

Gold Rush

4th
Grade

Find Your way to CALIFORNIA!

PACIFIC OCEAN

OREGON

CALIFORNIA

MISSOURI

WOOD

DUCK

GOLD! \$8

GOLD!

GOLD! \$10

GOLD! \$5!

Fish

GOLD! \$0.50

Diamond!

- Oregon Trail
- California Trail

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MYTHS and MOTIVATIONS

of the Gold Rush

Societies have valued gold since ancient times. Mythology and legends of the world have always had old tales of everyday people stopping at nothing to get it, or having their lives ruined once they attained it.



Jason and the Argonauts

Long ago in Ancient Greece, a man named Jason set out on a quest to find the Golden Fleece. Jason was the son of a king—he had all the money he could ever want—but the Golden Fleece was different. It was made from the golden hair of a winged ram, and legend said that whoever possessed the Golden Fleece would be given power, fortune, and happiness.

Jason gathered a band of brave heroes who called themselves the Argonauts. Together, they searched all over the country for the Golden Fleece. They abandoned their friends and families in order to follow their obsession. After years of searching, Jason and the Argonauts finally found the fleece, but it was guarded by a fierce dragon. Jason distracted the dragon with a special potion and stole the Golden Fleece. The travelers returned home safely, but it was only then that Jason learned his lesson: Nothing magically brings anyone power, fortune, and happiness, not even the coveted Golden Fleece.

Fun Fact: Gold Seekers and '49ers were also called "Argonauts" as a tribute to this tale.



El Dorado

If legends are to be believed, somewhere in South America a lost city of gold is waiting to be found. Juan Martinez, a Spanish lieutenant, was one of the first men to begin spreading rumors of this fantastical treasure. Martinez claimed that in 1542, he was seized by natives and taken to the mythical city of El Dorado where the people, the buildings, and the streets were all covered in gold.

Many famous explorers spent much of their time and money looking for what Martinez accidentally discovered. It was not hard to see why—any man who found El Dorado would be instantly famous and wealthy. Sir Walter Raleigh went on two separate expeditions to find the city of gold, and both attempts were equally unsuccessful. El Dorado may still be out there, awaiting discovery...

Bonus Activity: Draw a picture of the lost city of gold on the back of this worksheet.



King Midas

King Midas was a good ruler who cared for his subjects, and the gods of Ancient Greece thought he should be rewarded. They told him they would grant one wish, so King Midas wished everything he touched would turn to gold.

At first, this seemed like a great idea. Gold was the ultimate symbol of power, and soon King Midas would have more gold than anyone. However, days later, King Midas accidentally turned his entire city, all his food, and every member of his family into gold. Miserable, he begged the gods to take away his golden touch. The gods pitied the sad king and reversed the effects of the wish. King Midas spent the rest of his reign content without the massive piles of gold he had once desired.

Bonus Activity: What does it mean when we say someone has “the Midas touch”?

The CALIFORNIOS



The Californios were settlers who came from Mexico or Spain to live in California. In 1769, Alta California, which included present-day California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming, became the property of Spain.

The first Spanish-speakers to come to California were the missionaries, who began building missions, or churches with large areas of land. Missionaries used the land to grow crops and raise livestock. Soon after, more settlers came and started pueblos, small towns near the missions, and presidios, military forts so Spain could fend off anyone who tried to take California.

Mexico claimed the missions in the 1830s. They established the rancho system to populate the new land: Mexican citizens could ask the government for a large plot of land to use for farming and industry. The people who moved onto these tracts of land became known as Californios. In 1846, the U.S. went to war with Mexico. When the war was over, California was given to the U.S., making Californios legal U.S. citizens. Soon after, gold was discovered, and as strangers flooded in, Californios became a minority. Though they were legal citizens, they were seen as foreigners by the new settlers and were treated with discrimination.

They soon became subject to a law called the Foreign Miner's Tax, which said that they must pay \$20 to mine in California. In addition, miners often stole their land and property when mining didn't work out for them. Even worse, the Land Law of 1851 started a panel of people—all new settlers—to make rulings in court when a Californio's land was stolen. The original owners of the land could take their cases to court, but often ended up spending all their money on legal fees, forcing them to sell the land to the person who stole it in the end.

WORD SCRAMBLE: Unscramble the vocabulary words, then match them with their definitions.

