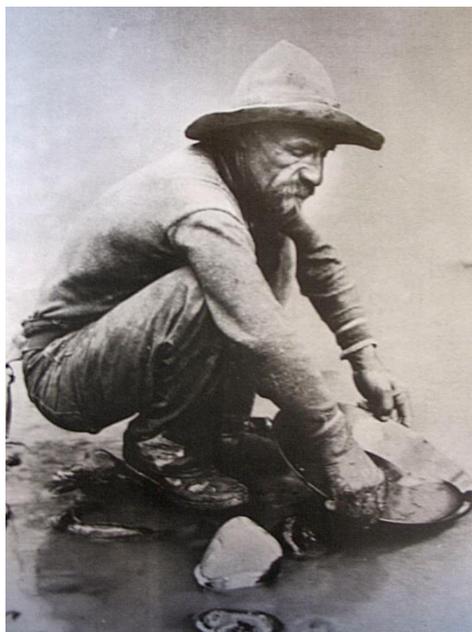


MINING LEGENDS

Objective: To enrich and expand the study of natural resources with literature and history.



A Few Facts

The first documented discovery of gold in the United States was made by 12-year-old Conrad Reed in 1799 while shooting fish with a bow and arrow in a North Carolina stream. Because gold was not known to be found in this part of the country, the boy's father kept the piece for several years and used it as a doorstop. In 1802, it was properly identified by a jeweler as gold.

Gold was mined in the U.S. prior to the Revolutionary War, but authentication of those discoveries is still missing. Some regions of Arizona have been mined for more than 600 years. The fabled Seven Cities of Cibola directed Spanish exploration of the New World in the 1500's.

The discovery of gold lured thousands of people to the American Frontier, and these prospectors settled the West and Canada.

The first authenticated U.S. gold rush was in Georgia in 1828 (though many believe that the lure of gold in Georgia did not create a true gold rush). The famous California Gold Rush began in 1849; it was followed by Colorado in 1859, South Dakota in 1874, Alaska in 1898 and Nevada in 1902.

- Gold is weighed in Troy ounces: 1 pound avoirdupois = 14.58 Troy oz.
- Gold content in jewelry and other applications is measured in karats.

1 karat = 1/24th part. 24k is pure gold; 18k is 18 parts gold and 6 parts other metals. Most gold jewelry is 14k gold.

Read More About It!



- *White Fang* and *Call of the Wild*, by Jack London; Macmillan Children's Book Group
- Robert Service Series and Yukon Poems by Robert Service; Putnam Publishing Group



Classroom Experience

Discuss the term "legend." What is fact? What is fiction?

Working alone or in groups, students can create their own treasure maps based on various myths, legends and books. By exchanging maps, they may locate the well-known treasure from the map and clues provided.

Dig A Little Deeper

- Research other mining legends or legends of the Old West.
- To recreate the emotion of the California Gold Rush, pan for gold in your own classroom. Special classroom panning kits are available from www.mineralseducationcoalition.org/store/gold-panning-kit.
- Write the legend of your classroom, or have students create their own legends and share them if they wish.
- Every state has legends of buried treasure or lost wealth waiting to be rediscovered. Research your local treasure.

Integrating the Curriculum

1. How long is the course in the Iditarod race? How many miles per hour did the most recent winner average?
2. The Egyptians used a great deal of gold. Where did they find it? How was it mined? How much does the gold sarcophagus of King Tut weigh?
3. Why is there a Russian influence in Alaska?
4. What is the basic weight for Troy weight? (12 Troy ounces = 1 Troy pound) Why is it called Troy? How many Troy ounces does each student weigh?
5. Secure a street map of your community and locate the origin of its street names. Were they named for any important historical events, places or people?
6. Form several groups and have each select a decade of your state's history to research and present to the class.