

Lesson Plan: The Gold Rush: Guided Writing and Publication

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Enduring Understandings

The Klondike Gold Rush was a premiere event that impacted Alaska's population, Native people and economy. The Gold Rush would fire the imaginations of people throughout the world, and would help create a mystique and romance that would draw future generations of people to the land. The Klondike Gold Rush drew outsiders into a land that was not only misunderstood, but sometimes painfully unforgiving. The Gold Rush experience helped illustrate many economic principles such as inflation, scarcity, the importance of entrepreneurs, etc. About 100,000 people set out for the Klondike Gold Fields. About half actually made it to Dawson, and only a few hundred found enough gold to be able to classify themselves as rich. Many who did get rich off the Gold Rush did so by providing needed services to the miners. The Gold Rush would help settle the issue of whether to establish a gold-based currency in America during the late 1890s.

Estimated Time:

Five 1-hour sessions for the guided writing; 3-5 additional sessions for the layout of the Gold Rush Publication.

Materials needed:

Teacher Background Material: Pierre Berton's Klondike Fever
Gold Rush Guided Writing prompts (PowerPoint), Gold Rush Photos
Layout Publication program such as Adobe Pagemaker, Microsoft Publisher, or Adobe In-Design
Links: <http://www.library.state.ak.us/goldrush/>

Lesson Plan:

This lesson is a guided writing exercise that places students in the role of a Klondike Stampeder in the late 1900s. Browse the goldrush site to gain a basic understanding of the Gold Rush, its characters and impact on Alaska history. Proceed with the guided writing. This lesson can be delivered in a regular classroom with a computer projection system, or in a computer lab with a projection system. Students can either write their responses or type them depending on what tools are available.

This lesson is broken down into five sessions. Each session has five prompts that the students will respond to in the first person. After each session, the students will write a paragraph. At the end of each class session, each student should produce between 1-2 pages of their story. At the end of the five sessions, students should have enough material to create a small book. Give the students about 5-7 minutes per prompt. It is good idea to print out the session prompts and give them to students who have a hard time keeping up the pace.

This activity lends itself to the team-teaching mode of instruction. Students may work on story organization, voice, grammar, spelling and punctuation in their language arts classes. Once the students have a polished story, they can then use a computer layout program to create a publication complete with a title page and pictures.

Alaska Standards:

History: A, B

Alaska History: AH. PPE 3, AH. CPD 2, AH. ICGP 3, AH. CC 2

Assessment:

Exceeds

Meets

In Progress

Not Started

Content:

Story demonstrates a strong understanding of the challenges and difficulties impacting the Gold Rush stampede.

Story demonstrates a basic understanding of the challenges and difficulties impacting the Gold Rush stampede.

Story demonstrates some understanding of the challenges and difficulties Gold Rush stampede faced on the way to Dawson.

Story demonstrates little or no understanding of the challenges and difficulties Gold Rush stampede faced on the way to Dawson.

Publication:

Student creates a well-written, well-documented publication that complements the story written.

Student creates a publication that is well-written, and appropriately documents the story written.

Student creates a publication that is understandable, and makes an attempt at documenting the story written.

Student fails to create a publication or collect pictures that document the story written.

