficulties of finding gold?

#### TELL Students 🙆 🎤

If you were a miner in the Gold Rush, preparing for such a demanding journey would involve several important steps. You would need to gather essential supplies like food, tools, and equipment for mining. **[Reference Supplies Image]** Planning your route carefully to avoid dangerous or difficult terrain would also be important. Additionally, you might need to prepare for unexpected challenges, such as harsh weather or running out of supplies, by learning survival skills and making sure you have reliable companions. To overcome the difficulties of finding gold, you could use different strategies. For example, you might use specialized tools to help with the mining process, such as pans for panning gold, sluice boxes for separating gold from gravel, and picks and shovels for digging. **[Reference Pans, Sluice Box, Picks Image]** A **sluice box** is a tool used in gold mining to separate gold from gravel and sand by allowing water to wash away lighter materials while the gold, being heavier, settles behind riffles along the bottom of the trough. Understanding the best locations to search for gold, such as areas where gold is likely to be found in the riverbeds or in certain rock formations, would also be important.

#### **ASK** Students

What strategies would you use to prepare for and overcome the challenges of mining for gold during the Gold Rush, and why would it be important to choose the right tools and locations for searching for gold?

#### TELL Students 🙆 🎤

Now, let's explore an important figure from the Gold Rush era. John Sutter, a pioneer in California, named his new settlement "Nueva Helvetia," or "New Switzerland." He chose this name to bring a piece of his homeland, Switzerland, to his new life in California. **[Reference Sutter Image]** This name also reflected his hope for a new beginning and opportunities in this unfamiliar land, similar to the fresh start he associated with Switzerland. To help build his dream, Sutter hired a carpenter named James Marshall to construct a sawmill in Coloma, located along the south fork of the American River. **[Reference Sawmill Image]** A **sawmill** is a facility where large logs are cut into boards and planks, which are essential for building structures. The construction of the sawmill was completed in January 1848. However, to ensure that the sawmill could operate efficiently, the men needed more water power, so they began deepening the stream to increase the flow of water.

#### **ASK** Students

Why did John Sutter and James Marshall need to deepen the stream to run the sawmill, and what might have happened if they didn't make the stream deeper?

#### TELL Students 🙆 🔎

John Sutter and James Marshall needed to deepen the stream to run the sawmill because a deeper stream could provide more water flow. This increased flow was necessary to generate sufficient water power to operate the sawmill's machinery effectively. Sawmills require a lot of power to cut through large logs, and in the 1840s, this power typically came from waterwheels. A waterwheel needs a strong, steady flow of water to turn efficiently and consistently. **[Reference Waterwheel Image]** A **waterwheel** is a type of device that takes advantage of flowing or falling water to generate power by using a set of paddles mounted around a wheel.

#### **TELL** Students

On January 24, while checking on the progress of things, Marshall saw something shiny in the river. It sparkled in the sunlight and caught his eye — little did he know, this discovery was about to start a huge event in history! Let's watch another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to learn more!

#### WATCH O

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon Ep. 33: The Gold Rush



#### TELL Students 🙆

One day, while James Marshall was working on building the sawmill for John Sutter, he made an incredible discovery. As he was examining the area around the sawmill, he noticed some shiny, yellow pieces in the riverbed. After closer inspection, Marshall realized that he had found gold! Knowing how valuable this discovery could be, Marshall and Sutter decided to keep it a secret. **[Reference Gold Image]** They understood that gold was a rare and precious metal, and they feared that if too many people found out, it could lead to chaos and disruption. They hoped to keep the discovery under wraps until they figured out what to do next. Despite their efforts to keep the find confidential, word about the gold leaked out. People started talking about the shiny treasure they had heard about, and soon, the news spread rapidly across the region. The excitement grew, and many people began to flock to California in hopes of finding gold themselves. This sudden rush of people searching for gold would later become known as the Gold Rush, a time when thousands of individuals ventured westward in search of their fortunes.

#### **ASK** Students

Why do you think James Marshall and John Sutter initially wanted to keep the discovery of gold a secret?

#### TELL Students 🙆

James Marshall and John Sutter initially wanted to keep their gold discovery a secret because they understood its tremendous value. They knew that if news of the gold spread, it could attract a rush of people eager to find their own fortunes. This influx of hopeful miners could create chaos, overwhelm the area, and make it difficult for them to control the land and manage their gold extraction. By keeping the discovery quiet, they hoped to maximize their own gold collection before others arrived. Despite their efforts, the secret eventually leaked out to the residents of San Francisco. Initially, many people were skeptical and doubted the news. However, when a man named Sam Brannan displayed actual gold from the mill, the excitement grew. **[Reference Sam Brannan Image]** That summer, almost everyone in San Francisco, and soon many people across California, abandoned their homes and jobs in pursuit of gold. The frenzy was so intense that even the local newspaper ceased publication, as its staff and readers were all drawn to the gold fields.

