



The Lure of Gold

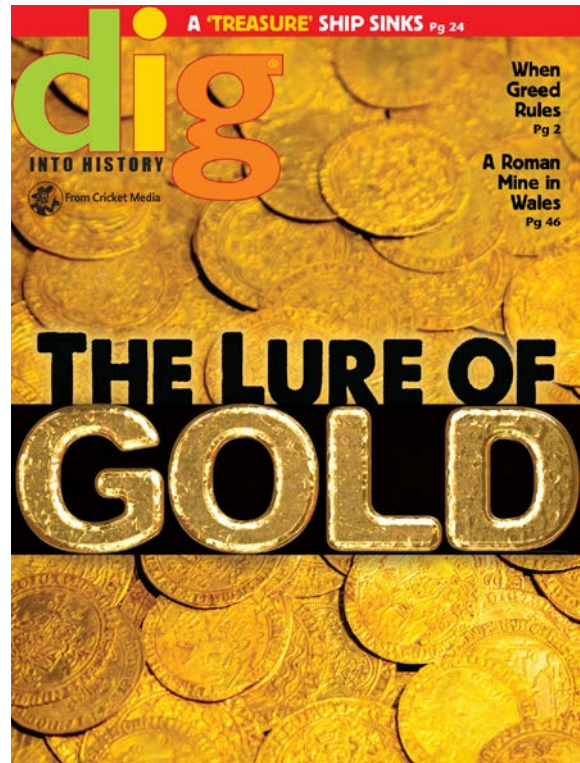
Explore the allure of one of history's most desired materials: gold. Learn about how rumors of ancient cities of gold motivated Europeans to explore the world and how reports of gold from California to New Zealand ushered in an era of goldrushes!

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How did the desire for gold affect human movement and settlement?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the European conquest of the Americas
- Students will learn about historic gold discoveries around the world
- Students will explain how human settlements and movements relate to the locations and use of various natural resources
- Students will explain how economic decisions influence the daily lives of people
- Students will explain how cultural characteristics affect the distribution and movement of people
- Students will use details from a text to write a historical fiction narrative
- Students will conduct research
- Students will write a poem



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core Social Studies skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

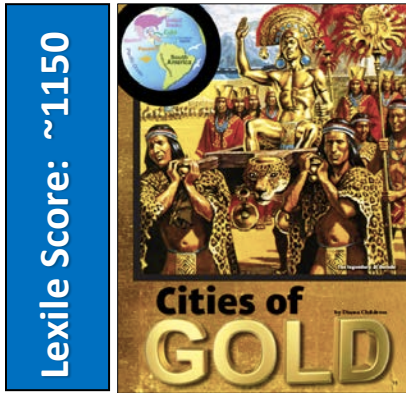
SELECTIONS

- **Cities of Gold**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1150
- **San Jose and the Spanish Treasure Fleets**
Expository Nonfiction, ~950
- **Pacific Gold**
Expository Nonfiction, ~950

Cities of Gold

pp. 15–17, Expository Nonfiction

Discover how a civilization set on discovering gold came to conquer the Americas.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article
- Students will learn about the European conquest of the Americas
- Students will explain how human settlements and movements relate to the locations and use of various natural resources
- Students will use details from a text to write a historical fiction narrative

KEY VOCABULARY

- **commerce (p. 16)** activities related to buying and selling goods, especially on a large scale
- **barter (p. 16)** the exchange of goods or services for other goods or services without using money
- **money (p. 16)** something used to pay for goods or services and to pay people for their work

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How did the desire for gold affect human movement and settlement?

Ask students to imagine themselves living in Spain in the Middle Ages. Tell them that news of large cities of gold has been spreading and the king and queen have offered to pay for voyages across the Atlantic to recover this gold. Would they go? Why or why not? If so, what challenges might they face?

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Together, review the vocabulary words and their definitions. Then have students write sentences using these words. Invite students to share their sentences. Then tell students to look for these words as they read the article.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- What areas in the Americas did Spanish explorers go to?
- How did Cortez's explorations eventually lead to the conquest of the Aztecs?
- What did the rumors of mythical cities of gold lead to?

SKILL FOCUS: Explain Movement

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that the movement of people and goods between cities, countries, or regions happens for different reasons—economic reasons, political reasons, and social reasons. Also explain that such movement can bring different cultures together and have multiple consequences on those cultures. Have students reread the article and find details from the text that describe the reasons why different Spanish explorers came to the Americas. Have students identify these reasons as economic, political, or social.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to identify at least three consequences of the quest for gold on the people of Spain and the peoples of the Americas. Invite pairs to share their ideas.

EXTEND

English Language Arts Review historical fiction (*a literary genre in which a made-up story is set in a real time and place in the past; stories include historical details about the setting and the problems characters face*). Then ask students to write a one-page historical fiction narrative based on one of the explorers described in the article. Tell students to use the article as a source of factual information about people and places.

