

Focus Question:

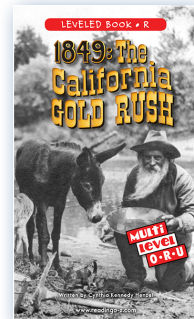
What was the effect of the gold rush on westward expansion?

Book Summary

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational

January 24, 1848, marked an important event in United States history when James Marshall discovered gold in California. The gold fever that followed this discovery overcame people from all over the world, causing them to flood the American West in search of wealth. **1849: The California Gold Rush** offers a detailed look at the unfolding of the gold rush and the way in which it shaped the United States. The book can also be used to teach students how to make inferences and draw conclusions as well as to identify subject-verb agreement.

The book and lesson are also available for levels O and U.



Lesson Essentials

Instructional Focus

- ☐ Summarize to understand text
- ☐ Make inferences and draw conclusions
- ☐ Describe information provided by graphics
- ☐ Recognize subject-verb agreement
- ☐ Identify and use boldface words

Materials

- ☐ Book: **1849: The California Gold Rush** (copy for each student)
- ☐ **Make inferences / draw conclusions, subject-verb agreement, boldface words worksheets**
- ☐ **Discussion cards**
- ☐ **Book quiz**
- ☐ **Retelling rubric**

Vocabulary

Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

• Words to Know

Story critical: *entrepreneurs* (n.), *erosion* (n.), *fortune* (n.), *gold rush* (n.), *placer mining* (n.), *prospectors* (n.)

Enrichment: *economy* (n.), *overrun* (v.), *treaty* (n.)

- **Academic vocabulary:** *amount* (n.), *enough* (adv.), *link* (v.), *plan* (v.), *same* (adj.), *within* (prep.)

Guiding the Reading

Before Reading

Build Background

Display a map of the United States and ask a volunteer to identify the state of California. Ask students why the western areas of the United States were the last to be settled. Point out that traveling west, whether by land or sea, was incredibly difficult before modern transportation. Explain that when gold was discovered in California many people were willing to make the dangerous trip and that this movement in search of gold is called the California gold rush. Provide each student with a large piece of paper. Have students create a poster that advertises the gold rush in California and attempts to attract people to make the long and challenging journey either by land or by sea. Show students the image on the title page to help get them started. Invite students to share their posters with the class.

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of **1849: The California Gold Rush**. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book and author's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Summarize**

Explain to students that engaged readers *summarize*, or create a brief overview, as they read. Explain that when readers summarize what they read it helps them sequence and organize the events described in the book. Point out that a summary often answers the questions *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*. Create a chart on the board with the headings *Who*, *What*, *When*, *Where*, and *Why*. Read aloud a summary from the back of a familiar book. Ask students what information is included in the summary and what

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

information is omitted. Remind students that a summary includes only the most important details. Point out that a summary may include the entirety of the book or simply a section or chapter of a book.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

Make inferences / Draw conclusions

- Explain to students that not all information in a book is directly stated. Discuss that sometimes readers need to make inferences and draw conclusions by using details in the book to understand the indirect language used. Point out that an *inference* is a conclusion drawn by readers connecting clues in the text to information they already know.
- Point out to students that they make inferences and draw conclusions all the time in their day-to-day lives. Have several bags with various clothing items in each, such as a sports jersey, sunglasses, mittens, a warm hat, and so on. Choose several volunteers and have them put on the clothing from their given bag. Invite each volunteer to stand in front of the class and have students make inferences and draw conclusions on the basis of the clothes being worn by each volunteer. For example, students might conclude that it is a sunny and cold day if a student is wearing a warm hat and sunglasses.

Vocabulary

Have students turn to the “Words to Know” box on the copyright page. Discuss each word with students. Then, have students turn to the glossary on page 16. Explain that the glossary provides definitions for the vocabulary words in the book. Point out the use of each content word and academic vocabulary word in the book, and then use each word in a different model sentence. Have students work in groups to create posters for these words. Have them include on each poster the word and its part of speech, the definition, the word in an example sentence, and a picture illustrating the meaning of the word.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about the California gold rush. Write the Focus Question on the board. Invite students to look for evidence in the book to support their answer to the question.
- Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be addressed in a future discussion.

During Reading

Text-Dependent Questions

As students read the book, monitor their understanding with the following questions. Encourage students to support their answers by citing evidence from the book.

