

# Ain't Nothin' but a Gold Digger

## Information Processing Model Synectics (v. 1), chapter 8, pp. 154-158 Grade 4 – Social Studies

### 1. MATERIALS/PREPLANNING

- **Materials**
  - Advance organizer (PPT)
  - Whiteboard & markers
  - Paper, pencils, & journals
- **Vocabulary**
  - Analogy
  - Forty-niner
- **Literature**
  - *Gold Fever!* (<http://www.museumca.org/goldrush/fever12.html>)
  - *The California Gold Rush, 1849* (<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/californiagoldrush.htm>)

### 2. OBJECTIVE

- **Objectives**
  - **Students Will Understand**
    - The Gold Rush was a period full of hardships and opportunities
  - **Students Will Know**
    - The daily struggles gold seekers faced during the Gold Rush
    - The characteristics of the “forty-niners” who flocked to California in 1849
  - **Students Will Be Able To**
    - Create and explain analogies involving the “forty-niners” of the Gold Rush
    - Relate the struggles the “forty-niners” faced to their own lives
- **State the Cognitive Taxonomy and/(Affective/ Psychomotor) Level**
  - **Cognitive**
    - **Knowledge**
    - **Comprehension**
    - **Application**
    - **Analysis**
    - **Synthesis**
    - **Evaluation**
  - **Affective**
    - **Receiving**
    - **Responding**
- **Standards**
  - **History-Social Science Content Standards (2009)**
    - *4.3 Students explain the economic, social, and political life in California from the establishment of the Bear Flag Republic through the Mexican-American War, the Gold Rush, and the granting of statehood.*
      - 4.3.3 Analyze the effects of the Gold Rush on settlements, daily life, politics, and the physical environment (e.g., using biographies of John Sutter, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, Louise Clapp).
  - **Reading-Language Arts Content Standards (2007)**
    - *2.0 Writing Applications (2.1 Write narratives)*
      - 2.1.a. Relate ideas, observations, or recollections of an event or experience

### 3. ASSESSMENT

- **Progress monitoring (informal):** This formative assessment would occur as students give individual contributions to their small groups or to the whole class. It can evaluate the quality of both their participation and their analogies, which display their thinking. The amount or depth of guidance from the teacher can be adapted based on the quality of students' contributions.
- **Constructed response (formal):** This summative assessment, which is given after the final analogy has been created, will be used to examine students' understanding of the analogies and will demonstrate their thinking. It will be evaluated according to the following rubric:

Score	4	3	2	1
<b>Clarity</b>	Writing thoroughly explains, justifies, and criticizes each point of comparison; includes topic and concluding sentence	Writing adequately explains and justifies each point of comparison; includes topic and concluding sentence	Writing vaguely explains and justifies each point of comparison; topic or concluding sentence may be missing	Writing mentions points of comparison without explanation; topic and/or concluding sentence may be missing
<b>Accuracy</b>	Each point of comparison is factually accurate and based on content learned in classroom	Most points of comparison are factually accurate and based on content learned in classroom	Points of comparison are lacking accuracy and sometimes based on content learned in classroom	Points of comparison are inaccurate and not based on content learned in classroom
<b>Purpose</b>	Paragraph includes 3 or 4 strong points of comparison between the forty-niners and the selected analogy	Paragraph includes 2 or 3 reasonable points of comparison between the forty-niners and the selected analogy	Paragraph includes 1 or 2 reasonable points of comparison between the forty-niners and the selected analogy	Paragraph includes 1 or fewer weak points of comparison between the forty-niners and the selected analogy

- **Journal response (informal):** This writing assignment will focus on students' understanding of the content and the analogies, as well as their ability to apply the ideas to their own lives. Because each student has had different experiences and thinks at varying levels of depth, it will not be scored qualitatively. Students will receive credit for completing the assignment; students who submit incomplete journals will be required to redo or elaborate on the assignment.

### 4. LESSON OPENING/PURPOSE

- **Clearly state to students how this lesson will benefit students.**  
**My version:** This exercise in creative and analogical thinking will expand students' problem-solving abilities, develop their collaborative skills, and deepen their understanding of the social studies content. They will learn to **apply** their understanding of the issues surrounding life during the Gold Rush to their own lives as they practice making connections between strange and familiar concepts.  
**Student version:** In today's lesson, we will talk more about the gold-seekers of the Gold Rush – the "forty-niners" – and try to better **understand** what life was like for them. As we do this, we'll **look** at and **create** some other ideas that will make it easier for us to **relate** to them. We will do this in groups, so **participation** and teamwork are very important!

