

# Northwest History Consortium

## The California Gold Rush

“Creating a Class Magazine,” Version 1

**James Reimer**

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**National Standard**

**Era 4: Expansion and Reform (1754-1820s) / Standards 1 & 2**

*Standard 1: United States territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers and Native American*

*Standard 2: How the industrial revolution, increasing immigration, the rapid expansion of slavery, and the westward movement changed the lives of Americans and led toward regional tensions.*

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In 1848 President James K. Polk confirmed the discovery of gold in California launching a mass stampede of people heading west to “strike it rich.” By the end of 1849 over 80,000 people from all over the world had arrived in California in search of gold. This “gold rush” phenomenon created a wide variety of experiences, successes, failures, dangers, and adventures for those who had the courage and mindset to head west.

### SCENARIO

It is late fall, 1849. You are a journalist/photographer for a struggling Boston-based magazine in the young United States of America. Your magazine circulation targets three Northeastern cities—Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. Competition in the magazine world is brutal and this particular magazine trails considerably behind its’ rivals.

In your weekly staff meeting, your editor and boss informed the staff that unless the magazine “finds the big story” that everyone wants to read about, the magazine will be shut down and all employees out of work. To avoid this from happening, your editor has one last idea that may turn the magazine around and cause a sharp rise in its popularity. To date, no northeastern magazine or paper has reported directly from the boom towns in the heart of gold rush country—California.

It has been deemed too risky for reporters to travel to California to simply write a story and fairly dangerous to hang out in the lawless boom towns themselves. You and several of your colleagues are being asked to make the trip to find the facts and the stories to report back about those who have gone west to California.

A special “Gold Rush” edition of your magazine is going to be produced. In order to save the magazine, this story edition must become “extra-ordinary.” You will be searching to find the real story of the dangers, sorrows, triumphs, failures, and adventure of the gold rush of 1849.

What stories are out there? What facts will you find? Will you ever get back to Boston with your story? These questions race through your mind as you think about the challenges ahead. Completing this task could bring you unheard of notoriety in the world of journalism. Papers

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and magazines from all over the country and perhaps the world would seek your services if you successfully bring back the “big story.”

In an attempt to ensure success and make it more likely that stories and pictures get back to Boston, your editor has decided to send out various teams consisting of three people who will be assigned to cover various topics surrounding the 1849 gold rush. You will be making this journey with two of your colleagues. Good luck !

#### TASK

As a class, you will be creating a “special edition” GOLD RUSH Magazine. This magazine will include stories, facts, pictures, commentary, and any other ideas you as journalists and writers come up with.

#### Journalism “team” requirements:

1. Each team will be responsible to contribute two stories to the editor to be placed in the special edition.
2. Each team will be responsible to contribute three photographs or pieces of artwork to be placed in the special edition.
3. Each team will be responsible to contribute at least one map pertaining to their assigned topic to be placed in the special edition.
4. Each team will provide one additional feature of their choice for this special edition.

#### Each group will need to include the following in their articles and stories:

1. A creative title for your magazine article that will catch the interest of the readers back in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia
2. First hand accounts, quotes, stories from actual people who have been part of the 1849 Gold Rush
3. Background information about your topic that would better help the reader understand what is taking place during this time period
4. Pictures, photographs, and maps that would enhance your stories and this special edition

#### Journalist TEAM assignments:

##### Assignment #1:

This group will be assigned to cover the story of traveling and journeying west.

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#### Assignment #2:

This group will be assigned to cover life in the gold rush boom towns.

#### Assignment #3:

This group will be assigned to cover life in the gold mining camps and the story of those searching and panning for gold.

#### Assignment #4:

This group will be assigned to cover life of women journey west and their role in boom towns and mining camps during the gold rush of 1849.

### RESOURCES

#### Books

Ward, Geoffrey G., Ives, Stephen, and Burns, Ken. The West: An Illustrated History. ©1996. Little, Brown, and Company. Boston, MA.

#### Internet

Aiello, George and Jo Ann. "The California Gold Rush in Their Own Words and Images." ©1997 – 2010. The Land of Glittering Dreams (www.glittering.com). 30 March 2010 <<http://www.glittering.com/letters/index.html>>.

"California's untold stories: Gold Rush." ©1998. Oakland Museum of California (museumca.org). Oakland, CA. 30 March 2010 <<http://museumca.org/goldrush/index.html>>.