#### **ASK** Students

What do you think would have happened if Sam Brannan had not shown the gold to the people in San Francisco? How might that have changed the way news of the gold spread?

#### **TELL** Students

If Sam Brannan had not shown the gold to the people in San Francisco, many might have continued to doubt the discovery. Brannan's display of real gold provided the proof that prompted thousands to leave their jobs and homes to search for gold. Without this visual evidence, the rush to find gold might have been slower and less intense, allowing Marshall and Sutter more time to gather gold quietly. However, even if Brannan hadn't made the discovery public, the news would likely have spread eventually, either through other means or as more people found gold on their own. In the 19th century, communication was much slower than it is today — there were no phones or computers to share news instantly. As a result, people from distant places like Oregon, Mexico, and even as far away as China and Peru did not hear about the gold as quickly as people located closer to California. However, even those far away from California eventually heard about the gold and traveled to California in hopes of striking it rich.

#### **ASK** Students

Why do you think people from places like China and Peru came to California to find gold?

#### TELL Students 🙆

Please read the following passage to learn more. [Teachers: Please print and disseminate fifth grade student text.]

People from distant places such as China and Peru traveled all the way to California to search for gold after hearing stories of the vast amounts of gold discovered there. They believed that by finding gold, they could improve their lives, buy things they needed, and potentially achieve great wealth. Despite the grueling and perilous journey across continents and through treacherous conditions, the promise of striking it rich motivated many to undertake the long trip. Upon arriving in California, these gold seekers, along with many others, faced the challenges of mining in harsh conditions with rudimentary tools, hoping that their efforts would lead to a better life.

#### **TELL** Students (continued)

The excitement about California's gold was so significant that it even caught the attention of President James K. Polk. In his State of the Union address in December 1848, Polk highlighted the astounding quantities of gold being found in California, stating that the amount was so immense it was almost unbelievable. This official endorsement further fueled the Gold Rush, drawing even more people to the region.

#### **ASK** Students

Why did people want to find gold?

#### TELL Students 🔎

People wanted to find gold in California because they heard it could make them very rich. They imagined using the gold to buy things they needed or wanted, like food, clothes, or even houses. The stories of a lot of gold in California made them excited and hopeful, so they traveled long distances, even across mountains and oceans, to try and find this treasure. They were called "49ers" because so many of them came in the year 1849. "**49ers**" is the nickname for those who flocked to northern California in 1849 hoping to take advantage of the Gold Rush. These adventurers were willing to take big risks and leave everything behind because they believed finding gold could give them a much better life.

#### **ASK** Students

Why did the "49ers" go to California to find gold?

#### TELL Students 🙆

The "49ers," as the gold seekers of 1849 were known, journeyed to California in pursuit of gold after hearing compelling tales about the vast quantities discovered there. **[Reference 49ers Image]** They hoped to gain wealth that could significantly improve their lives, enabling them to purchase essentials like food and clothing, or even land. Driven by a sense of excitement and optimism, they undertook perilous journeys, crossing treacherous mountain ranges and vast oceans, leaving behind their familiar homes and daily lives.

#### **TELL** Students (continued)

Despite their enthusiasm, finding gold was not the straightforward path to riches that many had anticipated. The quest for gold was challenging, and success often hinged more on luck than on the hard labor invested. Life in the mining camps proved to be grueling. Miners faced poor-quality food, substandard housing, and unsanitary living conditions, which made their efforts even more difficult and their hopes of striking it rich increasingly uncertain.

#### **ASK** Students

What challenges did the "49ers" face when they arrived in California to search for gold, and how did these challenges differ from their expectations?

#### TELL Students 🙆

Please read the following passage to learn more.

These challenges were very different from what many of the "49ers" expected. They thought they would find plenty of gold and have a better life, but the reality was hard work with often little reward, tough living conditions, and a lot of risks.

As more people arrived in California, mining towns sprang up. While a few men did strike it rich by finding gold, many others found their fortune by providing services to the miners. Samuel Brannan, a merchant and newspaper publisher, became California's first millionaire not from mining gold, but from selling goods to miners. Other successful entrepreneurs included Levi Strauss, who became famous for his durable blue jeans; Domingo Ghirardelli, who sold chocolate and coffee; and Leland Stanford, who made a fortune from his grocery business. These businessmen made their wealth by "mining the miners" — profiting from the needs of those who came looking for gold.

