

Cold-Read Task

Read "The Gold Rush" by Amy Headley and Victoria Smith. Then answer the questions.

The Gold Rush

In 1848, just a few months before the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ended the Mexican War, something happened that would change the history of the United States forever. In California, John Sutter was having a sawmill built on his property. He hired a carpenter named James Marshall to be in charge of the construction. Mr. Marshall and his crew were building the sawmill on the American River, near present-day Sacramento. It was there, in the muddy waters of the American River, that James Marshall found gold nuggets.

John Sutter tried to keep James Marshall's discovery quiet. He did not want people entering his property to search for gold. Within a few months, the secret was out. Most of Sutter's workers left him in search of their own fortunes. Sutter was unable to keep hundreds of prospectors from trampling his land, destroying his crops, and killing his cattle. People all around him were "striking it rich," but John Sutter lost everything and died a poor man.

The Forty Niners

Within a year of James Marshall's discovery, thousands of people from the United States and other countries traveled to California to claim a piece of gold for themselves and hopefully become rich.

Gold-seekers from Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, and China traveled across the ocean by boat. Prospectors from the United States and Mexico arrived on horseback and in covered wagons. Nearly 100,000 people traveled to California during that first year. Because the year was 1849, they became known as the "Forty Niners."

Mining for Gold

In the beginning of the Gold Rush, miners "panned" for gold by scooping pans with screen bottoms into the muddy waters of California's rivers and streams. The holes in the screens were big enough to let sand fall through, but small enough to stop any flakes of gold large enough to have value.

Later, the miners used a method known as cradle rocking to search for gold. They scooped up the mud, sand, and water from the bottom of the river and dumped it into a box with a screen bottom. The miners rocked the box back and forth to separate the gold from the mud and sand.

After the gold in and around the streams had been removed, miners turned their attention to the land around the rivers. To remove the gold, hard-rock miners used picks and axes to dig shafts and tunnels that were up to 40 feet deep. Ox-drawn wagons carried supplies into the mines and gold out of the mines.

Gold Rush Towns

In 1848, before James Marshall's gold discovery, there were a few hundred people living in San Francisco. After gold was discovered, San Francisco became the starting place for most miners hoping to strike it rich during California's Gold Rush.

Thousands of wagon trains packed the Oregon and California trails. Ships sailed across the Pacific Ocean. All were loaded with supplies and eager miners who started their golden journeys in San Francisco. By 1850, San Francisco's population had grown to 25,000.

From San Francisco, miners traveled to the towns of Sacramento or Stockton. These towns became the center of activity for prospectors heading to the northern and southern mines. After a long week panning for gold, miners returned to one of these towns for a hot meal, a warm bed, entertainment, and new supplies for the next week. Everything could be purchased with gold nuggets or bags of gold dust.

The Gold Rush © 2009 splashpublications.com

1. Read this sentence from the passage.

“Sutter was unable to keep hundreds of prospectors from trampling his land, destroying his crops, and killing his cattle.”

Part A

What is the meaning of the word prospector?

- a. Someone who give others wealth or a title.
- b. Someone who tries to uncover hidden information.
- c. Someone who explores an area in search of oil, gold, or other mineral deposits.
- d. Someone who travels to distant or unfamiliar places to find out more about them.

Part B

Which detail from the passage **best** supports the meaning of prospector?

- a. “John Sutter tried to keep James Marshall’s discovery quiet.”
 - b. “He did not want people entering his property to search for gold.”
 - c. “Within a few months, the secret was out.”
 - d. “People all around him were ‘striking it rich.’”
-

2. **Part A**

Which statement **best** describes John Sutter’s feelings toward prospectors finding gold on his property?

- a. John Sutter was excited to strike it rich with the prospectors.
- b. John Sutter was happy that he could help all his workers find treasure.
- c. John Sutter was worried that too many prospectors would come and ruin his land.
- d. John Sutter was angry that the prospectors were not sharing any of the gold they found.

Part B

Which detail from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- a. “Within a few months, the secret was out.”
 - b. “Most of Sutter’s workers left him in search of their own fortunes.”
 - c. “Sutter was unable to keep hundreds of prospectors from trampling his land, destroying his crops, and killing his cattle.”
 - d. “People all around him were ‘striking it rich,’ but John Sutter lost everything and died a poor man.”
-

3. Read this sentence from the passage.

They became known as the “Forty Niners.”

