

Lesson 3: The Gold Rush

Focus Questions

- How did the discovery of gold affect California's populations and settlements?
- What routes did the gold seekers use to reach California?

Activity # 1 *Read and Compare Historical Maps*

Materials needed for students: Harcourt *Reflections*: 180-181 and 218-219

Procedure:

Review the map of *Mexican California, 1845* on pages 180-181. Note the location of the 5 trails to California shown on the map. Using the map's legend, discuss the area claimed by the United States, Mexico, and the Republic of Texas. Also, note the area that is covered with diagonal stripes called hatch lines. These lines are used to show lands that are claimed by both Britain and the United States and by the U.S. and Mexico.

Turn to pages 218 and 219 and review *Map A: The United States* and *Map B: The United States, 1848*. Look at the color used to show lands that belonged to the United States. Note how some of the political boundaries have changed, i.e., see how California changed from 1845 to 1848. Discuss the impact of these changes on California, the United States, and Mexico.

Activity # 2 *Turn Headings into Questions*

Materials needed for students:

Harcourt *Reflections*: Chapter 6, Lesson 1, pages 226-233

Procedure:

Step 1: Model for students how to turn lesson headings into questions. For example:

Heading: The Gold Rush

Question: What was the gold rush?

Introduce *question signal words* such as Who? What? When? Where? and How?

Have pairs of students work together to write questions for the headings of each subsection in Chapter 6, Lesson 1 (pages 226-233). Have each group share their questions.

Step 2: Have students skim each section and write answers for their questions. If needed, they may revise their question. Have each group share the answers for their questions.

Variation: Model how to write one-sentence descriptions of headings.

Heading: Gold

Description: Gold was discovered in Coloma, California on January 24, 1848.

Have students work in pairs to write one-sentence descriptions for the lesson's section headings.

Step 3: Look together at the map *Routes of the Forty-Niners* on page 229. Have students turn the title of the map into a question. Study the map key and the chart, *Routes to California*. Have pairs work together to ask questions that can be answered by the map or the chart? Answer each others questions.

Finally, ask each student to determine which route he/she would take to California and to provide a rationale for his/her answer.

Activity # 3 Analyze a Primary Source Painting

Materials needed: Copy for each group of 4 students of **Art Analysis Worksheet** (Handout #3.1) "*Miners in the Sierras*" by Charles Nahl and Frederick August Wenderoth. Available for viewing at Google images.com and in Harcourt *Reflections California: A Changing State*, page 231



Charles Nahl (1818-1878) German-born classical-trained figure painter; moved to California 1851 where he became one of the first professional painters there; painted life of the miners and *rancheros*.

Frederick August Wenderoth (1819-1884). German-trained landscape painter; 1851, with Nahl arrived in California to search for gold; a daguerrotypist and painter in San Francisco; contributed backgrounds to Charles Nahl's figure paintings.

Painted in 1851-52. Oil on Canvas 54 ¼ X 67 inches. Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington D.C.

Had the German-born "Forty-niners" Nahl and Wenderoth struck it rich at the Rough and Ready (a mining camp near Sacramento), the Gold Rush might never have been portrayed in such detailed and lively terms. *Miners in the Sierra* was one of the first, and largest, paintings the two artists produced after they opened a studio in Sacramento in 1851. Four miners are hard at work along either side of the long tom, a wooden apparatus used to wash the gold from rocks and sand. The vigorous labors of the two men in their red, white, and blue shirts are depicted with the skill we would expect of artists who had European academic training.

Procedure:

Step 1: To prepare your students for analyzing and interpreting a work of art, display the painting for 20 seconds only. Then remove the image. Tell students that you showed them the image for only 20 to 30 seconds because that is close to what the average person spends looking at an artwork in a museum.

Have students tell you what they saw or remembered about the painting. Select a student to write the observations on the board. Once students have shared their observations, they can categorize their

responses. Some examples: subject matter, color. Ask students if they think they saw everything. Ask students what they will look for when they see the image again.

Step 2: Show the image again and note the time on your watch. Have the students share their additional observations. Other students can write them on the board under the categories you have developed. When students feel they have seen everything in the picture, then look at your watch again. Tell them how much longer than 20 seconds they spent looking at the image. Congratulate them for taking so much time to see so much in the picture.

