## **DISCOVER AMERICA** Teacher Guide



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



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### **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

- Recognize gold and understand why it was so valuable to people during the Gold Rush.
- 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.

## 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 **merchant:** someone who buys goods and sells them for a profit.
- 0.5 **sawmill:** a place where big logs are cut into boards and planks for building things.
- 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.

## Introduction

#### **TELL** Students

Today, we are going on a learning adventure! To find out what our topic will be, you are going to solve a riddle. Here is your riddle:

I'm not a metal, yet I'm golden, I'm not a treasure, yet I'm sought, I can shine and make you feel golden, But in the end, I'm often bought.

#### **ASK** Students

What am I?

#### TELL Students 🔎

That is right! The answer is gold! Gold is a shiny and precious metal that some people dreamed of finding a long time ago, hoping it would bring them riches and opportunities. In the past, miners set off on a challenging journey to California, eager to strike it rich by finding gold. A **gold miner** is someone who digs or sifts through dirt to find gold, a shiny and valuable metal. They faced long days of digging, sifting through sand, and getting their hands dirty, all in search of gold.

#### **ASK** Students

Why did people in the past embark on the challenging journey to California, and what kind of work did they have to do once they arrived?

#### TELL Students 🙆

People in the past embarked on the challenging journey to California in hopes of finding gold and becoming rich. Once they arrived, they had to work hard, digging, sifting through sand, and getting their hands dirty to uncover the precious metal. One notable figure during this time was John Sutter. **[Reference Sutter Image]** Sutter was a Swiss immigrant who owned a large land grant in California. He had a vision of turning this land into a new settlement he wanted to call Nueva Helvetia, which means "New Switzerland."

## Introduction

#### **ASK** Students

Why do you think John Sutter named his new settlement "Nueva Helvetia," which means "New Switzerland"? What does this tell us about how he felt about his new land and his homeland?

#### TELL Students 🎤

John Sutter named his new settlement "Nueva Helvetia," or "New Switzerland," because he wanted to bring a piece of his homeland, Switzerland, to his new life in California. It also suggests that he saw his new land as a place of opportunity, where he could start fresh and build a prosperous future, much like the hopeful beginnings he associated with Switzerland. To help build his dream, Sutter hired a carpenter named James Marshall to construct a sawmill in Coloma, along the south fork of the American River. A **sawmill** is a place where big logs are cut into boards and planks for building things. They finished building the sawmill in January 1848, but they needed more water power to run it, so they started to deepen the stream.

#### **ASK** Students

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

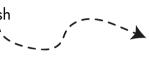
#### TELL Students 🙆 🎤

John Sutter and James Marshall were working to deepen the stream near Sutter's Mill to enhance the flow of water. They needed a stronger and more consistent water flow to generate the necessary power for the sawmill's machinery. In the 1840s, sawmills relied heavily on waterwheels, which required a robust and steady stream of water to function effectively. The increased water flow would enable the waterwheel to turn with greater force, providing the energy needed to cut through the large logs used in their operations. 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. **[Referece Waterwheel Image]** On January 24, as Marshall was inspecting the progress of their work, he noticed something gleaming 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!

## Introduction

#### WATCH **O**

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon Ep. 33: The Gold Rush







#### TELL Students 🙆 🎤

One day, while James Marshall was overseeing the construction of a sawmill for John Sutter, he stumbled upon some shiny gold flakes embedded in the riverbed. Recognizing the potential significance of his find, Marshall and Sutter decided to keep their discovery a secret. **[Reference Gold Image]** They understood that revealing such a treasure could not only lead to immense wealth but also attract a flood of people. Despite their efforts to maintain secrecy, whispers of the gold began to circulate. The idea of striking it rich quickly captured the imagination of the public. News of the discovery spread rapidly, driven by word of mouth and local rumors. The quiet discovery quickly turned into a major sensation, leading to a huge influx of gold seekers and marking the beginning of the Gold Rush era. The **Gold Rush** was a time period when many people moved to California between 1848 and 1855, seeking their fortunes by searching for gold.

#### **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 wanted to keep the discovery of gold a secret because they knew it was a very big find that could make them a lot of money. If the news about the gold spread, they feared that many people would rush to the area to look for gold. This could cause chaos, make it hard for them to control the land, and potentially prevent them from collecting as much gold for themselves. By keeping it secret, they hoped to have more time to gather as much gold as possible before others came looking for it. The first people to hear about the gold were in San Francisco. At first, not many believed the news until a man named Sam Brannan showed everyone real gold from the mill. **[Reference Sam Brannan Image]** That summer, almost everyone in San Francisco, and soon after, a lot of people in California, left their homes and jobs to find gold. Even the local newspaper stopped printing because everyone went to look for gold!