#### **ASK** Students

How did Samuel Brannan become rich without finding gold?

#### Tell Students

Samuel Brannan became rich during the Gold Rush not by finding gold himself, but by selling goods to the miners who were looking for gold.

#### **TELL** Students (continued)

He was a merchant, which means he sold things that people needed to buy. Brannan knew that all the miners coming to California would need tools, food, and other supplies, so he set up a store to sell these items. As more and more miners arrived hoping to find gold, they all needed supplies, and Brannan's business thrived. He made a lot of money because he was selling what the miners needed to try their luck at finding gold. This smart approach to business made him California's first millionaire.

#### **ASK** Students

How did Samuel Brannan become California's first millionaire without finding any gold himself?

#### TELL Students 🖸

Samuel Brannan became California's first millionaire without mining for gold. He opened a store and sold tools, food, and other supplies that the gold miners needed. As more miners came to California to find gold, they shopped at Brannan's store, making his business very successful and making him very wealthy. In the five years following Marshall's discovery of gold in California, an astonishing 750,000 pounds of gold were extracted from the region's mountains, streams, and rivers. **[Reference Surface Gold Image]** However, by the mid-1850s, the easily accessible surface gold had largely been collected, leading many prospectors to join larger mining companies. These companies began using hydraulic mining, a method developed in 1853 that allowed for the extraction of gold on a larger scale but significantly damaged California's environment. Due to its destructive impact, hydraulic mining was eventually banned in 1884.

#### **ASK** Students

Why did Samuel Brannan become wealthy even though he never mined for gold, and what happened to gold mining in California after the easy gold was gone?

#### **TELL** Students

The huge number of people and wealth that came to California during the Gold Rush helped the state grow quickly and become the 31st state in the United States in 1850.

#### **TELL** Students(continued)

After that, more people kept moving to California, and its economy and industries continued to grow. Today, California remembers its Gold Rush history with the state motto, "Eureka," which means "I have found it," and it is also called "the Golden State" to celebrate this important time in its past.

#### **ASK** Students

Why is California called "the Golden State," and what does the state motto "Eureka" mean?

#### **TELL** Students

California is called "the Golden State" because of the Gold Rush, which brought a lot of people and wealth to the area and helped the state grow quickly. The state motto, "Eureka," means "I have found it," and it reflects the excitement of discovering gold during that time. Thanks to the Gold Rush, California's population grew very quickly. Between 1849 and 1855, about 300,000 people from all around the world came to California. It was an exciting time, but it was also hard for many people, including the Native American and Chinese communities. Let's watch these exciting Learn More with Liberty videos and another Patriot of the Week to learn more!

#### WATCH O

Learn More With Liberty: The Science of Gold: What Makes Gold So Valuable?

Learn More With Liberty: The Transcontinental Railroad and the End of the Gold Rush
Patriot of the Week: James Marshall



#### Objective

To help fifth graders understand the significant role of the Transcontinental Railroad in the conclusion of the Gold Rush era, emphasizing the impact on commerce, travel, and national connectivity.

#### **Materials Needed**

- Large classroom map of the United States featuring major geographic landmarks and Gold Rush sites
- Colored string or yarn to represent railroad lines
- Cards with challenges and historical events
- Fact sheets about key figures and cities involved in the railroad construction and Gold Rush
- Timelines to arrange along the railroad route
- "Building Supplies" kits (colored paper, scissors, markers, glue) for constructing railroad and city models

#### Setup

- 1. Prepare a large map on a bulletin board or a floor space.
- 2. Distribute "Building Supplies" kits to each group.
- 3. Create and distribute cards that describe specific challenges (e.g., geographic obstacles, economic fluctuations, technological innovations).

#### Introduction and Background

• Briefly discuss the Gold Rush's impact on westward expansion and introduce the Transcontinental Railroad as a transformative project that connected the eastern and western parts of the United States, facilitating the end of the Gold Rush.

#### **Team Role Assignment**

- Divide the class into small groups, assigning each a role: Engineers, Historians, Economists, and Geographers. Each team will have specific tasks:
- Engineers: Design and build a segment of the railroad on the map.
- *Historians:* Research and present key events during the construction and how it intersected with the end of the Gold Rush.
- Economists: Analyze the economic impact of the railroad and the shift in Gold Rush towns.
- *Geographers:* Identify and solve geographic challenges using the map and string to plot the railroad's route.