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### 5. MOTIVATION FOR LEARNING

- Intrinsic motivation is to be expected here because students have the largest role in creating the lesson content. In this lesson, students do the majority of the talking, and the combination of their participation and subsequent learning is its own reward.
- In order to support this motivation, I will ensure that students do not miss out on the opportunity to contribute their original thoughts and ideas. This will be done through progress monitoring, asking thought-provoking questions to groups that might be struggling, and welcoming and affirming all appropriate contributions.

## 6. LESSON BODY

### Step 1 Review/Make Connections to Previously Learned Material

At the beginning of this lesson, teacher will guide students through a review of what they have already learned about the Gold Rush and those who participated in it. Students will have been studying this topic in recent lessons, but this synectics lesson will deepen their understanding of daily life during the Gold Rush and help them appreciate and empathize with the plight of the forty-niner. An advance organizer that shows the learned content will be displayed and discussed.

### Step 2 State Objectives for the Lesson (State the objective to students in a way that students will know what they will learn. This helps them make connections with prior learning.)

Today our goal is to deepen our understanding of the Gold Rush period, and what life was like for the people who participated in it. As we have been learning, the Gold Rush was an exciting time for some, with great opportunities bringing them fabulous wealth. But for others, it was a very difficult time full of hardships and exhausting labor. Today we will talk more about these characteristics and use some creative thinking to understand them better. As we do this, we will figure out some new ways to describe the lives of the forty-niners and discover some ways that our lives are similar to theirs.

### Step 3 Present New Material

#### 1. Describe the topic

- Teacher will ask students to describe Gold Rush settlers (or “forty-niners”) in small groups. In small groups, students will generate a list of descriptive words using ABC Notes (each group is responsible for a select group of letters, such as A-F, G-K, or T-Z, and will choose one descriptive word for each letter). After this brainstorming period, each group will contribute their words to a class list that will be recorded on the board. Sample:

<b>A</b> <i>ambitious</i>	<b>F</b> <i>frustrated</i>	<b>K</b> <i>keen</i>	<b>P</b> <i>plucky</i>	<b>U</b> <i>unprepared</i>
<b>B</b> <i>brave</i>	<b>G</b> <i>greedy</i>	<b>L</b> <i>lucky</i>	<b>Q</b> <i>quick-witted</i>	<b>V</b> <i>victorious</i>
<b>C</b> <i>competitive</i>	<b>H</b> <i>hopeful</i>	<b>M</b> <i>motivated</i>	<b>R</b> <i>resilient</i>	<b>W</b> <i>worried</i>
<b>D</b> <i>desperate</i>	<b>I</b> <i>impatient</i>	<b>N</b> <i>nervous</i>	<b>S</b> <i>successful</i>	<b>X</b> <i>excited</i>
<b>E</b> <i>eager</i>	<b>J</b> <i>jealous</i>	<b>O</b> <i>opportunistic</i>	<b>T</b> <i>tough</i>	<b>Y, Z</b> <i>yearning, zealous</i>

#### 2. Create direct analogies

- Students will **analyze** the class list and **create** a direct analogy between the words on the list and an animal that reminds them of many of the words on the board.
- Possible student answers include:
  - Great White Sharks, because they are fierce and determined in their pursuit of food
  - Tigers, because they hunt alone and are aggressive predators
  - **Mice, because they sneak around houses looking for food and avoiding danger**

#### 3. Describe personal analogies

- After voting one the best direct analogy for the forty-niners (e.g. mice), students will think about how it feels to be that animal (a mouse in a house). The teacher will then record their responses on the board, asking students to explain their thinking along the way.
- Possible student answers include:
  - *Frightened*. People or pets might discover me or hurt me.
  - *Defenseless*. I can't protect myself from bigger threats.
  - *Determined*. Life is difficult here, but my opportunities are better than before.
  - *Comfortable*. I don't have to worry about wild animals or harsh temperatures.
  - *Trapped*. Now that I got in, I don't know how to get out.
  - *Stealthy*. I am small and quiet, and might go unnoticed.

- *Independent*. I am responsible for finding my own food and shelter.
- *Cautious*. If I make one mistake, I could get caught.
- *Confident*. I am quicker than the people and pets, and I blend in easily.
- *Uncertain*. I don't always know if I will find food or stay safe.