Part A

Why are the prospectors who moved to California in search of gold referred to as forty niners?

- a. In 1849 a large rush of people moved to California in search for gold.
- b. The majority of the people who moved in search of gold were 49 years old.
- c. Most people who came to search for gold only lasted around 50 days before leaving.
- d. Prospectors moving to find gold had to establish a camp no closer than 49 yards to the nearest camp.

Part B

Which detail from the passage **best** supports the meaning of forty niners?

- a. Thousands of people from the United States and other countries traveled to California.
 - b. Because the year was 1849, they became known as the “Forty Niners.”
 - c. Unfortunately, not everyone found gold in California’s mines.
 - d. Sometimes it took months or even years to actually find and remove the gold.
-

4. Reread the section of the passage titled “Mining for Gold.”

Identify one tool used in each gold mining method and place the letter into the chart. Then, identify and place the letter by the **two** details from “Mining for Gold” that describe each method below.

Method	Tool	Detail 1	Detail 2
Cradle Rocking			
Hard Rock			
Panning			

TOOLS

- a. scooping pan
- b. sawmill
- c. pick
- d. box

DETAILS

- e. “scooped up the mud, sand, and water from the bottom of the river and dumped it into a box with a screen bottom.”
- f. “The holes in the screens were big enough to let sand fall through, but small enough to stop any flakes of gold.”
- g. “scooping pans with screen bottoms into the muddy waters of California’s rivers and streams.”
- h. “To remove the gold, hard-rock miners used picks and axes to dig shafts and tunnels.”
- i. “The miners rocked the box back and forth to separate the gold from the mud and sand.”
- j. “Ox-drawn wagons carried supplies into the mines and gold out of the mines.”

5. Which sentence **best** summarizes “The Gold Rush”?

- a. James Marshall discovered gold while building a sawmill on a farm in California.
- b. One way that prospectors searched for treasure was by “panning” for gold using scooping pans.
- c. In 1849, thousands of prospectors moved to California in hopes of striking it rich in search of gold.
- d. John Sutter’s property was destroyed when prospectors tore up his land looking for gold during the Gold Rush of 1849.

6. Identify **three** details that support the main idea that people were hoping to find gold in California.
- Prospectors searched for gold in rivers and streams, and by making shafts in rocks.
 - James Marshall was a carpenter that worked in California.
 - Gold rush towns sprung up throughout California, such as San Francisco.
 - John Sutter died a poor man.
 - Prospectors came from all over the world: Australia, New Zealand, China, and Mexico.

7. Identify the details from the passage that show the causes and effects between events of “The Gold Rush.” Place the correct letter in the box. Not all choices will be used.

Cause	Effect
	James Marshall finds gold nuggets in the American River.
Prospectors come in search of gold on John Sutter’s land.	
Word gets out about the discovery.	
	Miners begin mining for gold on land using picks and axes.
	San Francisco’s population grows to 25,000.

- John Sutter’s crops were destroyed and cattle killed.
- Hundreds of prospectors came.
- All the gold had been removed from streams and rivers.
- Sutter lost everything and died a poor man.
- San Francisco became the starting place for most miners hoping to strike it rich.
- Shafts and tunnels 40 feet deep were built.
- John Sutter hires James Marshall to build a sawmill.

8. Read the following sentence from the passage.

“All were loaded with supplies and eager miners who started their golden journeys in San Francisco.”

Part A

What is the meaning of *eager* in this sentence?

- a. excited
- b. poor
- c. rich
- d. scared

Part B

Which detail from the passage **best** supports the meaning of *eager*?

- a. “In 1848, before James Marshall’s gold discovery, there were a few hundred people living in San Francisco.”
- b. “After gold was discovered, San Francisco became the starting place for most miners hoping to strike it rich during California’s Gold Rush.”
- c. “After a long week panning for gold, miners returned to one of these towns for a hot meal, a warm bed, entertainment, and new supplies for the next week.”
- d. “Everything could be purchased with gold nuggets or bags of gold dust.”

9. Read the following sentence from the passage.

“All were loaded with supplies and eager miners who started their golden journeys in San Francisco.”

Write a multi-paragraph response that explains why the miners’ trip to California is described as a “golden journey” and how this description supports the information about the Gold Rush. Use details from the passage to support your response. Be sure to observe the conventions of standard English.

