

Peru Gold
NewsDepth, November 13, 2008
Classroom Activities
Online Lessons
Additional Resources



<http://mediaenvironment.files.wordpress.com/2008/03/368706.jpg>

Objectives:

All over the world the economy is experiencing a serious downturn, and no industry seems to be safe. Financial experts, however, tell us that in times of trouble, there is one reliable investment: Gold. Today's NewsDepth features one country, Peru, that is teeming with activity and is expressing some optimism in these tough times. Why? Because of its gold mines. In times of market crisis, people seeking refuge from its instability put their money in gold. And there's gold in "them there mines". Students will discuss the value of gold, write about it, and learn the value of hard work. They will also discover the relationship between gold and paper money.

Grade level: Grade 5-6

Subjects:

Social studies and language arts

Classroom Activities:

1. Activity #1 The Value of Gold Discussion (15-20 minutes)

- Throughout history, adventurers and explorers have traveled far and wide, even risked their lives, in a relentless pursuit of gold. What is it about gold that inspires such behavior? Centuries ago, we coveted gold as a rare and beautiful substance. Today, we also value its more practical qualities-- outstanding workability and durability and financial value. Gold's physical and chemical properties are without equal for use in such high tech fields as medicine, space, architecture, and electronics. Also in times of financial trouble, it is a very reliable investment. (FYI : Today's asking price for gold is \$737 an ounce. It might be interesting to bring in a gold piece, if you have one, and ask your students to guess the value of the piece)
- Brainstorm with your class to make a list of words and expressions linked to gold. (King Solomon's mines, search for the seven cities of gold, Rumpelstiltskin, King Midas) And what about the term "You were as good as gold?" How about gold medals in the Olympics or gold cups and trophies for first place in almost any kind of sport or contest? Do we then have the concept that gold is very valuable? Why do you think it is valuable?

- What do you know about our own nation's history about the effect of gold on its Western Expansion?
 - Tell the class that about 150 years ago, many people traveled a long distance from the eastern United States to California when they learned that gold had been discovered in the northern California mountains.
 - Use a class wall map to show them the gold rush land and sea routes, available at the links below. Make sure they realize that the wagon trail involved crossing mountains.
 - Ask students what they think it might have been like to have traveled from the East Coast to California during the gold rush. Do they think it would have been a difficult journey? Why do they think so many people left their homes in search of gold?
 - Discuss the idea of gold as a valuable commodity that, for those fortunate enough to find it in California, could make people rich.

2. Activity #2 Writing extension from Activity 1 Discussion (assignment)

- The gold of lore and legends is something that goes back far beyond our own childhood (as teachers). If you did Activity #1, students will mention King Midas and Rumpelstiltskin as just a couple of the legends that have survived the ages.
- Ask students to write their own "Gold Story." Create an assignment where they can go home and write a 1 page short story with the value of gold being reflected in some way in their plot. They can make this an interactive assignment with a parent or family member.
- There is a true story found on the internet that you could provide them with. <http://www.eslteachersboard.com/cgi-bin/lessons/index.pl?read=1259> As an alternative activity you could omit the last paragraph and have students write their own ending.

2. Activity #2 Find Peru on the Map (5-10 minutes)

- There are two websites you can visit or use a classroom map to find Orcopampa, Peru
 - <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/samerica/lqcolor/pecolor.htm> Orcopampa is a part of Arequipa
 - <http://www.maplandia.com/peru/arequipa/castilla/orcopampa-15-15-58-s-72-20-30-w/> Satellite images
 - <http://www.traveljournals.net/explore/peru/map/p65109/orcopampa.html> Map with additional geographical information about Orcopampa

3. Activity #3 How is Gold Mined? (20-30 minutes)

- Start with a simple panning activity for students to see how gold was originally discovered and mined back during our own California Gold Rush:

- Obtain some fine copper beebee pellets or iron fillings from a hardware store.
- Mix one-quarter cup of the "gold" with about 10 liters of course sand. . Put the mixture in a bucket and add water to make a slurry.
- Have students use small shallow bowls or old pie pans to scoop up a bowl of slurry and swirl it over another bucket or large pot. Tell them not to tip the pan too far and to continue adding plain water while swirling until only the pellets or fillings remain in the bowl.
- Watch how gold is mined now with this online video:
http://www.goldpawnshop.com/video_How_is_gold_mined.asp

4. Activity #4 The Conditions of a Miner (one class period, or a discussion time from 15-20 minutes with an overnight assignment)

- Taken from the NewsDepth Feature:
 “NOW BEFORE THEY’LL LET YOU GO DOWN INTO THE MINE YOU HAVE TO PUT ON THE PROPER PROTECTIVE GEAR THAT MEANS THE COVERALL, THE BOOTS, THE HELMET, A BREATHING MECHANISM FOR DOWN IN THE MINE ITSELF AND OF COURSE THE GOGGLES.ONCE SUITED UP, WE HEAD DOWN, ABOUT 1000 FEET DOWN, INTO THE MINE."THE BIGGEST RISK HERE IS A ROCK FALL," OUR GUIDE TELLS US, "WHICH IN THE MINES IN PERU IS WHAT CAUSES MOST FATAL ACCIDENTS."BUT THIS IS THE REASON THEY'RE WILLING TO RUN THAT RISK."I look here at the color of the rock. If I see around here it's black or gray, it probably doesn't have gold. But this vein that is white tells us that the gold is here." GETTING THE GOLD FROM THE MOUNTAINS IS AN EXPENSIVE PROPOSITION, AND FOR THE MINERS IT'S HARD WORK. WORKING HERE CAN BE DOUBLY HARD BECAUSE FIRST, THOUGH YOU'RE UNDERGROUND, YOU'RE AT A HIGH ALTITUDE- MORE THAN 3000 METERS ABOVE SEA LEVEL. SO YOU'RE DEALING WITH THE ALTITUDE FIRST, THEN YOU'RE GOING DOWN AS WELL, AND IT REALLY GETS HOT DOWN HERE.”
- Have students make lists or draw pictures of the things for which they would be willing to make long, difficult journeys or work very hard. Make sure students realize that these don't have to be material objects but can also be nonmaterial things such as getting good grades, being in good shape, or having the opportunity to explore a new place.
- Have them write a short story illustrating themselves doing this hard work and obtaining the things they desire. Have students share their stories or drawings with the class, and compare their ideas.
- Pose these questions to the class:
 - Why do you value these things, and why would you be willing to work so hard for them?
 - Do you think you will always value these things, or might they go out of style?

5. Activity 5# The Relationship between gold and paper money

- You often hear people say, “If we need more money, why don’t we just print up some more paper bills?”
- Visit this website as a resource to answer why we can’t do that.

Resource for that question:

http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=307&chapter=140189&layout=html&Itemid=27

Online Lesson Plans (standards listed)

<http://www.library.state.ak.us/goldrush/TGuide/GOLDMINE.HTM>

Let’s explore gold mining

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/16/g912/frommine.html> Gold: From the mine to you

<http://www.econedlink.org/lessons/index.php?lesson=EM395&page=teacher> One is Silver and the Other Gold

<http://www.womeninmining.org/pdfs/Sample2booklet.pdf> Hands on activities for teachers

Additional Resources:

<http://www.goldelement.info/> Excellent site for anything you ever wanted or needed to know about gold

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Official_gold_reserves Official gold reserves