

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# The California Gold Rush

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. In 1848, while building a sawmill called Sutter's Mill in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountain range, James W. Marshall struck gold. After reporting the gold flecks he found in the bed of the American River, news spread quickly—so did gold fever. All across America, especially in the eastern and southern US, groups of mostly young men set out on a long and dangerous journey to Northern California. Their goal was to get rich quick.

Gold fever describes { }.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| A. James W. Marshall's experience searching for gold at Sutter's Mill  | B. common diseases in the western United States |
| C. the rapid spread of excitement to travel to California and get rich | D. the temperature at which gold melts          |

2. Some prospectors made the journey by land in covered wagons and on horseback. Others went by sea, crossing the Isthmus of Panama or going all the way around South America. In each case, the journey took months, and many died before they made it to California. Those who did make it arrived by the thousand and became known as "forty-niners"—named after the year they began arriving. Prospectors settled in mining camps on land around the American River and near goldfields to begin their search. Americans weren't the only ones who caught gold fever. Prospectors came from Asia, Latin America, Europe, and Australia, settling in the same camps and mining alongside Americans.

Which of the following best describes the California Gold Rush?

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| A. A global attraction | B. An American crisis |
| C. A regional event    | D. A local occasion   |

3. Most prospectors used a technique called panning to extract gold from silt found in placers, or mineral deposits at the bends of a river. They swirled the soil in a pan with water to separate the denser gold. Others used a pickaxe and shovel. Some of the earliest prospectors became rich, but as more and more prospectors arrived, gold became scarce quickly. Life as a forty-niner was tough. Mining was extremely hard work that had little payoff for most of the prospectors. Mining camps were dangerous due to a lack of sanitation, housing, and law enforcement. Crime and violence was commonplace, and tensions were high as fewer and fewer prospectors found any gold at all. Food, clothing and other goods were extremely scarce and expensive.

Finding gold in California was { }.

- A. a guaranteed thing
- B. common with the right tools
- C. based mostly on luck
- D. impossible

4. With a growing population, California became a state in 1850. By this time, more than 80,000 White American miners had settled in the northern part of the state. With very little gold left and competition at an all-time high, American miners looked for someone to blame. This fueled xenophobia and discrimination against foreign prospectors, especially Latin American and Chinese settlers. In an effort to suppress competition, White settlers convinced the newly elected state legislature to enact the Foreign Miners' Tax. This monthly tax, levied against all non-citizens, made life difficult for foreign miners. It made living in California too expensive and drove many out of the state. Alongside this tax, American miners grew increasingly violent toward California's Native American population as miners spread across the region in search for more gold.

With which of the following statements would the author of this passage most likely agree?

- A. The Foreign Miners' Tax was a fair way for the state of California to generate revenue.
- B. The Foreign Miners' Tax should have been imposed on all miners, not just those from other countries.
- C. The Foreign Miners' Tax did not have the effect American miners intended it to have.
- D. The Foreign Miners' Tax was a result of American miners looking for someone to blame for their struggles.

5. By 1855, the California Gold Rush was over. Very few prospectors had become rich, and many of those who did spent and gambled their fortunes away. The largest fortunes were earned by those who profited off of miners, like hotel and restaurant owners and sellers of mining equipment. With the majority of easy-to-find gold gone, only big businesses with advanced technology could succeed. By the end of the Gold Rush, California had become a state and San Francisco had grown from a village of 800 people to a booming city with a population over 300,000. 80% of California's Native American population had been wiped out by disease, starvation, and violence. Despite efforts to drive out immigrants, the city remained more diverse than most other places in the US. Over the next few decades, more gold and silver rushes drew prospectors to Colorado, Idaho, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, and Alaska.

Which of the following best describes the relationship between the California Gold Rush and the state of California?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| A. The California Gold Rush propelled California into statehood.         | B. The California Gold Rush changed the borders of California.             |
| C. The California Gold Rush was the beginning of the end for California. | D. The California Gold Rush had minimal impact on the state of California. |