#### 4. Identify Compressed Conflicts

- Students will **analyze** the list of descriptive feelings as a class and pair up words that appear to conflict with each other (have metaphoric tension). Students will then vote upon the best compressed conflict.
- Possible student answers include:
  - **Frightened and confident**
  - Independent and trapped
  - Comfortable and cautious
  - Determined and uncertain
  - Defenseless and stealthy

#### 5. Create a new direct analogy

- After selecting the best compressed conflict from the list, students will **create** a different direct analogy that fits within the compressed conflict (e.g., frightened and confident). This could be an animal, a person, or an object. Students will then vote on the best new analogy.
- Possible student answers include:
  - A monkey being chased through trees in the jungle
  - A sports car about to run out of gas
  - A lion cornered by hunters
  - **A goose flying south for winter**

#### 6. Reexamine the original topic

- Students will **compare** their newest analogy (a goose flying south for winter) to the original topic – the forty-niners of the Gold Rush. They will **describe** the characteristics of a goose flying south for winter and **compare** this to the daily life of a forty-niner. After discussing this comparison in their small groups, students will contribute ideas to a class list that is recorded on the board. Each student will then write a paragraph **explaining** the comparison between the two dissimilar things. This will involve **listing** and **justifying** three or four aspects of the metaphorical comparison. They may also **criticize** the comparison, describing ways in which it is imperfect or inaccurate.
- Possible points of comparison include:
  - Being frightened about the possible perils of the long journey to the destination
  - Being confident about the benefits that await them at their destination
  - Being frightened about their ability to survive in the new environment
  - Being confident because of the group surrounding them

### Step 4 Guide Practice, Assess Performance, and Provide Corrective Feedback

**Questioning** – This strategy can be used here to review the metaphors chosen and the process of how we selected them.

- What was our first comparison? How did we decide on it?
- When we described our new analogy, which words seemed to have the most conflict with each other?
- What second new analogy came as a result of the first one? How did we choose it?
- What were some things we learned about creating analogies?

**Correcting Errors** – Make sure students understand that analogies find connections between different things. Different things can have similarities without being the same; however, analogies identify *significant characteristics* that the different things share.

- Step 5 Assign Independent Practices, Assess Performance, and Provide Corrective Feedback**  
Students will **compose** a journal entry in which they **compare** the challenges faced by the forty-niners to their own lives. In describing the comparison, they will also compare themselves to an animal in a certain situation, just as they did in class. They may **relate** the content to a time when their family moved, when they felt alone, or when they pursued an opportunity despite many obstacles.
- This assignment should be written in two paragraphs: one for the connections to students' lives, and one for the metaphorical animal comparison.
  - Teacher will assess this journal entry by reading it and responding thoughtfully to it. This will serve as a means of providing feedback, which can clarify misconceptions, affirm high-level thinking, and extend understanding with further questioning.

**Step 6 Review Periodically – Build in review of lesson in future lessons**

This lesson could be reviewed in two different ways:

- Asking students to reflect on the analogies made in this lesson as a way of strengthening their knowledge and deepening their understanding about the Gold Rush
- Asking students to recall this lesson as a way of making new analogies with other concepts

Reviewing this lesson prior to summative assessment on this content would help students to solidify their knowledge and understanding of the content. Furthermore, a future activity in which students read personal letters from forty-niners, and then write their own imaginative letters, would require students to draw on the knowledge and understanding gained by this lesson.