- How were John Sutter and Sam Brannan the same? How were they different? (level 2) pages 4 and 5
- Why was placer mining a good way to find gold in California? (level 1) page 6
- How were some groups of people mistreated during the gold rush? (level 1) page 7
- Who were the forty-niners, and how did they get to California? (level 2) pages 8–11
- What happened to many of the men who originally found gold in California? (level 2) pages 13 and 14
- How did the gold rush change the American West? (level 3) multiple pages
- Why did the prices of everyday items go wild during the gold rush? (level 3) multiple pages

Text Features: Graphics

Have students turn to page 13 and locate the supplemental text box labeled “Prices Gone Wild.” Point out that the additional text and the chart were provided by the author to expand upon and clarify the information discussed in the book. Ask a volunteer to explain what information shown in this graphic. Point out that such features are often present in nonfiction books. Have students discuss the following questions with a partner: *Why did the author include information about the cost of basic items in 1849? How does this additional information help you better understand what life was like for the forty-niners?*

Skill Review

- Remind students that a summary of a book or section of a book describes only the most important events and details. Have students work in groups to reread and create an oral summary of the section “Panning.” Direct them back to the chart on the board and review that a summary often includes *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*. Invite students to share their summary with another group and have students give a thumbs-up signal if the summary addresses the most important details of the section.
- Have students work independently to create a written summary of the book in its entirety, referring to the information on the board. Then, have students work with a partner to exchange summaries and provide feedback.
- Model making inferences and drawing conclusions. **Think-aloud:** *As I read about the California gold rush, I am aware of the details provided by the author and of the information that is not in the text but is inferred. For example, as I read about Sam Brannan, I learned that he had no interest in keeping the gold in California a secret. In fact, he ran through the streets telling everyone and then sold shovels to all the miners at a high price. On the basis of this information, I can conclude that Sam Brannan was not interested in working alongside John Sutter and was more concerned with making money for himself. Although the author does not state this*

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

directly, I can use the details and the clues in the book to make inferences and draw conclusions about Sam Brannan.

- Model how to complete the [make-inferences / draw-conclusions worksheet](#). Have students discuss the inferences with a partner.

After Reading

Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Skill Review

Graphic Organizer:

Make inferences / Draw conclusions

Review the make-inferences / draw-conclusions worksheet that students completed. Have students share their work in groups.

Comprehension Extension

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided to be used for extension activities.

Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Answers will vary. Sample: *The gold rush caused people from the United States, Asia, and South America to flood and inhabit the American West. Because of this influx of people, the West grew rapidly and this ultimately led to cities, towns, and the development of forms of transportation that made it easier for people to access this part of the country.*)

Comprehension Checks

- [Book quiz](#)
- [Retelling rubric](#)

Book Extension Activities

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics:

Subject-verb agreement

- Write the following sentence on the board: *It took longer for people in the eastern states to heard about the gold.* Read it aloud, and have students share with a partner what is wrong with the sentence. Invite a volunteer to share with the class how to change the sentence so it is correct. Change the sentence so it reads as follows: *It took longer for people in the eastern states to hear about the gold.* Read the sentence aloud and have students give a thumbs-up signal if it is correct.

- Explain to students that writing follows rules about how the verb, or action word, in a sentence works with the subject. Discuss how the subject and the verb must agree, or work together. Underline the words *people* and *heard*. Point out that the verb *heard* must agree with the subject *people*.
- **Check for understanding:** Create a list of subjects and verbs on the board, such as: *boy/run, kids/play, teacher/read, uncle/drive, neighbor/paint*. Have students work with a partner to create a sentence using each subject-verb set. Then, have them share their sentence with another group and have students give a thumbs-up signal if the subject and verb in each sentence agree.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [subject-verb-agreement worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: Boldface words

- Have students find and point to the word *economy* on page 15. Have students identify how this word is different from other words on the page. Point out that the word *economy* is in boldface print. Explain that boldface print means the text is written in darker print, which makes it stand out on the page.
- Ask students to turn to the glossary on page 16 and locate the word *economy*. Point out that the boldface words in the book can all be found in the glossary. Have students use the glossary to locate the word *erosion* and confirm that it is in boldface print in the text.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work in pairs to find and circle all the words in boldface print in the text. Have students call out the total number of boldface words they found in the book. Invite students to explain to a partner why the author chose to have some of the words in the book in boldface print.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [boldface words worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Connections

- See the back of the book for cross-curricular extension ideas.