Building History: The Transcontinental Railroad and the End of the Gold Rush

#### Challenge Cards

• Each group draws a challenge card that they must address during their segment of the presentation. Challenges could include dealing with rugged terrains like mountains and rivers, securing funding, or solving labor shortages.

#### **Building the Railroad**

- Using their kits and the string, teams start constructing their railroad segments on the map, ensuring they connect smoothly with other segments.
- While building, each group explains their strategy and how they overcame the challenges presented in their cards.

#### **Timeline Placement**

• As the railroad grows, groups place timeline markers at significant points along the route, detailing major events and breakthroughs.

#### **Discussion and Reflection**

- Once the railroad is complete, each group presents their findings and models.
- Discuss how the completion of the railroad contributed to the decline of the Gold Rush and the development of new cities and industries.

#### **Critical Thinking Questions**

- How would the development of the American West have differed without the railroad?
- What long-term impacts did the railroad have on towns that thrived during the Gold Rush?

#### **Learning Outcomes**

- Students will understand the monumental engineering feat of the Transcontinental Railroad and its historical context.
- Students will appreciate the multidisciplinary aspects of historical events involving economics, geography, engineering, and history.
- Students will enhance their teamwork, problem-solving, and presentation skills.



### **Challenge Cards**

Below are challenge cards designed for the interactive activity about the Transcontinental Railroad and the end of the Gold Rush. Each card presents a specific obstacle or situation that groups must address as part of their task to build the railroad and analyze its impact.

These challenge cards are designed to prompt students to think critically and creatively about historical problems and modern-day project management, blending academic learning with practical problem-solving.



**Challenge:** Your team needs to design a section of the railroad that crosses the Sierra Nevada mountains. Consider the steep gradients and harsh weather conditions.

**Task:** Propose a solution for overcoming these geographic challenges using engineering solutions from the 1860s.

### Challenge Card 2: Funding Shortages

**Challenge:** Financial resources are running low due to economic downturns or investors pulling out.

**Task:** Develop a strategy to secure additional funding or reduce costs without compromising the safety and efficiency of the railroad.



### **Interactive Map Activity Event Cards**

### Challenge Card 3: Labor Disputes

**Challenge:** The workers on your segment of the railroad have gone on strike demanding better pay and working conditions.

**Task:** Negotiate a resolution that keeps the project on track and addresses worker concerns.

### Challenge Card 4: Technological Setbacks

**Challenge:** A key technological component (like the steam engine or rail ties) has proven less effective than expected.

**Task:** Research and find a historical technological innovation that could solve this issue.

### Challenge Card 5: Native American Land Rights

**Challenge:** Your route plans intersect with lands traditionally owned by Native American tribes.

**Task:** Create a plan that respects Native American rights while continuing your railroad development.



### **Interactive Map Activity Event Cards**

### Challenge Card 6: Environmental Obstacles

**Challenge:** The chosen route involves crossing a major river or other sensitive environmental area.

**Task:** Design a solution that minimizes environmental impact while ensuring the railroad remains functional.

### Challenge Card 7: Supply Chain Issues

**Challenge:** There's a delay in the delivery of essential materials like steel rails and timber due to logistical issues.

**Task:** Outline an alternative logistics strategy to keep construction moving forward.

### Challenge Card 8: Rapid Expansion

**Challenge:** The towns along your railroad segment are growing faster than infrastructure can support.

**Task:** Plan how to expand town infrastructure efficiently to keep pace with growth due to the railroad.

### 

### **Interactive Map Activity Event Cards**

### Challenge Card 9: Political Pressure

**Challenge:** Local politicians are pressuring for changes to the railroad route to benefit certain constituencies.

**Task:** Balance political demands with the most efficient and practical route choices.

### Challenge Card 10: Unexpected Gold Discovery

**Challenge:** A new gold discovery near your segment of the railroad has led to a sudden influx of people and increased demand for transport.

**Task:** Adjust your railroad plans to accommodate the increase in passenger and freight traffic.



### **Gold Rush Impact Analysis Project**

NAME: DATE:

#### **Objective**

This activity challenges fifth graders to explore the broader impacts of the California Gold Rush, focusing on economic, social, and environmental aspects. Students will engage in research, analysis, and presentation skills, applying higher-level thinking to understand the complexities of historical events.

