

Unit 9 - Gold Rush

9A Introduction

California wasn't always the land of palm trees, surfboards and movie stars. For many years, California was part of Mexico. Even after the Mexican-American War, when California became a U.S. territory, very few people lived there. That all changed when a man named John Marshall was building a sawmill near San Francisco. As he was working, something shiny caught his eye. "I reached my hand down and picked it up," he later wrote. "It made my heart thump, for I was certain it was gold."

It was gold indeed, and what followed became known as the California Gold Rush. The year was 1849, and the men who made the journey west hoping to find gold became known as '49ers, which is where the name of San Francisco's football team comes from. The journey west was extremely difficult. There was no railroad connecting the east to the west, so people had to take wagons (which moved at the same speed you can walk), or a boat around South America (putting them nearly in Antarctica). In all, 300,000 people came to California for gold. Some got rich. Many did not.

9B Song Lyrics

In 1848, that's before
California became a state,
It was all a great **expanse**, wide-open land,
Mostly Mexicans and Indians.
A guy named Marshall went berserk
When he found some gold pellets in the dirt.
This started a major **migration**,
People started moving from across the nation.
Now I wanted to collect and **accumulate**
More gold than the Lakers make.
But did they tell the truth, or **exaggerate**,
Saying you could find 10 pounds of gold a day?
I was **desperate** for money, I needed it bad,
So I said bye to my family and packed my bags.
Travel was more **primitive** back then, more basic,
No airplanes, kid, I hit the pavement.
Go West, young man, for something new,
I went through the **barren** desert where nothing grew.
Cut through the Great Plains like, um... kung fu.
Six months later, though, I'm in San Francisco.



*This is the Gold Rush and yes, we go nuts,
Looking for the gold nuggets and the donuts.
Best style for sure, we've got the best flaws,
So if you want to go, just roll up.
x2*

This is the wild, wild West, it's all
hard from the **onset**, from the start.
We didn't have women, we didn't have kitchens,
But we were driven and had **ambition**.

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I tried to make a **deposit**, put money in the bank,
By looking for gold **deposits** in the mountain range.
To **extract** the gold, get it out from the soil,
Bring it out, bring it out, bring 'em out.
But we destroyed the rivers, **exploited** them,
Used them, now our pockets have gold in them.
We **dwelled** and stayed in shantytowns,
A bunch of huts, we're family now.
All the gold created a crazy **economy**,
The money system was wild; it was hard for me.
So imagine some guy trying to sell you
A cup of water for a hundred dollars.
You hear this West Coast sound I'm sampling?
Well, I also did a little bit of gambling.
A guy **liberated** me of my money,
Um, he freed me from it, now I've got none of it.

Hook

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9C Words Defined

accumulate / ambition / barren / deposit / desperate / dwell / economy / exaggerate / expanse / exploit / extract / liberate / migration / onset / primitive

Below you'll find each vocabulary word that was used in the song. Each word is followed by the part of speech, a simple definition and a meaningful sentence. Some words will also have synonyms, antonyms and other forms of the word listed.

1. **accumulate** (verb) to gather or collect

Some people try to *accumulate* as many beanie babies as they can and then sell them for a profit. Other forms: The *accumulation* (noun) of dust on the furniture was so disgusting that not even the housekeeper would touch it.

2. **ambition** (noun) a strong desire or drive

Leslie's *ambition* to be a rock star was about to come true when her album went to number one on the charts.

Other forms: My *ambitious* (adj) and driven little brother started his own business at age fourteen.

3. **barren** (adj) not producing or creating anything; having no vegetation

The settlers soon discovered that the *barren* land was not good enough for growing crops and raising animals.

Synonyms: sparse, desolate

4. **deposit** (verb) to deliver and leave an item, often for safekeeping

Bernard does not like to *deposit* his paycheck using ATM machines; he only goes into the bank and hands it to a bank teller.

Other forms: *Deposit* is also a noun meaning "large pieces of metal or rock that occur in nature," as in: The miners fought over the gold *deposits* that were scattered on the banks of the river.

5. **desperate** (adj) having an urgent need or desire

Stanley was so *desperate* for attention from his classmates that he tapped his pencil constantly and made funny faces while the teacher lectured.

Other forms: If you are *desperate*, then you experience *desperation* (noun).

6. **dwell** (verb) 1. to live somewhere 2. to stay on one thing

Mr. Cowden loved to *dwell* on the idea that it was distracting for kids to do their homework while listening to music at the same time.

Other forms: The house where you live, or *dwell*, is your *dwelling* (noun).