"The Foremothers Tell of Olden Times" from *The Chronicle*(San Francisco), Sept. 9, 1900. The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco (sfmuseum.org). San Francisco, CA. 30 March 2010 <<http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist5/foremoms.html>>.

"The Gold Rush: American Experience." PBS.Org (WGBH). 1997 - 1998. Boston, MA. 30 March 2010 <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/goldrush/>>.

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### ASSESSMENT

Part I:

The second part of the assessment will include a rubric that will score each news team. (This rubric appears on the next page.)

Part II:

The second part of the assessment will include a rubric that will score each individual member of the news team.

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### NEWS TEAM SCORING RUBRIC

| CATEGORY   | 4  | 3   | 2  | 1   |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| <b>Layout – Headlines and Captions / Creativity of project</b>     | All Headlines have captured the reader’s attention and accurately lead into the articles. All pictures and additional material is relevant to the topic. Layout is well organized. | All articles have headlines that accurately lead into the articles. Pictures and layout are satisfactory. | Headlines do not accurately reflect the article. Creativity, layout, and pictures needs improvement. | Missing headlines, missing articles and pictures. Work is not organized and/or completed. |
| <b>Knowledge gained / Comprehension of Topic</b>                   | Clear and demonstrated understanding of topic. Information is accurate and complete.   | Understanding of content is evident. Most information is accurate.  | Lacking a clear understanding of content. Information is disorganized and has some inaccuracies.     | No understanding of content. Information is inaccurate and irrelevant.                    |
| <b>Use of class time / Cooperation with group</b>                  | Excellent<br>Effective<br>Engaged  | Satisfactory  | Needs to be improved   | Group was disengaged and work was incomplete.   |
| <b>Use of primary sources / Content evaluation / Effectiveness</b> | Project included several quotes from primary sources, authentic accounts, pictures etc. This info was presented in an organized and effective way.                                 | Included quotes, information from primary sources, but not presented in a clear organized manner.         | Very few quotes and information from primary sources. Stories/ project lacks effectiveness.          | No evidence of any primary sources in project.  |
| <b>Completion of Task Requirements</b>                             | Group completed All 7 required tasks   | Group completed at least 6 of the required tasks  | Group completed at least 5 of the required tasks   | Group completed less than 5 of the required tasks   |

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### Scoring Rubric for Individual Team Members

| CATEGORY:  | 4  | 3  | 2   | 1   |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| <b>Use of class time</b>   | Excellent<br>Effective<br>Engaged  | Satisfactory   | Needs to be improved  | Disengaged, did not work with group   |
| <b>Use of resources / Class preparedness</b>                                 | Came prepared each day. Spent adequate time researching and using resources to complete project. Demonstrates creativity and accuracy. | Came prepared each day. Utilized resources to complete a satisfactory project. | Came to class unprepared on occasion. Did not use resources adequately to complete project. | Consistently unprepared for class. Failed to utilize resources to complete project. |
| <b>Evaluation of individual work contributed (creativity, content, etc.)</b> | Accurate, very detail oriented, creative, draws interest of the reader and viewer. Well organized                                      | Demonstrates accuracy and organization. Satisfactory                           | Lacks organization, attention to detail and accuracy  | Unsatisfactory<br>Incomplete  |
| <b>Overall performance as a team member</b>                                  | Excellent<br>Effective<br>Engaged  | Satisfactory   | Needs to be improved  | Did not contribute to group project   |

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#### REFERENCES/CITATIONS

ALTEC. "Rubistar: Create Rubrics for you Project-Based Learning Activities." 4Teachers.org. 2009. Lawrence, KS. Advanced Learning Technologies Consortia (ALTEC) at the University of Kansas. 23 June 2009 <[http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?screen=CustomizeTemplate&bank\\_rubric\\_id=4&section\\_id=1](http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?screen=CustomizeTemplate&bank_rubric_id=4&section_id=1)>. Adapted by Jason Reimer for the Northwest History Consortium with permission.

"History Standards for Grades 5-12 United States." UCLA National Center for History in the Schools. 2005. Los Angeles, CA. 21 May 2009 <<http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/us-standards6>>.

Reimer, Jason. "The California Gold Rush." NWESD Organization. 2008. Anacortes, WA. 30 March 2010 <[http://www.nwesd.org/1510101216191755740/lib/1510101216191755740/4.1-2\\_GoldRush.Reimer.6.pdf](http://www.nwesd.org/1510101216191755740/lib/1510101216191755740/4.1-2_GoldRush.Reimer.6.pdf)>.