OALIIFRNCOS

LAAT AILCFNOIAR

MANISSIOERIS

NRCASHO

PDERSIIOS

PBUSOEL

RNOFEIG MISNER' XTA

- Settlers who came from Mexico and Spain to live in California.
- Large plots of land given out by the Mexican government.
- Military forts to keep California secure.
- People who came to California to start churches.
- Small towns near missions.
- A law that forced Californios to pay a tax in order to mine.
- Spanish territory that included present-day California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, and some of Colorado and Wyoming.

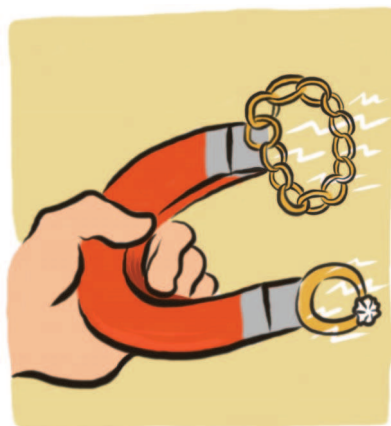


Once they found what they thought was a valuable nugget, many miners were faced with a challenge: is it real gold? Test for yourself! Find a few pieces of "gold" jewelry around your house and put them to the test.



Discoloration. When something that is only gold-colored is touched a lot, the color can wear away. Real gold won't wear. If you wear your jewelry for a while and it leaves green, gray or brown marks on your skin, it's not real.

Bite It! Many people don't know this, but gold is a soft, malleable substance. The softer the gold, the purer it is. Bite down on the object. If your teeth leave impressions, you've got real gold!



How Attractive! Gold isn't a magnetic substance. If you hold a magnet up to your item and it moves or sticks, it's probably fake.*

*Just because it doesn't move doesn't mean it IS gold – it just means it isn't magnetic. Phony gold items can be made out of non-magnetic materials as well, like plastic or wood.



Does It Float? Gold is very dense. If you put it in a small vial of water and sinks fast, it might be gold.



Scratch Test: Find an unglazed ceramic item that you don't mind getting scratched and drag your item along it. If it leaves a black mark, it isn't real. If it leaves a gold mark...it's legit!



Take it to a Jeweler.
He or she will know for sure!

What Would You Bring?



← When people decided to make the trip out to the gold fields, it often meant leaving behind most of their possessions. Before they left for California, they had to decide which of their personal belongings they could bring with them. Some items were necessary for life – clothing, food, and money – others they brought because it provided entertainment or reminded them of the loved ones they would be leaving behind.

Pretend you're a father from a family of modest means in Boston. You've heard about the gold in California and have decided to seek your fortune out west to better care for your family. However, on the ship you will take to get there, you are only allowed one bag of belongings. What would you take with you? Circle the items below.



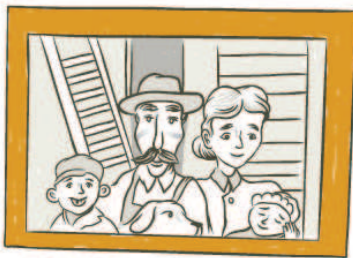
HARMONICA



MEDICINE



FINE CHINA



FRAMED FAMILY PHOTO



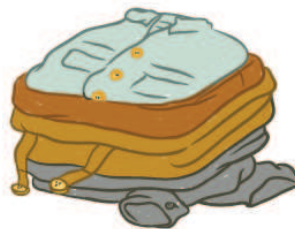
DECK OF CARDS



CANNED FOOD



BLANKET and PILLOW



CLOTHES



PAN FOR GOLD MINING



'49ers took many different routes to get to California as fast or as easily as possible. Take a look at the data on the three most common routes to California and figure out which one is the best for you and your party!



THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAIL

Starts in Missouri, splits off in Idaho to lead to either Oregon City or CA gold fields.

Distance: about 3,000 miles

Travel Time: 3 to 7 months

Benefits: Shortest of all established routes

Drawbacks: 2,000 miles of walking, sometimes in the hot sun during the summer months and through snow in the winter. Cholera, pneumonia and diphtheria are common along this trail. You will not only have to provide for family, but for animals as well.

Best time to take this route: April-May, when winter has passed but summer heat hasn't started in earnest yet.