San Jose and the Spanish Treasure Fleets

pp. 24–27, Expository Nonfiction

Learn how Spain's quest for gold and silver led to the development of a transportation system known as the treasure fleet system.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article
- Students will learn about the European conquest of the Americas
- Students will explain how economic decisions influence the daily lives of people
- Students will conduct research

KEY VOCABULARY

- **merchant ship (p. 25)** a vessel that transports goods to be bought and sold
- **trade route (p. 25)** a series of pathways and stopping points used for the transport of goods
- **privateers (p. 25)** ships used in the past to attack and rob other ships

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How did the desire for gold affect human movement and settlement?

Ask students to share what they know about world trade in the 16th–18th centuries, and discuss what this trade between nations required. Direct them to understand that shipping routes were required to send goods between places. Finally, have students predict why those routes were dangerous for those transporting goods along them.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Together, review the vocabulary words and their definitions. Then have students work in groups to write a one-paragraph story—silly or serious—using these words. Give groups five minutes to write their stories and then have them read the stories aloud. Remind students to look for these words as they read the article.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- What did Spanish merchant ships bring to the Americas before picking up gold and other treasures to bring back to Spain?
- How did the Spanish government protect their merchant ships?
- How did Spanish economic decisions lead to conflict among European nations?

SKILL FOCUS: Explain Decisions

INSTRUCT: Explain that decisions can be made for a variety of reasons, including economic ones. Tell students that economic decisions made by European nations several hundred years ago led them to explore and conquer large parts of the Americas. Next, have students reread the first section of the article. Then ask students to identify the different groups of people mentioned in this section (i.e., merchant sailors, settlers, privateers, governments).

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to choose one of these groups of people and identify one example of how an economic decision impacted the daily lives of this group. Tell students that they may have to make inferences based on evidence in the text.

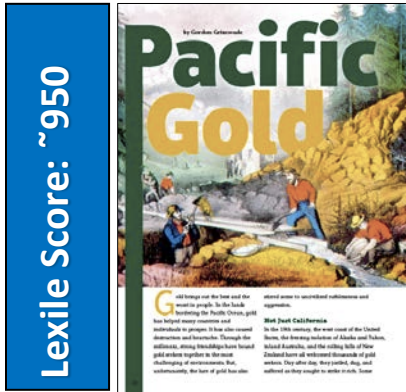
EXTEND

Social Studies Have students conduct online or library research to learn about other shipwrecks in the Americas that involved large cargoes of gold. Tell students to choose one of these shipwrecks and conduct further research about it for a short oral presentation. Have students take turns delivering their presentations to the class.

Pacific Gold

pp. 28–31, Expository Nonfiction

Learn how the discovery of gold in places along the Pacific Ocean led to “goldrushes,” where people flocked to areas hoping to strike it rich.



ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How did the desire for gold affect human movement and settlement?

Invite students to imagine a large group of people in the 1800s who receive news of a massive gold discovery and decide to set out for the new site in hopes of finding gold and becoming rich. Have students predict how a large number of people flooding into an area at the same time might affect people’s chances of becoming rich.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Together, review the vocabulary words and their definitions. Then write the following sentences on the board and have students use the vocabulary words to complete them.

The life of a _____ was difficult because of the many challenges of working in a _____.

The discovery of a large _____ prompted many people to rush to the area.

RESOURCES

- Explain Movement Organizer

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article
- Students will learn about historic gold discoveries around the world
- Students will explain how cultural characteristics affect the distribution and movement of people
- Students will write a poem

KEY VOCABULARY

- **goldfield (p. 30)** an area in which gold is found in large quantities
- **miner (p. 29)** a person who digs in order to discover materials under the earth’s surface

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- What seems to be universally true about people and gold?
- What were the short-term and long-term effects of gold rushes on the places where they occurred?
- A situation in which there is a huge difference between what is expected and what actually happens is called ironic. Why were the gold rushes ironic?

SKILL FOCUS: Explain Distribution

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that when historians set out to explain why humans moved from one place to another—even if that movement is temporary—they also look to see how that movement affected the settlement and distribution of people in an area—again, even if these changes were temporary.

ASSESS: Distribute the *Explain Movement* organizer to students. Have them work in pairs to record details from the text that help explain how human population distribution was affected—permanently or temporarily—by gold rushes to each of the areas listed in the organizer.

EXTEND

English Language Arts Ask students to compose a narrative poem—short or long—about a miner who sets out for one of the goldfields mentioned in the article. Tell students that they can decide whether the miner will strike it rich or struggle, but poems should reflect some of the challenges mentioned in the article.

Explain Movement

For each location listed in the organizer, identify details in the article that help explain how the human population distribution there was affected by gold rushes. Record details in the organizer. Remember, the effects may be permanent or temporary.

Location	How was the human population distribution affected by gold rushes?
California	
Canada	
Australia	
New Zealand	