#### **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

Please read the following paragraph to learn more. [Teachers: Please print and disseminate fourth grade student text to students.]

If Sam Brannan had not shown the gold to the people in San Francisco, it is likely that many people would have continued to doubt the truth of the gold discovery. Without the visual proof that Brannan provided, the excitement and urgency that drove thousands to abandon their jobs and homes to search for gold might not have happened as quickly or intensely. This would have given Marshall and Sutter more time to collect gold quietly, but eventually, the news would likely have spread, perhaps through other channels or after more people discovered gold. Back in those days, there weren't any phones or computers, so news traveled very slowly. People from nearby places like Oregon and Mexico, and even as far as China and Peru, heard about the gold and came to California to see if they could find some too.

#### **ASK** Students

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

#### **TELL** Students

People from places like China and Peru came all the way to California to find gold because they heard stories about how much gold was there and thought they could find some too. They wanted to find gold because it was very valuable and could help them buy things they needed or wanted. Even though it was a long and hard journey, the chance to find gold and maybe become rich was a big reason for them to come. When they finally arrived in California, they tried their best to find gold, hoping it would change their lives for the better. Then, President James K. Polk confirmed the presence of gold in California in his State of the Union address in December 1848.

#### **ASK** Students

Why do you think people traveled to California to look for gold?

#### **TELL** Students

Please read the following paragraph to learn more. People traveled all the way to California from places like China and Peru because they heard exciting stories about a lot of gold being there.

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

They thought that if they could find some gold, they could become rich and buy things they needed or wanted, like food, clothes, or even a new house. The journey was very long and hard, but the chance to find gold and improve their lives was worth it to them. They hoped that finding gold would help them and their families have a better future. In the spring of 1849, thousands of people, mostly men, traveled across mountains and oceans to California to try to get rich quickly. These gold seekers were called "49ers." They left everything behind and took big risks, hoping to find gold.

#### **ASK** Students

Why did people want to find gold in California?

#### 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 lots 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. **[Reference "49ers" Image]** 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" went to California to find gold because they heard stories about how much gold was there and thought they could become very rich. They wanted to use the gold to buy things they needed, like food and clothes, or even to buy houses. They were excited and hopeful that finding gold would help them have a much better life.

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

So, they traveled long distances, sometimes over mountains or across oceans, taking big risks and leaving their homes behind, all because they believed that finding gold would change their lives for the better. But, panning for gold often wasn't the quick path to wealth many people hoped for. **[Reference Panning Image]** Success mostly depended on luck, despite the hard and exhausting work involved. Life in the mining camps was tough. Miners dealt with poor food, inadequate housing, and unsanitary conditions.

#### **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 🙆 🎤

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. A **merchant** is someone who buys goods and sells them for a profit. 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. **[Reference Brannan, Strauss, Ghirardelli, Stanford Image]** 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

What did Samuel Brannan sell to the miners to become California's first millionaire?

#### **TELL** Students

Samuel Brannan became rich during the Gold Rush by selling necessary items like tools, food, and other supplies to the miners who came to California hoping to find gold. He set up a store where the miners could buy what they needed to mine for gold. As more miners arrived, they all needed these essential supplies, and Brannan's business flourished. His smart business strategy allowed him to profit from the miners' needs, making him California's first millionaire without ever having to find gold himself.

#### **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 all 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 Gold Image]** However, by the mid-1850s, the easily accessible surface gold had largely been collected, leading many prospectors to join larger mining companies.

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

These companies began using hydraulic mining, a method developed in 1853 that was like using a powerful water cannon which helped with the extraction of gold but washed the dirt and gravel into rivers and streams making them unnavigable. 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. After that, more people kept moving to California, and its economy and industries grew even more. 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 two 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: Boom towns and Ghost Towns: The Rise and Fall of Mining Towns

Patriot of the Week: James Marshall









#### Objective

To help fourth graders understand how the Gold Rush contributed to the growth of the western United States, including the rapid development of towns, the spread of infrastructure, and the impact on various communities.