Step 3: While still viewing "*Miners in the Sierras*," ask students to "Put yourself in the picture and imagine seeing the scene using your senses.

- What sounds do you hear, what smells are there, and what are some of the textures you might feel. What awakens your senses?
- Where are you standing or sitting in the scene? What is surrounding you? Have students describe the places they chose and other students can guess their location.
- What is the temperature? Is it warm, hot, cool, cold? How do you know?
- How many different things are near you? What is closest to you?
- Look far in the distance. What is farthest from you?
- What time of the day do you think it is? How can you tell? What do you think this place looks like in the early morning, late afternoon or nighttime? What time of the year is it? How can you tell?
- How does this painting reflect the period of history?
- What are the artists trying to convey about California? Who might be the audience for this painting?
- Have you been to a place like this before? How was it similar to this place? What might this place look like today?

Step 4: Distribute a copy of **Art Analysis Worksheet** (Handout #3.1) to each group of 4 students. To complete the worksheet, have each student in the group record information for one of the 4 steps. Redirect the groups so that all students responsible for Step 1 meet together and Students for Steps 2, 3 and 4 confer in job-alike groups. As they share with other students responsible for completing the same Step, students may add information to their worksheet. Students then return to their original group to share new information gained from the job-alike meetings.



Step 5: View another painting of the historic era. Follow the same instructional procedure used in Step 4. Recommended is the painting shown on the right, *Sunday Morning in the Mines*, 1872 by Charles Christian Nahl (1818-1878) oil on canvas. <http://www.museumca.org/goldrush/art-sunmines.html>

A source for artwork can be found at the *Art of the Gold Rush* of the Oakland Museum. <http://www.museumca.org/goldrush/art.html>

Looking at Artwork

The questions listed below may be used when looking at artwork. Not every questions works well with every piece of artwork. Copy the questions onto cards and distribute sets of cards to each group of students. Encourage students to select at least 5 cards and answer the questions.

1. Look carefully at the work of art in front of you. What do you see happening in the picture? Take turns listing the objects that you see.
2. What is the setting of the picture? (Where does it take place?) What is the place like?
3. What do you see here that you probably would not see today? (For clues, look at what people are doing and wearing or the objects in the picture.)
4. Do you think this artwork is true to life? How real has the artist made things look?
5. What colors did the artist use to make the picture? Which ones did the artist use the most?
6. Write two things that the picture tells you about this historical period. What are the clues? What do you see in the picture that makes you think that?
7. Why do you think the artist created this picture? (What was he or she trying to tell about the people, place or life during this time?)
8. What would you have called this work of art if you had made it yourself? Write a caption to go with this work that tells what you want people to know about it.
9. Do you like this work of art? Why or why not? Has your reaction to the work changed? Do you like it more or less than you did at the beginning? Why?

Activity # 4 Living History Bio-Sketches

Have the 5 students who are portraying John Marshall, Miner #1, Miner #2, Miner #3, and Louise Clappe present their *Living History Oral Presentation* to the class.

As an added resource, refer to **Letters from the California Gold Mines by Louisa A.K. Clappe** (Harcourt *Reflections*. Primary Source Collection – Intermediate. Pages 153-154). For one year, between 1851 and 1852, Louise A.K. Clappe, who was also known as Dame Shirley, lived with her husband, Fayette, in the gold-rush mining camps of Feather River Canyon, California. While living in the camps, she wrote 23 letters to her sister, Molly. The perspective Louise Clappe provides in her letters is special because there were few women in mining camps. In her last letter, she explained the failure of the mining camps, the harsh living conditions, and how the experience in the camps had changed her.

Art Analysis Worksheet

Step 1. Observation

A. Study the work of art for a few minutes. Form an overall impression of the work and then examine individual items that are illustrated. Next, divide the work into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible.

B. Use the chart below to list objects or activities depicted in the work of art.

OBJECTS or ACTIVITIES

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Step 2. Identify the work

A. Who is the artist? _____

B. When was the work completed? _____

C. Does the work reflect a specific geographic location, an historical time or event?

D. Is there any evidence that the artist was expressing a particular point of view?

E. What is the historical significance of the work?

Step 3. Inference

Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might infer from this work.

Step 4. Questions

Does this work of art raise any questions in your mind?

