

Social Studies

Genre

Nonfiction Articles provide information about real people, places, or things.

Text Feature

Timelines show historical events in the order in which they occurred.

Content Vocabulary

precious

historians

environment

GOLD!

by Patricia West

Spanish explorers in Mexico nearly 500 years ago heard stories of great cities built of gold. Although they never found these cities, they did send many items made of gold back to Spain.

Mexico was freed from Spanish rule in 1821, but more conflict was yet to come. A war broke out in 1846. As an outcome of the war, the United States won the northern part of Mexico and called it California.

Before 1848, California was home to only a few ranchers, in addition to the Native Americans who had lived there before the European settlers arrived. That all changed with the cry of “Gold!” The **precious** metal had finally been discovered in the American River, not far from the then-small town of San Francisco.



As **historians** tell us, “The world rushed in!” In 1849 nearly 90,000 men and women, nicknamed “49’ers,” raced to California in search of fame and fortune.

Some made the journey overland by covered wagon, traveling about 12 miles a day. Others chose to take ships down the Atlantic coast to Panama and then up the Pacific coast to California. The longest trip was to sail down the eastern coasts of the United States and South America, around the tip, and up the Pacific coasts. This route required up to eight months to make the 18,000-mile voyage.

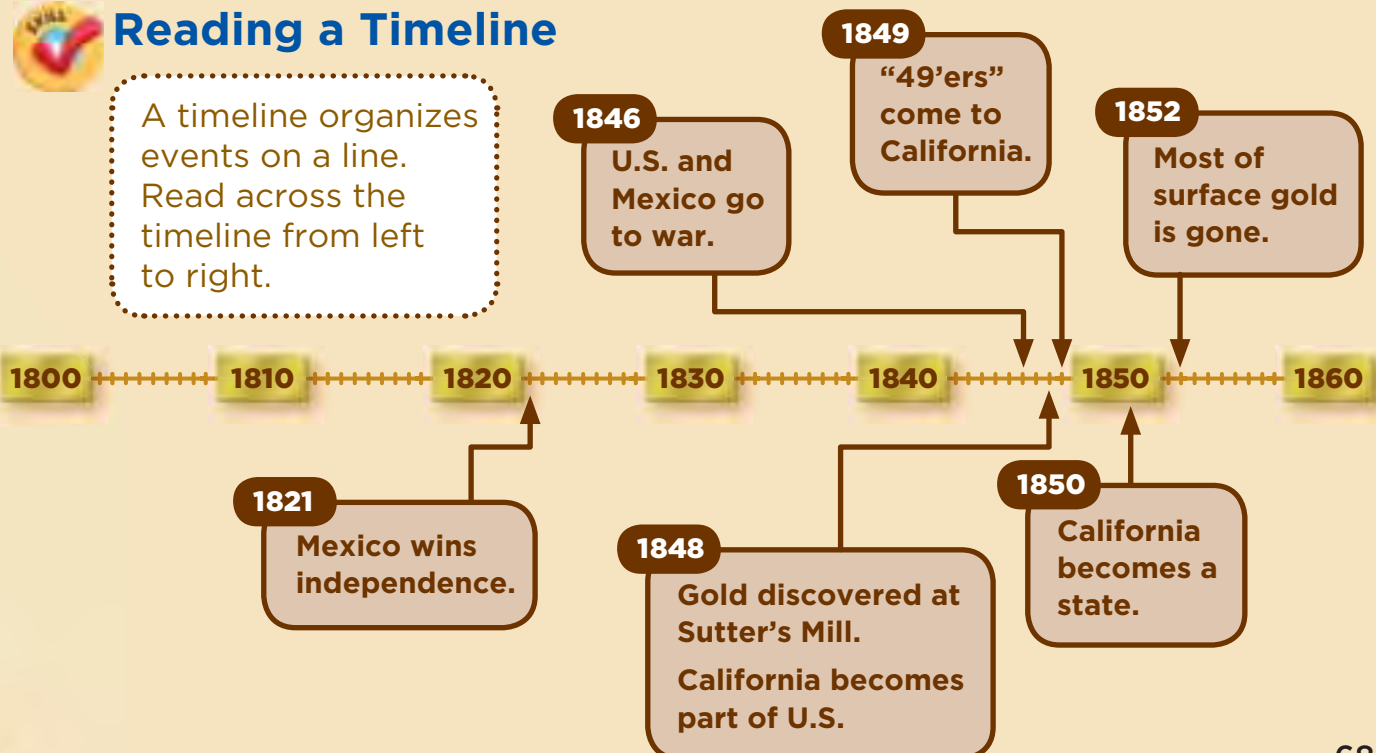


Timeline of California Gold Rush



Reading a Timeline

A timeline organizes events on a line. Read across the timeline from left to right.



People came from all over—some from as far away as China. In 1850, a year after California became a state, there were 3,000 Chinese men living there—and another 22,000 on their way. One of the few women in gold rush country used the pen name “Dame Shirley.” Shirley was a doctor’s wife whose real name was Louise Amelia Knapp Smith Clappe. She spent a year living in rough mining camps along the Feather River and wrote letters filled with colorful information about the era.

In one letter, “Dame Shirley” described the way the miners spoke. She especially liked their figure of speech “seeing the elephant.”

That meant “having a remarkable experience,” nearly as remarkable as finding an elephant in the gold mines. In 1851 she wrote this about the gold miners: “I never could appreciate the poetry or the humor of making one’s wrists ache by knocking to pieces gloomy-looking stones....”

Miners set up systems that dumped huge amounts of dirt and gravel into long wooden boxes. They poured in water to wash away everything but the heavier gold. By 1852, though, most of the easier-to-find gold had been discovered. Then miners began digging underground.



