

YUKON GOLD

UNIT OVERVIEW

In this unit students journey north into the land of the “Land Of The Midnight Sun”. The unit is divided into three parts with teachers choosing to do all three sections or simply selecting the parts that best meet the needs of each individual class. In any case, this is sure to be a “nugget” of a unit.

PART I - The YUKON GOLD RUSH

Part I is a structured section focusing on the historical facts of the Yukon gold rush. Students write down a series of overhead notes dealing with the discovery of gold by George Carmack, Skookum Jim Mason and Tagish Charlie in 1896, and the explosion of events that followed. Each lesson is also accompanied by a meaningful activity designed to compliment the factual, knowledge-based information conveyed by the notes. The topics and activities are:

- 1) The Discovery / Early Days - Gold Discovery (Role-Play)
- 2) Ships Of Gold / Gold Fever - Getting The Klondike Gold (Worksheet)
- 3) How Do You Get There From Here? - Sam’s General Store (Math Problems)
- 4) White Pass And The Dead Horse Trail - Crooks And Shysters (Role-Play)
- 5) The Chilkoot Pass And The Golden Stairs - Avalanche (Role-Play)
- 6) To Dawson On The Mighty Yukon - Ted Harrison Style Picture
- 7) Dawson: City Of Gold - Pictoral Timeline
- 8) Newspaper Front Page

PART II - STARVATION WINTER OF 1897 (Drama Activities)

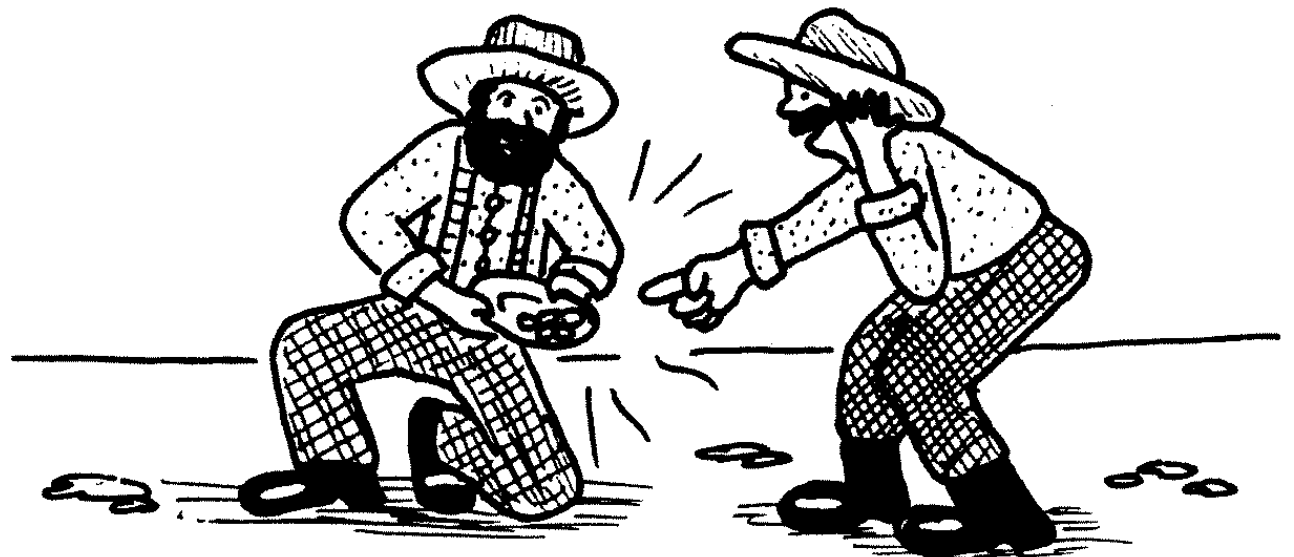
This section uses structured drama activities to help bring meaning to the unit. The episodes mirror what actually occurred in Dawson during the winter of 1897/1898. Three episodes are presented with the teacher-in-role as a Yukon old-timer. The three episodes are:

- 1) “Miming” For Gold
- 2) Disaster Hits Dawson (Starvation Winter)
- 3) Newspaper Reporter Interview

PART III - OPTIONAL LESSONS

A series of optional activities helps to build a degree of flexibility into the unit. Optional assignments can be added as separate activities, used to compliment other topics or given as enrichment. These include:

- 1) Yukon Gold Wordsearch
- 2) Yukon Gold Crossword Puzzle
- 3) Panning For Gold / Meteorites
- 4) Homebuilt Sluice Box
- 5) Books And Literature
- 6) Written Questions
- 7) Movie Review
- 8) Baking Sourdough Bread/Buns





GETTING THE KLONDIKE GOLD

Name: _____

Instructions: Answer all questions in full sentences.