THE PANAMA SHORTCUT

Leaves from the East Coast and goes through Panama, then up the West Coast.

Distance: 7,000 miles

Estimated travel time: 2 to 3 months

Benefits: 8,000 miles shorter than the Cape Horn route.

Drawbacks: Malaria and cholera were common on this route. You have to get out and walk when you get to Panama and pass through a disease-ridden jungle.

Best time to take this route:
December–February:
May–November is rainy season in Panama.

CAPE HORN ROUTE

Leaves from the East Coast and the South and goes down all the way down to Cape Horn (the southernmost tip of South America), then back up the western coast of South America, Mexico, and finally the United States.

Distance: 15,000 miles

Estimated travel time: 4 to 8 months

Benefits: Pretty in good weather. Probably the safest of all routes.

Drawbacks: Seasickness was a serious risk, hot weather spoiled the food quickly, and a single ticket could be expensive (\$100 to \$1000). There are cold, harsh winds around the cape, and if your ship gets lost you are on your way to Antarctica.

Best time to take this route: Leave in American fall or winter, so that by the time you get to the Cape it will be their summer. Since you're on the other side of the Equator, the seasons are reversed!

THINK ABOUT IT

If you were leaving from: New Orleans with: 7 people
What route and time of year would be best for your party? Why?

If you were leaving from: Philadelphia with: 50 people
What route and time of year would be best for your party? Why?

If you were leaving from: Wisconsin with: 15 people
What route and time of year would be best for your party? Why?

What would be the best way to get there nowadays? Explain.

MARGINALIZED

~ People of the Gold Rush ~

It's important to remember that, though many people found fortune and fame during the Gold Rush, not everyone's story had such a happy ending. Certain classes and races had their rights trampled in the rush for gold.



CHINESE-AMERICANS

When word got out about the gold in California, workers from China flooded into San Francisco. At first, the other miners were welcoming—everyone was free to seek fortune in California. But as more and more Chinese citizens showed up, the other miners began to worry that these new settlers would take away jobs and opportunities from them. Soon, Chinese-American miners began to face intense discrimination. They were often blamed for crimes they did not commit and all social ills in the lawless land. In 1850, a \$20 tax on foreign-born miners was put into place.

Still, Chinese miners had more rights in America than they did back home. They could (and did) take people to court if they felt they were being treated unfairly. However, this didn't last for long: As the public turned against them, California law, which already did not allow African-Americans and Native Americans to testify in court, was extended to include Chinese immigrants. In 1882, the U.S. government passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which had forbidden Chinese immigrants from entering the country.

However, their efforts weren't always in vain: when Chinese miners sent the money they made from mining home, their families were not only freed from poverty, but often became very rich. Neighbors in China would gossip about the family's newfound wealth, having no idea of the discrimination and hardship the miner in California had faced to get it.

Do you think it would be possible to not allow a person from a certain country to testify in court today? How about passing a tax on foreign workers?



WOMEN

At the beginning of the Gold Rush, fathers and husbands came to California, hoping to send for their families when they struck it rich. After the first year or so, women started arriving in San Francisco and present-day Sacramento, hoping to also find their fortune.