#### Materials Needed

- Access to library resources or the internet for research
- Paper and pencils for notes and sketches
- Poster board or digital presentation software (like PowerPoint or Google Slides)
- Markers, colored pencils, and other art supplies for creating visual aids

#### **Choose a Focus Area**

- Students choose one focus area from the following options concerning the Gold Rush:
  - Economic Impact: Analyze how the Gold Rush impacted California's economy and the national economy.
  - Social Impact: Explore the effects on various populations, including immigrants, Native Americans, and the original California settlers.
  - Environmental Impact: Investigate the environmental consequences of the Gold Rush, such as landscape changes and pollution.

#### **Research Phase**

- Students conduct in-depth research on their chosen topic. They should look for specific examples, such as the rise of boomtowns, changes in population demographics, or specific environmental degradation events (e.g., the impact of hydraulic mining).
- Encourage the use of primary sources where possible, such as diaries, newspapers, and government documents from the period.

#### Analysis

- Students analyze the data and information gathered, looking for causes and effects. They should consider questions like:
  - What were the immediate and long-term impacts of these changes?



### **Gold Rush Impact Analysis Project**

#### Analysis (continued)

- How did these impacts vary between different groups or ecosystems?
- What lessons can we learn from the Gold Rush that apply to today's economic, social, or environmental issues?

#### **Creating the Presentation**

- Using their research and analysis, students create a detailed presentation. This can be a traditional poster, a digital slideshow, or even a small website.
- The presentation should include:
  - A brief introduction to their topic
  - Detailed sections on various impacts, supported by specific examples and sources
  - Conclusions drawn from their analysis
  - Visual aids such as charts, maps, or photographs to enhance understanding

#### **Presentation Day**

- Each student presents their findings to the class. Encourage students to ask questions and discuss similarities and differences in the impacts found by their classmates.
- Discuss as a class how understanding these impacts provides insight into the consequences of rapid economic growth and human migration.

#### Reflection

• After the presentations, ask students to write a reflection on what they learned about the Gold Rush's broader impacts and how it relates to modern issues such as resource management, community development, and environmental conservation.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

- Students will develop a deeper understanding of the complex effects of the Gold Rush beyond just the search for gold.
- Students will enhance their research, critical thinking, and analytical skills.
- Students will improve their ability to present historical information in a clear, engaging, and informative manner.

This project encourages a multifaceted exploration of the Gold Rush, promoting a comprehensive understanding through research, analysis, and creative presentation.



### **Gold Rush Impact Analysis Project Rubric**

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Research Quality (30 Points)	25-30 points Extensive research with a variety of credible sources; information is well- documented and relevant to the chosen topic.	19-24 points Adequate research with some use of credible sources; most information is relevant and properly cited.	13-18 points Basic research completed, minimal use of credible sources, some relevance to the topic.	0-12 points Limited research, few or no credible sources, or irrelevant information.
Analysis and Content Depth (30 Points)	25-30 points Presentation is well-organized, visually appealing, and includes a variety of engaging materials (charts, maps, images).	19-24 points Presentation is organized and includes some visual materials that support the text.	13-18 points Presentation is somewhat organized, lacks visual appeal or has minimal visual support.	0-12 points Analysis is superficial or missing; lacks clear connections and insight.
Presentation Quality (20 Points)	17-20 points Presentation is well-organized, visually appealing, and includes a variety of engaging materials (charts, maps, images)	13-16 points Presentation is organized and includes some visual materials that support the text.	9-12 points Presentation is somewhat organized, lacks visual appeal or has minimal visual support.	0-8 points Presentation is disorganized, visually unappealing, or lacking in supportive materials.



### **Gold Rush Impact Analysis Project Rubric**

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Clarity and Communication (10 Points)	9-10 points Information is communicated clearly and confidently; excellent use of language that engages the audience.	7-8 points Information is mostly clear with satisfactory language; engages the audience.	4-6 points Information is somewhat clear but may be confusing; minimal audience engagement.	0-3 points Information is poorly communicated; language is unclear or confusing.
Engagement and Interaction (10 Points)	9-10 points Actively engages with the audience through questions or prompts; effectively responds to peer questions.	7-8 points Some engagement with the audience and responds to questions adequately.	4-6 points Limited engagement with the audience; minimal interaction during Q&A.	0-3 points No attempt to engage the audience; does not respond to questions or interacts poorly.
Total Score : 100 points				



# Student Text

#### Please read the following paragraphs to learn more.

People from distant places such as China and Peru traveled all the way to California to search for gold after hearing stories of the vast amounts of gold discovered there. They believed that by finding gold, they could improve their lives, buy things they needed, and potentially achieve great wealth. Despite the grueling and perilous journey across continents and through treacherous conditions, the promise of striking it rich motivated many to undertake the long trip. Upon arriving in California, these gold seekers, along with many others, faced the challenges of mining in harsh conditions with rudimentary tools, hoping that their efforts would lead to a better life. The excitement about California's gold was so significant that it even caught the attention of President James K. Polk. In his State of the Union address in December 1848, Polk highlighted the astounding quantities of gold being found in California, stating that the amount was so immense it was almost unbelievable. This official endorsement further fueled the Gold Rush, drawing even more people to the region.



