



New York State Testing Program

English

Language Arts Test

Book 3

Grade

6

April 26–28, 2010

Name _____

TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

Here are some suggestions to help you do your best:

- Be sure to read carefully all the directions in the test book.
- Plan your time.
- Read each question carefully and think about the answer before writing your response.

In this test, you will be writing about texts that you will be reading. Your writing will be scored on

- how clearly you organize your writing and express what you have learned
- how accurately and completely you answer the questions being asked
- how well you support your responses with examples or details from the texts
- how correctly you use grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing



Whenever you see this symbol, be sure to plan and check your writing.

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Reading and Writing**D***irections*

In this part of the test, you are going to read an article called “Gold Fever” and a poem called “A Gold Miner’s Tale.” You will answer questions 31 through 34 and write about what you have read. You may look back at the article and the poem as often as you like.

Go On

Gold Fever

from "PBS Kids" website

In the cities and towns of the East, it seemed almost like wartime. Thousands of men left their homes and families behind and headed for California. Women moved in with relatives or fended for themselves. Children wrote letters to their faraway fathers and waited impatiently for them to come home. It was 1849, and the California Gold Rush had begun.

James W. Marshall had discovered gold on January 24, 1848. Marshall worked for John Sutter, a Swiss immigrant who hoped to create an agricultural empire in California. Sutter owned

39,000 acres of land, on which he raised livestock, fruits, and vegetables. He built a large fort that was home to a number of businesses.

Marshall was inspecting a ditch at Sutter's sawmill on the South Fork of the American River when he saw a sparkle beneath the water. He picked up the glittering particle, half the size of a pea. He was certain that he had found gold.

* * *

On May 12, 1848, when word of the discovery reached San Francisco, the town's male



population was about 600. On May 15, only about 200 men remained. By June 1, San Francisco was a ghost town—stores closed, ships abandoned, and houses deserted. Most of the men had run off to the gold fields. The town’s newspapers even shut down. No one was left to write or read them.

Gold fever quickly spread. By the end of 1848, prospectors came from as far as Oregon to the north, the Hawaiian Islands to the west, and Mexico and Chile from the south. It took almost a year for the news to reach the East. When it did, a stampede began.

Today it might be hard to understand why men left their homes and loved ones and traveled thousands of miles to look for gold. But in 1849, a prosperous farmer might make about two or three hundred dollars a year. A factory worker made about a dollar for working a twelve-hour day. A skilled craftsman made a dollar and a half a day.

In California, gold was free to anyone who could find it. A miner could take \$25 to \$35 of gold a day—or even more—out of a riverbed. Stories of miners becoming rich men in a single day spread like wildfire. Many of these stories were exaggerations. But some of them were true.

Some men struck it rich, in primitive mining camps with names like Hangtown, Gouge Eye, and Hell’s Delight. The work was back-breaking, but flake by flake, nugget by nugget, these lucky forty-niners dug up deposits of gold worth hundreds—or even thousands—of dollars. Most miners were not so lucky. Many of the best mining sites were quickly claimed, and then picked clean.

Some people in California made money without having to dig for gold. Smart business people charged miners for supplies and services. A pound of sugar sold for \$2. A pound of coffee for \$4. Women in the gold fields could charge \$25 for a cooked meal, or earn \$50 a week washing shirts. In 1849, those prices were sky-high. A successful miner could easily pay them. But many miners could barely make ends meet.

* * *

The Gold Rush transformed not only the lives of people, but California itself. California’s population grew dramatically. Its towns, cities, and businesses thrived. And almost overnight, it became the most famous American state. People around the world knew the story of California, the golden land where a fortune could be dug from the ground.

31

Complete the chart below by describing **one** way that both the population and the city of San Francisco were affected by the California Gold Rush in 1848. Use details from the article in your answer.

HOW THE GOLD RUSH AFFECTED SAN FRANCISCO

| Effect on the Population of San Francisco | Effect on the City of San Francisco |
|--|--|
| | |

32

Explain why men thought it was worth the trouble to leave their homes and families to look for gold in California. Use details from the article to support your answer.