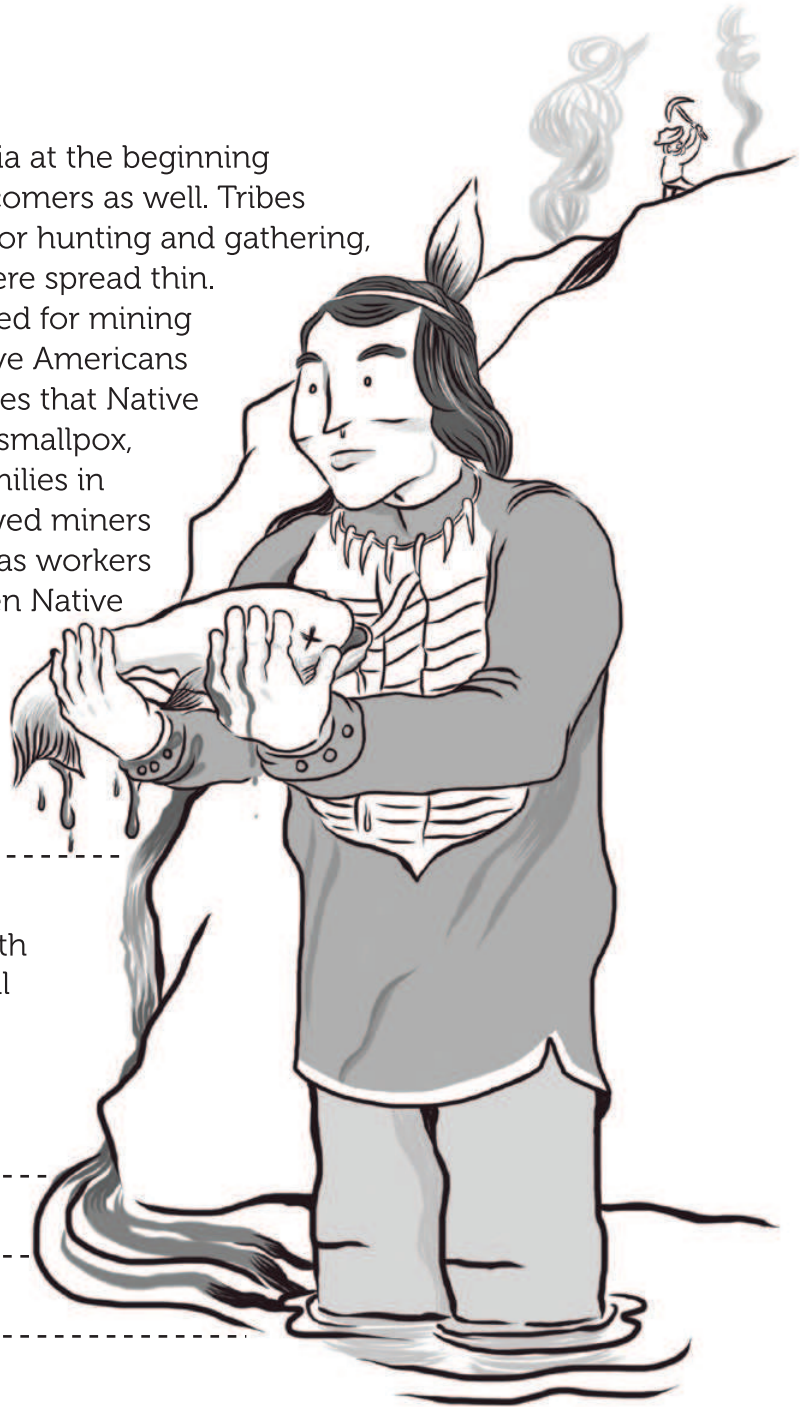
Though they at first were treated poorly by the men, who thought of mining as men's work, many women soon learned they had skills they could use to make money from miners. For instance, husbands depended on their wives for many things, including cooking, cleaning, and grooming. When these men struck out on their own, they had no idea how to fry an egg or patch a hole in their jeans!

One famous story involves Luzena Wilson, the wife of a miner. One day, she was baking a biscuit when a passerby noticed the smell. He offered to pay her \$5 for the biscuit (that's almost \$130 in today's money!). She stared at him in shock, which he mistook for a bargaining tactic. "OK, I'll pay you \$10," he said. Luzena started up a popular restaurant business. Many women like her made money from miners by cooking for them, doing their laundry, and even by singing, dancing, and acting as towns grew into cities.

Are there any jobs that people still consider "woman's work" today? Are there jobs that are thought of "a man's job?" What are they? Do you think that's fair?

NATIVE AMERICANS

The Native Americans who lived in California at the beginning of the Gold Rush had trouble with the newcomers as well. Tribes near gold fields depended on local wildlife for hunting and gathering, and as more people moved in, resources were spread thin. Additionally, the chemicals some miners used for mining poisoned the lakes and streams where Native Americans caught fish. Miners also brought new illnesses that Native Americans had never been exposed to, like smallpox, measles, and influenza, which put many families in danger. In 1850, a law was passed that allowed miners to capture Native Americans and use them as workers in their mining camps. The tensions between Native Americans and the miners often resulted in violent fights between the two groups. By 1870, the Native American populations near Gold Rush towns dropped significantly.



Imagine you're a lawman in a mining camp. What would you do to keep both the citizens of your town and the local Native American tribes happy and peaceful?