Some Californians became concerned about the **environment** when mud and trash washed into California's rivers. Lawmakers finally passed laws in 1854 that stopped much of this pollution. However, some effects are still visible even today.

Gold mining was popular until shortly after World War II, which ended in 1945. Although most of the gold is probably gone now, people still look for gold in the rivers of northern California. They dip a shallow pan in the river and swirl it



around to wash out the dirt. A very lucky miner might find a few specks glinting in the bottom of the pan.

Connect and Compare



1. Look at the timeline on page 683. About how many years did the gold rush last? **Reading a Timeline**
2. Why do you think the earliest gold miners made no effort to protect the environment? **Evaluate**
3. Reread page 683 of this article and page 672 of *The Gold Rush Game*. How did the "49'ers" get to California? **Reading/Writing Across Texts**



Social Studies Activity

Research gold prices. Find out how much gold was worth in each of the following years: 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000. Plot your data on a line graph.



Find out more about gold at www.macmillanmh.com

Writer's Craft

A Strong Conclusion

A good magazine article is organized by topic sentences and interesting supporting details. A **strong conclusion** sums up the article.

Write About a Place

A Day at White Pines Forest

by Casey R.

The White Pines Forest is a great place to visit. If you like rivers and boating, you'll find lots to do. You can go boating on Muddy River in many different kinds of boats. People who like to swim can go to Colson Lake. Little kids can play happily on the lake's sandy shore.

There's plenty to do on dry land, too. You can hike and picnic among the pine trees. At the wildlife center, visitors can watch snakes slowly slithering around in their cages and hear owls hoot spookily. You will find great things to do at White Pines Forest.



My article for the school newsletter includes topic sentences and interesting details.

I summed up with a strong conclusion.

Your Turn

Write a short magazine article about a special place to visit in your community. Write topic sentences and support them with details. In your details, describe the features of this special place and explain why it is worth visiting. Sum up with a strong conclusion. Use the Writer's Checklist to check your writing. Include photographs in your article.



Writer's Checklist

- Ideas and Content:** Have I included the most interesting information about this special place? Did I use a **strong conclusion**?
- Organization:** Did I start each paragraph with a topic sentence and then provide interesting supporting details?
- Voice:** Will readers sense my enthusiasm?
- Word Choice:** Did I use precise and colorful language to help my readers picture this place?
- Sentence Fluency:** Did I vary my sentences?
- Conventions:** Did I use *good* and *well* correctly? Did I check my spelling?