Go On

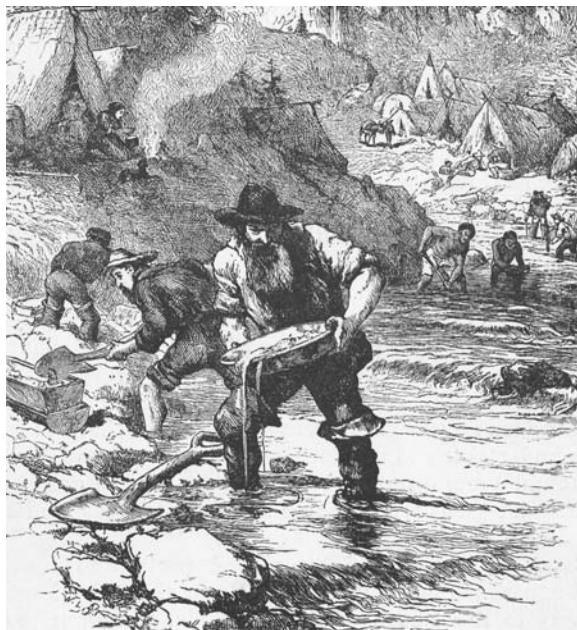
A Gold Miner's Tale

by Bobbi Katz

I was twenty-one years old.
Fired up by dreams of gold.
Rushing West in '49
to stake a claim to my own mine!
What did I find when I got there?
Thousands of "rushers" everywhere!
Water and sand. That's ALL it takes.
Swish your pan. Pick out the flakes!

A meal?
A horse?
A place to stay?
Who'd believe what we had to pay!

Bought a shovel. Bought a pan.
Soon I'd be a rich young man.
Water and sand. That's ALL it takes.
Swish your pan. Pick out the flakes!
Pan after pan, I'd swish and wish
for a glint of pay dirt in my dish.
Asleep at night, what did I see?
Nuggets the daylight hid from me.



It takes more than a flash in the pan
to make a rusher a rich young man.

The gold I found? Just enough to get by.
I gave up when my claim went dry.
Water and sand. That's ALL it takes.
Swish your pan. Pick out the flakes!
Got a job in a hydraulic mine.
Hated the work, but the pay was fine.
So when I heard about Pikes Peak,¹
I
was
in
the Rockies
within a week!

Water and sand. That's ALL it takes.
Swish your pan. Pick out the flakes!
I should have known better.
With a grubstake² so small,
I left Colorado with nothing at all.
No job. No gold. Just a shovel and a pan.
But I walked away a wiser man.

"Gold in the Klondike!"³
Wouldn't you think
I'd be up there in a wink?
But with my new plan to pan gold flakes,
I didn't make the same mistakes.
Before I joined the great stampede,
I thought: What will stampedeers need?
Now I'm a Dawson⁴ millionaire!
I sell them ALL long underwear.

¹**Pikes Peak:** site of a gold discovery in Colorado

²**grubstake:** money or supplies

³**Klondike:** a Gold Rush area in northern Canada

⁴**Dawson:** a city in the Yukon Territory of northern Canada

33

Why does the speaker in “A Gold Miner’s Tale” say he was “a wiser man” when he left Colorado? Use details from the poem to support your answer.

Go On

Planning Page

You may PLAN your writing for question 34 here if you wish, but do NOT write your final answer on this page. Your writing on this Planning Page will NOT count toward your final score. Write your final answer on Pages 9 and 10.

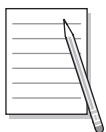


34

Think about the difficulties faced by gold miners in “Gold Fever” and “A Gold Miner’s Tale.” Write an essay in which you discuss the hardships of life as a gold miner or gold “rusher.” Use details from **both** the article and the poem to support your answer.

In your essay, be sure to

- discuss the hardships of life as a gold miner or gold “rusher”
- include details from **both** the article and the poem



Check your writing for correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Go On

Place Student Label Here



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