If you're looking for a fun, unique summer adventure, why not try panning for gold in your own backyard? Make history come alive for your kids as they learn what it was like to be a prospector during the California Gold Rush. While you're not guaranteed to find any real gold, it's still a fun way to spend some time outdoors while getting a hands-on lesson in California history.

See the end of this activity for a few quick facts about this famous gold rush.

What you need

- History book that includes information on the California Gold Rush (you can also research it online)
- Shallow plastic or tin pan
- Gravel
- Stream or creek, about 6 inches deep with a good spot to sit while panning
- Sunscreen and a hat

1. Before making the trip to the creek, read about the California Gold Rush in the history book or online with your child. What caused it, and why does he think it attracted so many people? What does he think it was like to be a gold miner?

2. Travel to your chosen creek and find a good spot for panning. Have your child sit down.

3. Invite him to fill the pan $\frac{3}{4}$ full of gravel from the stream, then submerge it deep enough so it's just under the surface of the water. Give the pan several vigorous shakes back and forth and from side to side, but not so vigorous that the material washes out of the pan.

4. Now have him switch to a gentler circular movement, so the material starts revolving in a circle. This process will cause most of the dirt and clay to dissolve and wash out of the pan. If roots and moss surface, work them over your pan with your fingers to dissolve any lumps. Pick out the larger rocks after making sure they're washed clean.

5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until there are only about two cups of heavier material left in your pan. This material is usually called "black sand" or "concentrate."

6. Now ask him to raise the pan completely out of the stream, leaving about an inch of water in the bottom. Have him tilt the pan slightly toward himself and swirl the water slowly in a circular motion to check the pan for nuggets and pieces that he can easily pick out by hand.

7. If you have a plastic bowl, you can use a magnet to pull away the magnetic black sand pieces. A small squeeze bottle of water can help go through the black sand as well.

8. He should be able to see the gold now if he has any. Don't be sad if it's only a few little pieces. Those pieces add up!

Did You Know? The California Gold Rush began on January 24, 1848, after James W. Marshall discovered gold at Sutter's Mill in Coloma, California, not far from Sacramento, the state's capital. Over the course of the 7-year period, about 300,000 people flocked to California in the hope of striking it rich. Early gold seekers were called forty-niners after the year they arrived, 1849.

The Gold Rush helped make San Francisco an important city. Before this period, San Francisco was just a small settlement, but as large numbers of gold seekers began arriving in California, San Francisco quickly expanded into a boomtown.

~Bartering~

~GAME~

Play the bartering card game! Exchange goods and services, just like miners had to do on the frontier.

How to Play:

1. Each player starts with 3 cards. Each card has a value: yellow cards are 3 points, blue are 2, and red are 1.
2. Start the game by asking your opponent for a card you would like to have. Before asking, look at your hand and see what you're missing: you have tools, a little bit of food and cards to pass the time, but do you have clothes to wear? How about a place to sleep?
3. If your opponent has the item you want, make a trade! Try to find a card of similar value to give to him in exchange for the card you would like. If the other player doesn't have anything you want, he can give you two cards of lower value or try to convince you to take something else from him. If you can't agree on a trade, the asking player must draw a card from the stack. Players are also allowed to pass on turns, but if they do they may not draw from the stack.
4. Instead of asking for an item on each turn, you can also ask to trade a card you want to get rid of. Take turns trading cards until there are no more cards to draw.
5. When there are no more cards, each player must add up their points. Whoever has the most wins!

 cut out the cards

Brand new pick.



Play me a song!



Cup of coffee.



Clothes.



C

A room for the night.



R

Money.



M

Sarsaparilla.



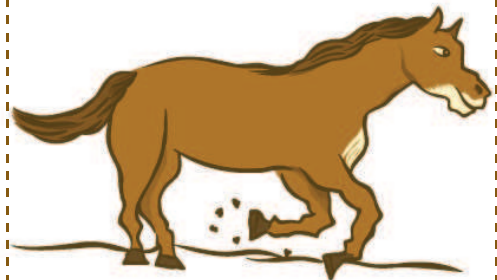
S

Sewing Kit



SK

Horse.



H



B

A full breakfast.

Mule.



M

Hardtack.



H

Gold. (worth \$5)



G

Shave and a haircut.