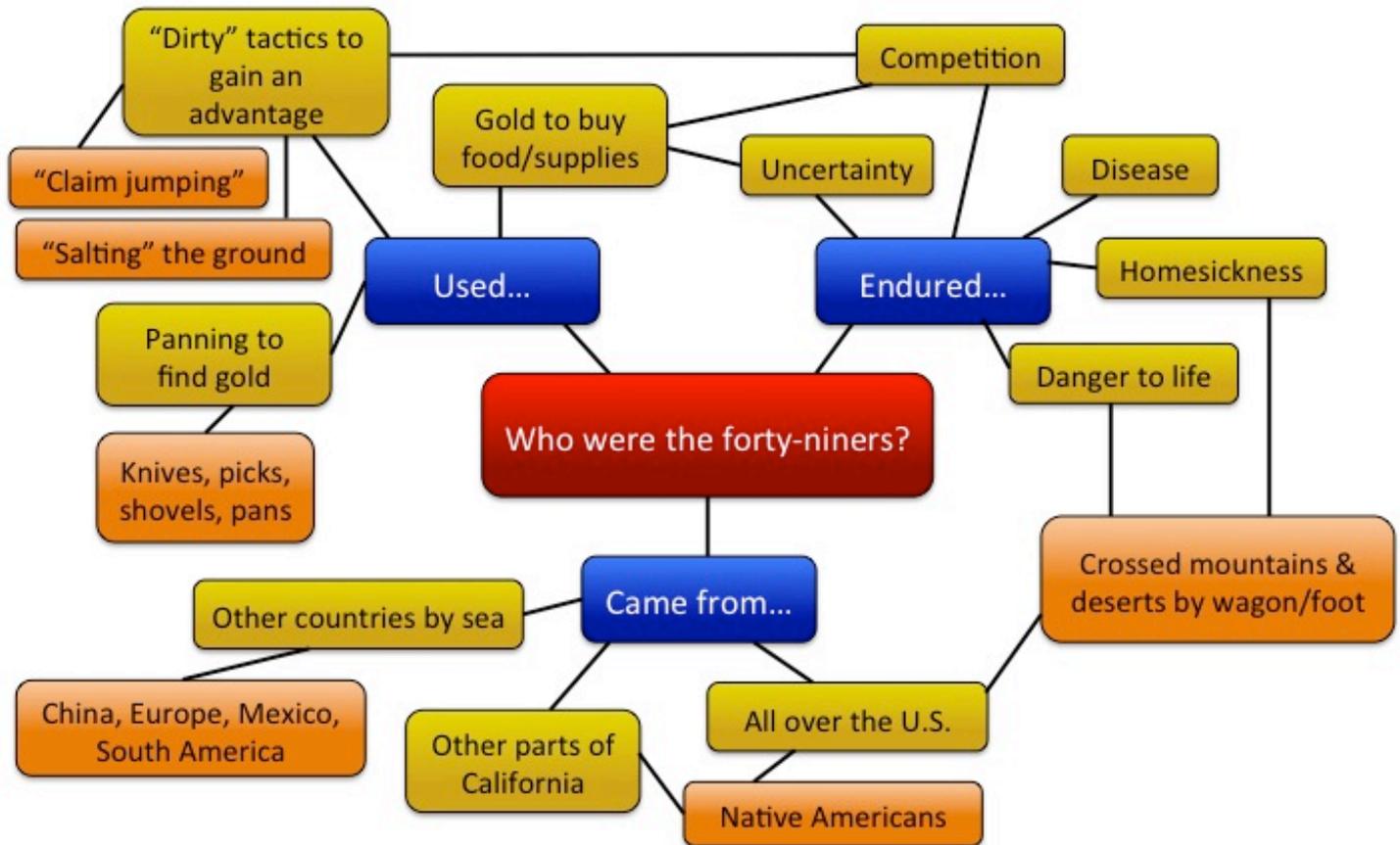
For a technology-based alternative, instead of writing their own letters, students could connect the content to the present day by recording a video message from a 21<sup>st</sup> century forty-niner (2049er?) to their friends or family back home. This may be done using a student-created **Voki** avatar, which would have a unique appearance and an original message.

Another option would be for students to browse the letters from forty-niners so that they can **analyze** for common themes. Using **Tagxedo**, students can copy and paste the text of 10 letters into the program and **create** a word cloud, which will highlight the most common words. This will help them **understand** the recurring themes and common experiences of the gold-seeking lifestyle. They can be creative in choosing unique font, color, and shape arrangements, and the finished word clouds can be printed and posted around the classroom for viewing.

**7. Student Work Examples/Technology Support**

- **Attach samples of student work.**
  - A sample paragraph and a journal response are attached at the end of the lesson.
- **Add technology support**
  - <http://www.kidport.com/reflib/usahistory/calgoldrush/CalGoldRush.htm#Events>
    - Text-based journey through the Gold Rush period
  - <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/goldrush/sfeature/game.html>
    - *Strike it Rich!* Interactive Gold Rush role-playing game (Flash required)
  - [http://www.huntington.org/Education/goldrush/game/anna\\_1.htm](http://www.huntington.org/Education/goldrush/game/anna_1.htm)
    - *Annabelle's Story 1850* – Interactive Gold Rush role-playing game
  - <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~momarion/goldrush.htm>
    - Gold Rush Letters from 1849-1850 (transcribed primary sources)
  - [http://21cif.com/rkitp/challenge/goldrush/goldrush\\_index.swf](http://21cif.com/rkitp/challenge/goldrush/goldrush_index.swf)
    - “Interactive tutorial games to strengthen scanning”
  - <http://www.voki.com>
    - Voki avatars

**ADVANCE ORGANIZER – PREVIOUSLY LEARNED CONTENT**



*"I have left those that I love as my own life behind and risked everything and endured many hardships to get here. I want to make enough to live easier and do some good with, before I return." – S. Shufelt, March, 1850*

**GRAPHIC ORGANIZER – NEW CONTENT**