- How does a person "stake a claim"?

- What is bedrock? (And no, the answer is not "a town where the Flintstones live!")

- What was the "gold layer"?

- Describe what permafrost is.

- How did the miners get through the permafrost to bedrock and the gold layer?

- Why do gold pans have ridges on the sides?

- How does a sluice box work?

- Why is a sluice box better at getting the gold out of the paydirt than panning?

Bonus When you are done, colour the pictures in the article.

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SAM'S GENERAL STORE

Name: _____



Instructions: Use the prices in the picture to answer the following problems. Remember to show all your work.

- How much would two dozen eggs cost?
- What would be the cost of four sacks of flour?
- A hungry miner wanted to buy five pounds of bacon, two pounds of tea and a loaf of bread. How much would this cost?

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LESSON #4 - WHITE PASS AND THE "DEAD HORSE TRAIL"

Student Objectives and Activities

- Students learn about the futile path taken by some stampedeers from Skagway along the Dead Horse Trail to the White Pass.
- In a role-play activity, students play the parts of stampedeers and the shysters waiting to fleece them along the way.

Suggested Teaching Strategies

- Begin with the short page of notes on the "Dead Horse Trail".
- Chapter 2 of *The Klondike Stampede* directly relates to the notes and upcoming assignment and could be read at this time.
- The teacher introduces the role-play by slipping into the character of a shyster or crook. With students at their desks (so they can't see too well) play the infamous Shell Game or Three Card Monte using the rules given on the next page "How To Be A Shyster".

SHELL GAME

At a desk or table have three cups or shells and a pea or small ball. Ask a volunteer to place the pea inside one of the overturned containers. The object is for volunteer to try and guess which container contains the pea after they have been moved around somewhat by the shyster. After the volunteer places the pea, ask them to sit down and begin shuffling the containers. The trick is to move the container slightly over the edge of the desk so that the pea falls out. When the volunteer asks to turn over the container that the pea should have been in, it is empty and they owe you a small wager - say \$20.00. (A teacher's desk is perfect since it has a drawer that can be open slightly to catch the pea)



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LESSON #6 - LAKE BENNETT TO DAWSON ON THE MIGHTY YUKON

Student Objectives and Activities

- Students learn about the boat-building and river phase of the journey.
- The assignment investigates Robert Service's legendary poem "*The Cremation Of Sam McGee*" with students attempting to create a picture for the poem in the style of famous Canadian artist Ted Harrison.
- Students take down notes on the topic after the assignment.

Suggested Teaching Strategies

- Display several books illustrated by Ted Harrison including *Children of the Yukon*, *O Canada*, *The Shooting of Dan McGrew* and *The Cremation of Sam McGee*.
- Students should notice the bright colours used, the simplicity of the drawings and the "colour layering" effect that are characteristic of Harrison's work. Read the back flap which tells about Harrison's life and discuss how all of his works relate to life in the north.
- Students listen and watch as you read to them "*The Cremation of Sam McGee*".

*** Note ***

Although the poems of Robert Service capture the "essence" of the Yukon Gold rush, he only arrived to the Yukon four years after the rush had ended and his poems do "stretch the truth". For example, since people were not allowed to carry guns in Dawson during the gold rush, the "*Shooting Of Dan McGrew*" is more likely to have occurred in Skagway rather than in the Yukon.

- Students then try to create an illustration for the poem in the style of Ted Harrison. Students first their sketch drawing with pencil and then use markers or oil pastels for colouring their picture.
- If enough books are available, students can work in small groups with each group choosing a different picture to try and imitate. (Using wide-tipped scented markers will drastically reduce colouring time although kids are likely to get marker on their noses)
- If time permits, students can create their own original drawing in the style of Ted Harrison as an alternative to trying to imitating Harrison's works.

*** Note ***

Oil pastels are those greasy, crayon-like things usually kept in a dirty old drawer. (They are similar to disposable diapers in that they will not disintegrate or break down for hundreds of years)

- After the assignment, students take down notes on the topic "Lake Bennett To Dawson On The Mighty Yukon". Stress the difficulties encountered in sawing trees into usable lumber and then building a boat.

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LESSON #7 - DAWSON: CITY OF GOLD

Student Objectives and Activities

- In this lesson, students understand Dawson - the boom and bust city that grew out of the gold rush.
- After notes on the topic, students complete a "Pictorial Timeline" which outlines major events of the gold rush.