S & H

Newspaper.



N

Steamboat ticket.



ST

Go West!

When gold was discovered in the Sacramento area, newspapers across the country portrayed California as a state full of sunshine, succulent agriculture, and beautiful landscape. Rumor had it gold could be found lying on the street. Pretty soon, people began to think of California as a place where any man could make all of his dreams come true.

In reality, mining towns were pretty rough. They were filled with miners who hadn't seen a shower or clean clothes in weeks. Good food was tough to come by, and homes, businesses, and even restaurants were set up in small shacks, tents, and sometimes even old ships that had been pulled to shore.

Take a look at this scene on the right and find three positive aspects of it.

- 1.)
- 2.)
- 3.)



On the lines underneath, write a slogan encouraging people to come to California.

.....

.....

.....

.....

Sam Brannan's

SACRAMENTO STORE



How Much Is It?

The sudden increase in population quickly raised the price of goods in gold rush towns. See if you can guess how much each item would cost in today's money! Below is a real price list for items for sale in Sam Brannan's Sacramento store. Keep in mind that, on a good day, a miner would walk away with gold worth \$6-10.

	1850s Price	Today's Price		1850s Price	Today's Price
1 pound of coffee	\$0.55		Mule or horse	\$150.00	
1 egg	\$0.85		Boots	\$40.00	
Fruit	\$0.50		Pick	\$25.00	
Pan for gold	\$10.00				

Tip: \$1 in 1850 is worth roughly \$28.30 today.

THINK ABOUT IT:

Why do you think an item as simple as a pan is so much more expensive than coffee or fruit?



GOLD RUSH

BUSINESS PLAN

It wasn't just miners who got rich off the gold rush – businessmen who started stores and sold goods and services to the miners became just as wealthy, if not more wealthy, than the '49ers.

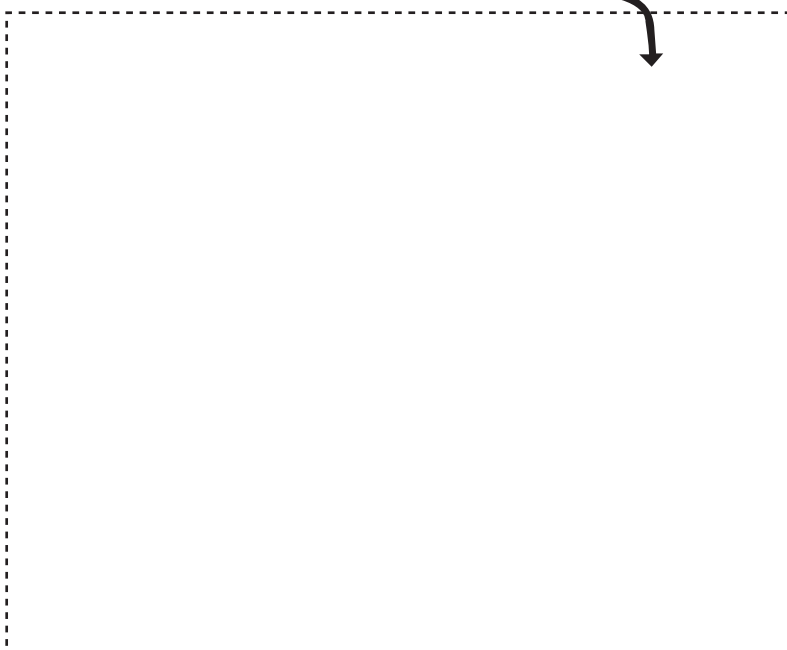
Think about the kinds of things that miners, many of whom came with only what they could carry and were far away from their homes, would want in their new life in California. Try to think not just about mining supplies, but also about things he might like to have for work, daily life, or even recreation and entertainment. Then, write up a plan for your new business.



- What is your business?
- Will you be selling material goods (things you can touch), or will you be providing a service (equipment repair, shave and a haircut, hotel room, song and dance)?
- Why will miners want to patronize it?
- How will you advertise it?



Draw a poster to advertise your new business.



How much will you charge?
Create a price list for the things you are selling below.



I SAW IT FIRST!

Tip: Avoid the 'rocks' card!

