

Gold!

In 1848, James Marshall found gold in California. His discovery sparked a period in history called the Gold Rush. Over the next 5 years, more than 300,000 people came to California looking for gold.

Many of the people came in 1849. They were called 49ers. They were also called prospectors. The prospectors used a process called panning to look for gold. They washed gravel from streams and dirt to see if they found any gold flecks.

The 49ers were the ultimate adventurers. But very few of them actually found gold. Shop owners benefited the most from the gold rush. They sold food and supplies to the prospectors. They made a lot of money.

One of the shop owners was Levi Strauss. He came to California from Germany. He made work pants called blue jeans. The pants were strong and sturdy. The 49ers all wore them. Eventually Levi sold his jeans all over the country and the world.

During the gold rush, California became the 31st state in the country. People built roads, schools, and churches. They built new towns.

Sadly the Native Americans living in California suffered. They lost their land to the prospectors. They also lost their food sources and livelihood as the state became more industrial.



The gold rush in California was not the first gold rush in the U.S. Fifty years earlier, people had rushed to North Carolina to look for gold. There are always people up for an adventure. Especially an adventure that might make them rich!



This page has been intentionally left blank.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. Who benefited most from the gold rush?
 - a. Native Americans
 - b. Prospectors
 - c. 49ers
 - d. Shop owners

2. What did Levi Strauss sell?
 - a. Gold
 - b. Equipment
 - c. Pants
 - d. Food

3. Why were the prospectors called 49ers?
 - a. Because they came to California in 1849
 - b. Because they played for the 49er football team
 - c. Because they were 49 years old
 - d. Because they searched for gold for 49 years

4. Why did California become the 31st state during the time of the gold rush?
 - a. Because its population grew
 - b. Because new towns were made
 - c. Because new roads, schools, and churches were built
 - d. All of the above

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

1. Who benefited most from the gold rush?
 - a. Native Americans
 - b. Prospectors
 - c. 49ers
 - d. Shop owners**
2. What did Levi Strauss sell?
 - a. Gold
 - b. Equipment
 - c. Pants**
 - d. Food
3. Why were the prospectors called 49ers?
 - a. Because they came to California in 1849**
 - b. Because they played for the 49er football team
 - c. Because they were 49 years old
 - d. Because they searched for gold for 49 years
4. Why did California become the 31st state during the time of the gold rush?
 - a. Because its population grew
 - b. Because new towns were made
 - c. Because new roads, schools, and churches were built
 - d. All of the above**