These challenges were very different from what many of the "49ers" expected. They thought they would find plenty of gold and have a better life, but the reality was hard work with often little reward, tough living conditions, and a lot of risks.

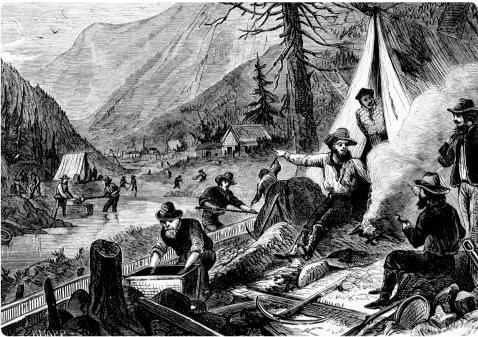
As more people arrived in California, mining towns sprang up. While a few men did strike it rich by finding gold, many others found their fortune by providing services to the miners. Samuel Brannan, a merchant and newspaper publisher, became California's first millionaire not from mining gold, but from selling goods to miners. Other successful entrepreneurs included Levi Strauss, who became famous for his durable blue jeans; Domingo Ghirardelli, who sold chocolate and coffee; and Leland Stanford, who made a fortune from his grocery business. These businessmen made their wealth by "mining the miners" — profiting from the needs of those who came looking for gold.



## Resources

- https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/guadalupe-hidalgo
- https://www.loc.gov/collections/california-first-person-narratives/articles-and-essays/early-california-history/discovery-of-gold/
- https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/goldrush-california/
- https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\_id=1099
- https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/goldrush-california/
- https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/annual-message-to-congress-5/
- https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/how-the-gold-rush-transformed-california
- https://mhs.mt.gov/education/docs/CirGuides/Ridge-Crime-Gold-Rush.pdf
- https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/california-gold-rush/sources/1912
- https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/the-gilded-age/american-west/a/the-gold-rush
- https://www.history.com/topics/19th-century/gold-rush-of-1849
- https://www.library.ca.gov/california-history/gold-rush/legacy/

**Gold Rush** 



Credit: Canva Pro.





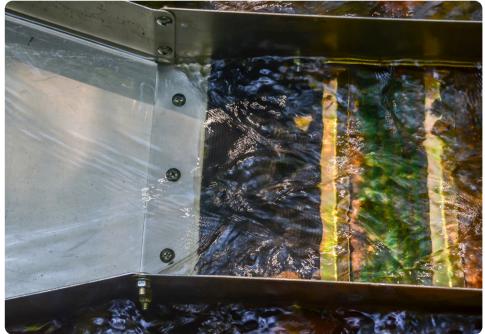
Credit: Canva Pro.

**Supplies** 



Credit: Canva Pro.

Pans, Sluice Box, Picks



Credit: Canva Pro.

John Sutter



Credit: Wikipedia.

Sawmill



Credit: Canva Pro.

Waterwheel

Gold



Credit: Canva Pro.

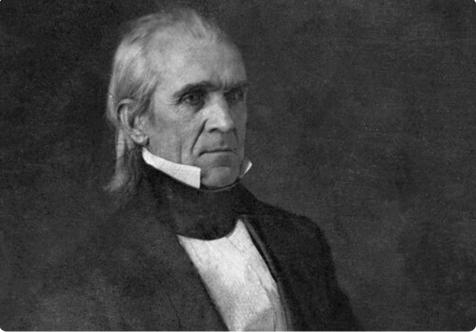


Credit: Canva Pro

49ers



**James Polk** 



Credit: Wikipedia.

Domingo Ghirardelli



Credit: National Portrait Gallery

#### **Leland Stanford**



Credit: U.S. Senate Historical Office

#### Levi Strauss



Credit: Levi Strauss & Co.

#### Sam Brannan



Credit: Canva Pro.

Surface Gold



Credit: Canva Pro.



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