7. **economy** (noun) an organized money system

The *economy* was in danger unless a drastic change in consumer spending occurred.

Other forms: It was an *economic* (adj.) hardship on many students to have to buy school supplies with their own money.

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8. exaggerate (verb) to say that something is more than it really is; to overstate

Franchesca would *exaggerate* when she described herself, saying that she had the smallest feet in the world.

Antonyms: to minimize, understate, play down

Other forms: Maya's statement that her mom is a monster is a complete *exaggeration* (noun).

9. expanse (noun) a wide-open space

In Montana, the *expanse* of sky seems to go on for miles.

Antonyms: small space, enclosure

Other forms: If something is very huge, it is *expansive* (adj). Something *expands* (verb) when it spreads out.

10. exploit (verb) to profit from selfishly; to abuse

The owner of the restaurant tried to *exploit* his workers by making them work longer hours for no extra pay.

Other forms: Child labor is a form of *exploitation* (noun).

11. extract (verb) to draw something out of something else; to remove

The police tried to *extract* the scared skunk from under the house, since it was causing an unbearable stink for the homeowners.

Other forms: The dentist did a tooth *extraction* (noun) on one of my wisdom teeth.

12. liberate (verb) to set free

One day I hope to sneak into the zoo and *liberate* all the animals from their cages.

Synonyms: to release, emancipate

Antonyms: to hold, confine, enslave

Other forms: We hope to see the *liberation* (noun) of those two prisoners.

13. migration (noun) a movement or change of position, usually of many people or animals

The buffalo *migration* was an awesome sight from the ridge above the valley.

Other forms: To *migrate* (verb) is to move from one place to another.

14. onset (noun) the beginning or start

The *onset* of Abigail's allergies came the same time every year.

Antonyms: the end, termination, conclusion

15. primitive (adj) happening early in the history of humans and the world, or simple and not complicated

The anthropologists uncovered some *primitive* tools in their dig of the ancient settlement.

Synonyms: ancient, basic

Antonyms: recent, modern, civilized

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9D Fix the Mistake

accumulate / ambition / barren / deposit / desperate / dwell / economy / exaggerate / expanse / exploit / extract / liberate / migration / onset / primitive

Each of the sentences below has a mistake. The wrong vocabulary words have been used, so the sentences don't make sense. Rewrite each sentence using the correct vocabulary word from this unit.

1. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 **accumulated** native Americans from their homes and forced them to move west to the Indian Territory.

2. The **primitive** Sahara Desert in Africa is almost as large in size as the United States of America.

3. Navya did an oral report on the **ambition** of people moving west.

4. Woman felt **exploited** when the 19th Amendment was passed in 1920 and they were finally given the right to vote.

5. Anna tried not to **extract** on the past, but move forward with her life.

6. Morgan **liberated** her allowance money into her piggybank.

7. Mahatma Ghandi had a lot of **onset** to improve the civil rights of people living in India.

8. By encouraging more trade with other countries, China has the fastest growing **migration** in Asia.

9. Jay was **barren** to know how the *Harry Potter* book series would end.

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10. The raindrops quickly **exaggerated** and formed large puddles.

11. During the Industrial Revolution factories **dwelled** child workers; sometimes six-year-olds would work 19-hour days.

12. The Mayans lived in a **desperate** time period, yet they were skilled mathematicians and developed a complex calendar.

13. From the **expanse** of the scandal, the politician claimed he was innocent.

14. Andrew **deposited** how much time it took him to clean his room when he said, "it took me like a *million* years."

15. Wyatt's farm has a wide **economy** of land that allows him to ride his four-wheeler all over.

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9E Pick the Winner

accumulate / ambition / barren / deposit / desperate / dwell / economy / exaggerate / expanse / exploit / extract / liberate / migration / onset / primitive

Circle the word that best fits into the sentence. Then write a sentence below that uses the word you didn't pick in a meaningful way.

1. The state of Utah was once described by settlers as a **(barren OR desperate)** rock.

2. The **(deposits OR economy)** of scum around the bathtub meant it was time for me to clean it.

3. Harriet Tubman used the Underground Railroad to **(exaggerate OR liberate)** as many slaves as possible.

4. The students **(accumulated OR exploited)** as many canned goods as possible for the annual canned food drive.

5. We needed an **(economic OR expansive)** area on which to land our hot air balloon.

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9F Draw the Relationship

accumulate / ambition / barren / deposit / desperate / dwell / economy / exaggerate / expanse / exploit / extract / liberate / migration / onset / primitive

In each grouping of eight words below, draw straight lines between the synonyms (words that mean similar things) and squiggly lines between any antonyms (words that mean nearly opposite things). Every word should have at least one line connected to it. Some may have more.