#### **Materials Needed**

- A large, blank map of the western United States (including major rivers, mountain ranges, and key states like California, Nevada, and Oregon)
- Small stickers or markers representing different elements (e.g., gold mines, towns, railroads, immigrant groups, Native American tribes)
- Event cards describing specific developments or challenges related to the Gold Rush (e.g., "Gold discovered in Sutter's Mill," "Railroad construction begins," "Mining town established")
- Timeline strips to place on the map, showing when key events occurred
- Reflection sheets for students to document their observations and insights

#### Prepare the Map

• Hang or place the large map where all students can see it. The map should be blank except for physical features like rivers and mountains.

#### **Distribute Stickers/Markers**

• Give each student or small group a set of stickers or markers, representing gold mines, towns, railroads, immigrant groups, and Native American tribes.

#### **Event Cards**

• Create a set of event cards that describe different milestones in the Gold Rush and westward expansion, such as the discovery of gold, the establishment of specific towns, the impact on Native American lands, and the building of railroads.

#### Introduction

• Explain to students that they will be creating a visual timeline and map that shows how the Gold Rush contributed to the growth and development of the western United States.





#### Introduction (continued)

• Discuss briefly how the discovery of gold led to significant changes in the region.

#### **Event Placement**

- Start by reading the first event card aloud (e.g., "Gold discovered in Sutter's Mill, 1848"). Have the student or group with the corresponding sticker place it on the correct location on the map.
- Continue reading each event card in chronological order, allowing students to place their stickers/markers on the map where these events occurred. As each marker is placed, briefly discuss its significance (e.g., "How did the discovery of gold in this location lead to the growth of nearby towns?").

#### Build the Map and Timeline

- As events are placed, the map will begin to show the spread of gold mines, the rapid establishment of towns, the construction of railroads, and the movement of various groups, including immigrants and Native American tribes.
- Place timeline strips below the map, showing when key events happened, to help students visualize the sequence of developments.

#### Discussion

• Once the map is complete, engage the class in a discussion. Ask questions like, "What patterns do you notice on the map? How did the Gold Rush contribute to the rapid growth of towns and railroads in the West? What impact did this have on the people living in these areas, including Native Americans?"

#### Reflection

- Have students complete a reflection sheet where they answer questions about what they learned, such as:
- How did the Gold Rush lead to the growth of the western United States?
- What were some of the positive and negative impacts of this growth?
- How did the development of railroads change the region?





#### **Extension Activity**

• For further exploration, students can research and present on specific towns that grew rapidly during the Gold Rush, or the experiences of different groups affected by this expansion (e.g., immigrants, Native Americans).

#### **Learning Outcomes**

- Students will understand the role of the Gold Rush in the westward expansion of the United States.
- Students will learn how the discovery of gold led to the rapid development of infrastructure, such as towns and railroads.
- Students will explore the impact of this expansion on various communities, including Native Americans and immigrants.

This interactive map activity combines geography, history, and critical thinking, helping fourth graders visualize and understand the widespread effects of the Gold Rush on the growth of the American West.





### Event Card 2:

Title: First Major Gold Rush Migration

**Year:** 1849

**Description:** The first wave of "49ers" arrives in California. Thousands of people from across the United States and around the world journey west to seek their fortunes in the goldfields.

**Action:** Place population growth markers in California and along major trails leading to the West.

### Event Card 3:

Title: San Francisco Boomtown

Year: 1849 - 1850

**Description:** San Francisco rapidly grows from a small settlement to a bustling city as thousands of miners arrive and businesses spring up to support them.

**Action:** Place a town marker on San Francisco.



### Event Card 4:

Title: Impact on Native American Lands

Year: 1850

**Description:** As more settlers move into California, Native American lands are increasingly encroached upon, leading to conflicts and significant changes for native communities.

**Action:** Place a Native American marker on areas around California and discuss the impact on these communities.

#### Event Card 5:

Title: Statehood for California

Year: 1850

**Description:** The rapid population growth and economic boom from the Gold Rush lead to California being admitted as the 31st state of the United States.

**Action:** Place a statehood marker on California.

#### Event Card 6:

Title: Hydraulic Mining Begins

Year: 1853

**Description:** Hydraulic mining, a new method that uses water to extract gold from the ground, begins. This method allows for larger-scale mining but causes significant environmental damage.

**Action:** Place a mining technology marker in key gold mining areas in California.



### Event Card 7:

Title: Railroads Expand Westward

Year: 1855

**Description:** The need to transport goods and people leads to the rapid expansion of railroads across the western United States, connecting California to the rest of the country.