I Saw It First! A game for two players

Split the deck evenly. Each player takes a stack of cards, facedown. Players take turns putting down cards faceup, moving as fast as they can! The objective is to collect as many gold cards as possible. If a player puts down a gold card, the first player to put a hand over it and shout, "I saw it first!" takes it.

At the end of the game, the players add up the amount of their gold. The player with the highest dollar amount wins!

✂ cut out the cards



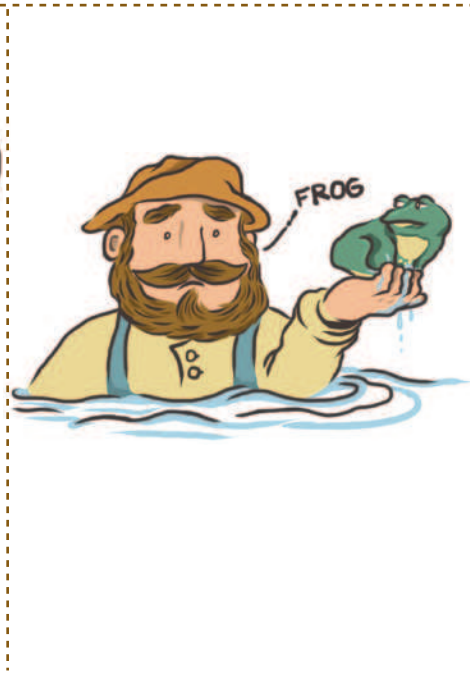
I SAW IT FIRST!

✂ cut out the cards



I SAW IT FIRST!

✂️ cut out the cards



I SAW IT FIRST!

Bonus Activity:

Set your imagination free by creating 6 playing cards of your own!

 cut out the cards

SETTLE A DISPUTE



Since there were no laws set up in California before the miners came out, there were many disputes between the settlers. Help settle this dispute between a hardworking miner and Sam Brannan the businessman!



SAM: You owe me money because you found gold on my property. According to this contract I wrote up, I am to be paid twenty percent of the worth of any gold found on my land.*

JONAS THE MINER: I don't owe you nothin'! I got here first and had been mining in this here spot for weeks before you set up your store just inches away from my tent. I never agreed to anything!



In your opinion, who is right?

Sam

Jonas the miner

If this dispute were to go to court, who do you think would win?

Sam

Jonas the miner

Circle your answer.

Come up with a compromise that both Jonas and Sam can agree on.

Run out of space? Feel free to continue on the back of this page.

*Fun fact: Sam Brannan is real, but this situation isn't. Sam sure was ruthless, but we just made this scenario up. We wouldn't put it past him to do something so lowdown, though.





Write a letter Home

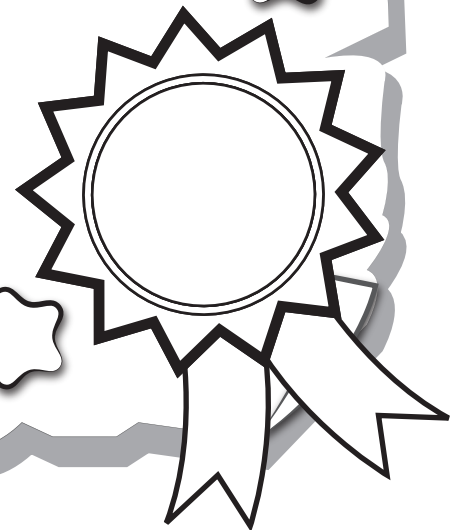
Lined writing area for the letter.

Pretend you're a miner at the gold fields. Using everything you've learned so far in this book, write a letter home describing your new life in California.

- What has surprised you about gold mining?
- How do you feel about the people you have met, the food you have eaten, and the money you have made so far?
- What do you like about your new location?
- What do you miss about home?

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Answer Sheets

Gold Rush

Sam Brannan's Sacramento Store

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Answer Sheet

How Much Is It? Answer Sheet

To find each item's approximate value, multiply the 1850 price by \$28.30

	1850s Price		Today's Price
1 pound of coffee	\$0.55		\$15.56
1 egg	\$0.85		\$24.05
Fruit	\$0.50		\$14.15
Pan for gold	\$10.00	x 28.30 =	\$283.00
Mule or horse	\$150.00		\$4,245.00
Boots	\$40.00		\$1,132.00
Pick	\$25.00		\$707.50