1

accumulate	dwell	desperate	stay or live
beginning	lose everything	onset	need it badly

.....

2

open area	money system	expanse	economy
set free	liberate	lack of motivation	ambition

.....

3

productive	extract	barren	primitive
movement	modern	migration	take out

4

exaggerate	exploit	deposit	take out
ending	onset	make little of	use up

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9G Understanding What You Read

accumulate / ambition / barren / deposit / desperate / dwell / economy / exaggerate / expanse / exploit / extract / liberate / migration / onset / primitive

Read the passage below. Then answer the questions.

During the Gold Rush, many merchants and store owners actually made more money than the miners. While the miners were working hard to extract gold deposits from the land, the merchants got rich selling them supplies. Most California towns were primitive when the miners first arrived, and there was a huge need for goods: food, clothing, and mining materials. On top of that, not many miners were finding the gold they had hoped for. People had moved to California to strike it rich, and instead most were barely surviving.

There were a lot of people, but not many supplies in California in the late 1840s. This had a strange effect on the economy because there was a high demand for goods, but not very many goods to sell. This meant that store owners could set their prices really high and people would *have* to pay it. The miners didn't have a choice. As a result, people paid outrageous amounts of money for food and supplies. In 1849, some of the exaggerated prices included \$20 for mining boots and \$6 for a dozen eggs! That's expensive even for today! One story told again and again was that someone had bought a cup of water for \$100. With these prices, more and more merchants got rich and more miners struggled to survive.

A famous merchant from this time period was a man by the name of Levi Strauss. He came to San Francisco in the year 1850 with the ambition to open a business where he would make and sell tents and covers for wagons. By this time, however, everyone already had these two items, and Levi had to come up with a new idea. Since he was good at sewing, he decided to create a special type of pants that miners could wear. These pants were a huge hit among the miners because they were so strong and lasted a long time. Levi Strauss soon started to make a fortune selling his "wonderful pants of Levi's." He eventually replaced the canvas with denim and opened a factory in the city. People call his pants "Levi's," though nowadays most people call them "jeans." It's interesting to note that Levi Strauss made more money selling jeans than practically every miner who searched for gold.

1. According to the text, why were eggs so expensive?

- (A) People ate too many eggs.
- (B) There were not many eggs to sell.
- (C) The eggs were made out of denim.
- (D) There were too many eggs to sell.

2. According to the text, before the miners arrived, most towns in California were

- (A) wide open
- (B) basic
- (C) overdeveloped
- (D) full of gold

3. This reading passage was most likely written in

- (A) 1849
- (B) 1850
- (C) 1859
- (D) 2007

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4. Which of the following statements is NOT supported by the text?

- (A) Levi's pants were popular among the miners.
- (B) The Gold Rush took place in California.
- (C) Levi Strauss came to California in the year 1848.
- (D) Some people charged \$20 for boots in the year 1849.

5. According to the text, Levi Strauss

- (A) sewed every pair of jeans he sold
- (B) went to California to be a miner
- (C) first made his jeans out of canvas
- (D) made more gold than all of the miners combined

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9H Thinking Creatively

accumulate / ambition / barren / deposit / desperate / dwell / economy / exaggerate / expanse / exploit / extract / liberate / migration / onset / primitive

Answer each question below. Don't be afraid to think creatively.

1. Is it possible that things that are cool now will seem **primitive** just 20 years from now? Explain your answer with an example.

2. List two reasons that animals **migrate**.

3. Rewrite this sentence using synonyms: "Liberate your brain."

4. What does the word expansion have to do with the word **expanse**?

5. Do you think **ambition** is a good thing or a bad thing? Why?

Word Breakdown

The word *migration* can be used when talking about animals and people, but it sometimes means that the people lack a permanent settlement. When the United States government forced thousands of Cherokee people to march across the country and relocate, this could be described as a forced migration. A similar word, "immigration," usually means that someone is entering a new country to settle there.

The word *ambition* is interesting too. It comes from the Latin word "ambition," which means "going around to ask for votes." Politicians who were ambitious would go door to door to ask for votes from the people. Apparently, some politicians grew greedy, because later the word took on a negative meaning: "too much desire for wealth or power." Nowadays, the word is more neutral – it can be used in positive and negative contexts. 50 Cent's song "Hustler's Ambition" talks about how he has a strong desire to hustle because he "wants the finer things in life."