**Action:** Place railroad markers along key routes connecting California to eastern states.

### Event Card 8:

Title: Arrival of Chinese Immigrants

Year: 1852

**Description:** Thousands of Chinese immigrants arrive in California, many seeking to find their fortune mining gold. When the Gold Rush ended, many found work on the expanding railroads. They play a significant role in the development of the West, despite facing significant discrimination.

**Action:** Place immigrant markers in areas where Chinese communities formed, such as San Francisco and nearby mining towns.

#### Event Card 9:

Title: Environmental Impact of Mining

#### Year: 1860

**Description:** The environmental damage from hydraulic mining becomes apparent, with rivers clogged with debris and landscapes altered. This leads to growing concerns about the sustainability of mining practices.

**Action:** Place environmental impact markers on key rivers and valleys in California.



### Event Card 10:

**Title:** Completion of the Transcontinental Railroad

Year: 1869

**Description:** The Transcontinental Railroad is completed, connecting the eastern United States to California. This makes travel and shipping much faster and easier, further boosting California's growth.

**Action:** Place a railroad marker across the entire map from east to west.

#### **Event Card 11:**

Title: Growth of Sacramento

**Year:** 1854

**Description:** Sacramento, located near the goldfields, grows rapidly as a key supply center for miners and becomes California's state capital.

**Action:** Place a town marker on Sacramento.

### Event Card 12:

Title: Boom and Bust Towns

Year: 1855

**Description:** As gold becomes harder to find, some mining towns grow rapidly and then quickly decline when the gold runs out. These are known as "boom and bust" towns.

**Action:** Place markers on towns that boomed and then faded, such as Bodie or other mining towns.



### Event Card 13:

Title: Impact on Mexican Californians

Year: 1850

**Description:** Many Mexican Californians lose their lands and status as the Gold Rush leads to a massive influx of new settlers who often disregard the land rights of the original inhabitants.

**Action:** Place a marker on key Mexican Californian land areas and discuss the changes in ownership and culture.

#### Event Card 14:

**Title:** Discovery of Gold in Nevada (Comstock Lode)

Year: 1859

**Description:** The discovery of the Comstock Lode, a massive deposit of silver and gold in Nevada, sparks another rush of miners, leading to the rapid growth of nearby towns like Virginia City.

**Action:** Place a mining marker on the Comstock Lode in Nevada.

### Event Card 15:

Title: End of the California Gold Rush

Year: 1855

**Description:** By 1855, the easily accessible gold had mostly been mined, and the California Gold Rush began to decline. Many miners leave California or turn to other jobs as the focus shifts to larger mining operations.

**Action:** Place a "decline" marker on the map to represent the end of the initial Gold Rush period.



### Gold Rush True/False Worksheet

NAME: DATE:

Instructions: Read each statement below and circle True if you believe the statement is correct or False if you think it is incorrect.

- 1. James Marshall discovered gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848. True / False
- 2. The Gold Rush led to California becoming the 31st state in 1850. True / False

3. Most of the gold found during the Gold Rush was deep underground and required advanced mining techniques from the beginning.

True / False

- 4. Samuel Brannan became California's first millionaire by mining gold. True / False
- 5. The Gold Rush only attracted people from the United States; no one came from other countries. True / False
- 6. Hydraulic mining, which began in 1853, caused significant environmental damage in California. True / False
- 7. The Gold Rush had no impact on the Native American population in California. True / False
- 8. San Francisco grew rapidly during the Gold Rush, becoming a major city almost overnight. True / False
- 9. The term "49ers" refers to the people who rushed to California in 1849 to search for gold. True / False



### Gold Rush True/False Worksheet

Instructions: Please read each question carefully and circle the correct answer.

10. All miners who came to California during the Gold Rush became rich. True / False

11. The discovery of gold in California had little effect on the development of the western United States.

True / False

12. The Transcontinental Railroad was completed in 1869, making travel to California faster and easier. True / False

13. Many mining towns in California became "boom and bust" towns, growing quickly and then declining just as fast when the gold ran out.

True / False

14. Levi Strauss, who made blue jeans, became successful during the Gold Rush by selling supplies to miners.

True / False

15. After the Gold Rush ended, California's population decreased as people moved back to the East Coast.

True / False

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### Gold Rush True/False Worksheet Answer Key

- 1. James Marshall discovered gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848. True
- 2. The Gold Rush led to California becoming the 31st state in 1850. True

 Most of the gold found during the Gold Rush was deep underground and required advanced mining techniques from the beginning. False (Early gold was found near the surface, and more advanced techniques were developed later.)

