

READING PASSAGE 1

Answer **Questions 1-16**, which are based on Reading Passage 1 on pages 2 and 3.

Historical impact of the California Gold Rush

The California Gold Rush of 1849-1855 radically transformed California and the USA. It prompted one of the largest migrations in US history, with hundreds of thousands of migrants across the USA and the globe travelling to California to find gold in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains. This led to the establishment of boomtowns, rapid economic growth and prosperity, as well as the improvement of transport links. The significant increase in population and infrastructure allowed California to qualify for statehood in 1850, only a few years after the USA bought the territory from Mexico as part of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

For all its significance, the onset of the Gold Rush originated from a seemingly insignificant event. In January 1848, James Marshall, a carpenter, was building a sawmill for John Sutter at Sutter's Fort, a trade and agricultural colony, when he spotted something shiny in the American River. Not sure of what he had found, he collected the apparent gold flecks and ran some rudimentary tests on them - including biting them and hitting them with a hammer. When their appearance did not change, Marshall realised they were genuine gold and quickly notified John Sutter. Sensing that the discovery would negatively impact his business and bring a large number of people to his land, Sutter told his employees to keep the gold a secret. However, news of the discovery quickly got out and spread across the region. Soon, gold seekers arrived at Sutter's Fort, and just as Sutter had feared, his employees all left to look for gold.

Within a few months, news of the gold discovery expanded beyond the region, with the Baltimore Sun becoming the first US newspaper to report on it in late summer. In the autumn, the New York Herald ran a subsequent story on the gold discovery and by December, President Polk announced to Congress that significant amounts of gold were being discovered in California. The year 1849 prompted a massive migration to California from many parts of the USA as well as places as far away as China, Chile and France. The migrants, dubbed the 'forty-niners' for the year of their trip, flocked to cities such as San Francisco and present-day Sacramento, which were experiencing rapid development. The population of San Francisco, for example, exploded from 500 in 1847 to more than 150,000 in 1852.

With the massive influx of migrants, California underwent a radical transformation in a very short amount of time. It changed from a sparsely populated region to a territory with enough people to constitute a state. At the time, the population of California was still predominantly Mexican; however, the arrival of many US migrants quickly reshaped the local demographics. The newcomers often wanted to keep in touch with family around the USA and pushed for the development of new communication and transportation links. So the famed Pony Express was created to send mail and parcels from California to the Midwest within a two-week period using ponies, while a mail delivery service, the California Star Express, connected California with Missouri.

Turn Over ->

Although the Gold Rush allowed some of the early miners to become rich, it was the ensuing economic development that sprang up around gold mining that would result in the greatest profits; the merchants who aimed to satisfy the needs of gold prospectors would ultimately become very wealthy. Not only did the Gold Rush lead to an explosion in the manufacturing of mining machinery and equipment for hydraulic operations, it also saw more of the leather goods and clothes that miners required being produced.

The rapid development of agriculture – thanks to heightened demand and the availability of more sophisticated tools – was another major outcome of the Gold Rush. In fact, many who did not succeed in mining turned to California's 'green gold', taking full advantage of the territory's favourable climate to produce massive amounts of fruits, vegetables and grains to feed the expanding mining communities.

The fervour surrounding the Gold Rush led to a revolution in transportation. At the time, California was relatively isolated, but improvements were made to the road network and the number of steamships being constructed increased. San Francisco, which experienced the largest economic boom at the time, saw its rapid modernisation and economic development rewarded when it was chosen as the site for the western terminus for the first transcontinental railway, linking the east coast of the USA with California.

The Gold Rush was not beneficial to all, however. It led to increased violence against Native Americans, while immigrants, who had come to California in the hope of making their fortunes, often experienced intense discrimination. Some Americans were convinced that immigrants were taking revenue and employment opportunities away from Americans and argued for restrictions on immigration and a tax on all foreign miners working in California. The Gold Rush also had a severe environmental impact. Rivers became clogged with sediment; forests were cut down; biodiversity was compromised and soil was polluted with chemicals from the mining process. Despite these drawbacks, the Gold Rush had a lasting positive impact. It propelled significant industrial and agricultural development and helped shape California's future by turning it into an economic powerhouse.

Questions 1 – 7

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1?

In boxes 1-7 on your answer sheet, write

| | |
|------------------|--|
| TRUE | if the statement agrees with the information |
| FALSE | if the statement contradicts the information |
| NOT GIVEN | if there is no information on this |

1. Few other migrations in the USA have been equal in size to that of the California Gold Rush.
2. The population growth caused by the Gold Rush was a key factor in California becoming a state.
3. It took a long time for the USA and Mexico to agree on a figure for the purchase of California.
4. When gold was discovered, John Sutter was confident his staff would continue working for him.
5. The New York Herald article gave details about the areas of California where gold had been found.
6. The Pony Express was in operation in California before the Gold Rush.
7. A large number of the people who failed to find gold became farmers.

Turn Over ->

Questions 8 – 16

Complete the notes below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 8-16 on your answer sheet.

The California Gold Rush

The first discovery of gold

- James Marshall was working on the construction of a **8** when he found flecks of gold.
- Marshall bit on the gold flecks and used a **9** to check they were real.
- John Sutter wanted the discovery to be a **10**
- the news soon spread.

1849

- many people went to California in search of gold.
- the population of California grew rapidly.

The Impact of the Gold Rush

- the largest **11** were achieved by machine manufacturers and businesses supplying miners with items of clothing and products made from **12**
- the people supplying miners with food benefited from the area's **13**
- roads became better and more **14** were built.
- a terminus for the first **15** to cross the USA was built in San Francisco.

The negative consequences

- some immigrant workers were discriminated against.
- mining resulted in **16** contaminating the soil.