Suggested Teaching Strategies

- Complete the notes stressing the concept of "boom" and "bust" as it applied to Dawson. This might also be an opportune time to examine the idea of supply and demand as it relates to prices.
- Explain that not many of the stampedeers actually found any gold. Most of the good places for mining had been staked in the first month after the discovery and only about 500 of the 30,000 that make it to the Yukon found any gold at all.
- In the assignment "Pictorial Timeline", a collection of seven diagrams and a cover suitable for colouring depicts major events of the gold rush in chronological order. The eight diagrams are:
 - 1) Cover - "Yukon Gold"
 - 2) "The Discovery" - August 16, 1896
 - 3) "Ships Of Gold" - July, 1897
 - 4) "Crooks And Shysters" - September, 1897
 - 5) "The Golden Stairs" - January, 1898
 - 6) "The Sawpits" - April/May, 1898
 - 7) "The Mighty Yukon" - June, 1898
 - 8) "Dawson - August, 1898"
- The diagrams are coloured and placed along a suitable wall in chronological order. The diagrams can be given as an ongoing, individual assignment in booklet form or the pictures can be enlarged onto 11 by 17" paper and coloured by pairs of students. Obviously, the larger pictures make much more effective room displays.



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EPISODE #3 - NEWSPAPER REPORTER INTERVIEW

Student Objectives and Activities

- Students explore the drama strategy of an interview and continue to act as if they are in another place at another time.
- Students create the front page of a Yukon newspaper as it might appear the day after the "Disaster Hits Dawson" chain of events. (This activity fits well with Lesson #8)

Suggested Teaching Strategies

- Working in pairs, one student becomes an interviewer for the "Yukon Miner", "Dawson Klondike News" or a newspaper of their choice while the other takes on the role of a Dawson citizen.
- The interviewers have been sent out to report on the crisis facing the citizens of Dawson. Give students a few minutes to jot down some questions they might ask while students who are acting as the citizens can take the time to think about what kind of a character they might be. (Most of their character can be made up as the interview goes along and depends on what questions the reporter chooses to ask them)
- The reporter should write down what is told to them in point form so they would be able to introduce their counterpart to the main group.
- After the interviews, students (independently) create a headline story for a newspaper focusing on the "Disaster Hits Dawson." This front page should include:
 - 1) a title for the newspaper
 - 2) a news headline
 - 3) a news article describing the situation facing the Dawson citizens including quotes, and a picture



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YUKON GOLD CROSSWORD



Name: _____



Across

2. These men guarded the Chilkoot Pass. Sam Steele was their leader.
4. These steps led to the top of the Chilkoot Pass. (1500 in all)
11. Founder of Dawson.
12. Wrote "The Cremation Of Sam McGee"
14. Famous Yukon artist.
17. Greenhorn or tenderfoot.
18. The wooden sidewalks of Dawson were called this.
21. The name of Rabbit Creek was changed to this after the discovery of gold.
22. Pay _____ - contained gold.
23. The name of this river comes from the Native words for "hammer water".

Down

1. Yukon oldtimer.
3. _____ Box - separates gold from paydirt.
5. City of gold.
6. Famous Klondike swindler.
7. The richest creek of all.
8. Ground that is frozen all the time.
9. Boats were built by men who camped around this lake in 1897.
10. Most stampedeers who "made it" to the Yukon went over this pass.
13. The gold layer was found above this hard, solid rock.
15. The territory where the gold was found.
16. This man had the discovery claim.
19. _____ a claim.
20. This substance has been known to cause a "fever" when discovered.

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YUKON GOLD

The Discovery – George Carmack and "Bad Luck" Henderson
Well, ya see all this hubbub about gold got started way back on August 16, 1896. That's when a fella named George Carmack and his two friends named Tagish Charlie and Skookum Jim decided to split up with an angry cuss named Robert Henderson. Seems that old Henderson didn't want to share his tobacco with George and his buddies because they were Native. Anyway, they split up and Carmack and his pals started prospecting up on Rabbit Creek

It turns out that leaving "Bad Luck" Henderson was about the best thing that could ever have happened because that afternoon they struck it rich. And I mean rich! When they were done swishing the gravel and water out of their pans they were left with nothing but shiny gold nuggets the size of small peas. Carmack and the boys pounded in their posts to stake their claims and headed downstream to the mining camp of Fortymile to make things official with the North West Mounted Police. On the way they told everyone and anyone about their gold strike on Rabbit Creek - that is, everyone except "Bad Luck" Henderson. I guess that's what folks around here call "Yukon justice".



Sourdough News: Every year, Natives would hammer in posts so that they could hang salmon nets across the mouth of a rich fishing river. The Natives called this river "hammer-water" or "Thron-diuck" which was later mispronounced to give "Klondike". The gold rush boomtown of Dawson sprang up at the mouth of the Klondike River where it empties into the larger Yukon River.

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