- 4. Samuel Brannan became California's first millionaire by mining gold. False (He became rich by selling supplies to miners.)
- 5. The Gold Rush only attracted people from the United States; no one came from other countries. False (People from all over the world, including China and Peru, came to California.)
- 6. Hydraulic mining, which began in 1853, caused significant environmental damage in California. True
- 7. The Gold Rush had no impact on the Native American population in California. False (The Gold Rush had a significant impact, often negatively affecting Native American communities.)
- 8. San Francisco grew rapidly during the Gold Rush, becoming a major city almost overnight. True
- 9. The term "49ers" refers to the people who rushed to California in 1849 to search for gold. True
- 10. All miners who came to California during the Gold Rush became rich. False (Most miners did not strike it rich and faced many challenges.)

11. The discovery of gold in California had little effect on the development of the western United States.

False (The Gold Rush had a major impact on the growth and development of the West.)

12. The Transcontinental Railroad was completed in 1869, making travel to California faster and easier. True

13. Many mining towns in California became "boom and bust" towns, growing quickly and then declining just as fast when the gold ran out. True

14. Levi Strauss, who made blue jeans, became successful during the Gold Rush by selling supplies to miners. True

15. After the Gold Rush ended, California's population decreased as people moved back to the East Coast.

False (California's population continued to grow after the Gold Rush.)

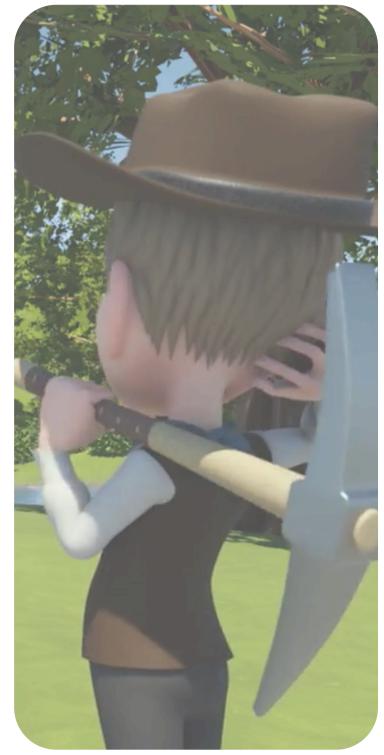


## Student Text

## Please read the following paragraphs to learn more.

If Sam Brannan had not shown the gold to the people in San Francisco, it is likely that many people would have continued to doubt the truth of the gold discovery. Without the visual proof that Brannan provided, the excitement and urgency that drove thousands to abandon their jobs and homes to search for gold might not have happened as quickly or intensely. This would have given Marshall and Sutter more time to collect gold quietly, but eventually, the news would likely have spread, perhaps through other channels or after more people discovered gold. Back in those days, there weren't any phones or computers, so news traveled very slowly. People from nearby places like Oregon and Mexico, and even as far as China and Peru, heard about the gold and came to California to see if they could find some too.

People traveled all the way to California from places like China and Peru because they heard exciting stories about a lot of gold being there. They thought that if they could find some gold, they could become rich and buy things they needed or wanted, like food, clothes, or even a new house. The journey was very long and hard, but the chance to find gold and improve their lives was worth it to them. They hoped that finding gold would help them and their families have a better future. In the spring of 1849, thousands of people, mostly men, traveled across mountains and oceans to California to try to get rich quickly. These gold seekers were called "49ers." They left everything behind and took big risks, hoping to find 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/

John Sutter



Credit: Wikipedia.

Waterwheel



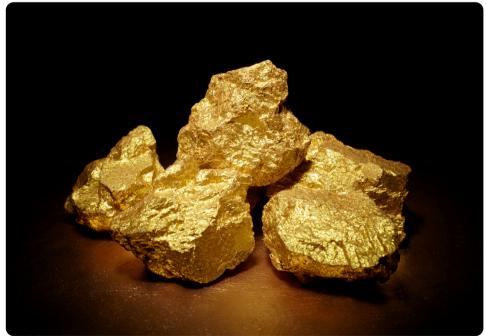
Credit: Canva Pro.

#### Sam Brannan

Gold



Credit: Canva Pro.



Credit: Canva Pro

49ers



Panning



Credit: Canva Pro.

Domingo Ghirardelli



Credit: National Portrait Gallery

#### **Leland Stanford**



Credit: U.S. Senate Historical Office

Levi Strauss



Credit: Levi Strauss & Co.



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