



**ELA Common Core Content Standards:**

Reading Standards for Informational Text 1, 2, 3, 4, 8

Writing Standards 3, 4, 5

Speaking and Listening Standards 1, 2, 3, 4

Listening Standards 1, 2, 3, 4

**Estimated duration:** 1.5 hours for lesson, 1-2 hours for research, writing, and vocabulary homework.

**Goal:** Students will learn about the Gold Rush in our region from the perspective of local tribal people, particularly from the Karuk Tribe. While this era is held by many in nostalgic memory as being the birth of the American culture on the Klamath River and its tributaries, the indigenous peoples have a very different perspective on the effects of gold mining on the original “Americans” and its ancestral land and resources.

**Teacher Background:** The first Europeans to enter the Klamath River Basin were fur trappers for the Hudson's Bay Company in the 1820s; they established the Siskiyou Trail along the Klamath and Trinity rivers into the Sacramento Valley, repurposing many ancient trails established by the indigenous peoples of these areas. The California Gold Rush began on January 24, 1848, when gold was found by James W. Marshall at Sutter's Mill in Coloma, California. This news brought some 300,000 "forty-niners" to California. While most of these gold miners were Americans of European descent, some tens of thousands arrived to seek their fortunes from Latin America, Europe, Australia, and Asia.

The effects of the Gold Rush were substantial: Within several decades, the majority of Native peoples were forced into hiding due to lethal conflicts between the two cultures, or onto reservations. A system of "staking claims" was developed even before California officially became a U.S. state in 1850. Agriculture ventures multiplied and transportation means expanded to meet the needs of these new settlers. By 1869, railroads were built across the country to connect California to the East Coast.

This period in history was particularly violent. After the initial boom had ended, explicitly racist attacks, laws, and confiscatory taxes sought to drive out foreigners and the indigenous peoples from these landscapes. The radical decrease in the Native population that had begun during the Spanish/Mexican era was exacerbated by the lawless conditions defining the Gold Rush. Many new arrivals openly advocated genocide against Native Americans. Peter Burnett, California's first governor, declared on January 7, 1851, *“that a war of extermination will*

*continue to be waged between the races, until the Indian race becomes extinct, must be expected. While we cannot anticipate this result but with painful regret, the inevitable destiny of the race is beyond the power or wisdom of man to avert.”<sup>1</sup>*

The State of California expended \$25,000 in bounties for Indian scalps, differentiating between adult male, adult female, and child sizes for the amount paid out. It also provided the basis for the enslavement and trafficking of Native American labor, particularly that of young women and children, which was carried on as a legal business enterprise. Miners, loggers, and settlers formed vigilante groups and local militias to hunt the Natives, regularly raiding villages to supply the demand.<sup>2</sup> Before the missionary, fur trapping, and gold rush era migrations, California's Native American population was estimated at about 200,000. Between 1840 and 1870, however, that population declined to 12,000 due to disease, removal, and death.<sup>3</sup>

<b>Theme/Big Idea:</b>	Resource extraction can be detrimental to eco-cultural landscapes
<b>Big Question:</b>	How do we protect and preserve our cultures and landscapes?
<b>Vocabulary:</b>	indigenous*, prospector, holocaust, garrison, hydraulic, indentured, placer mining, skirmish, vigilante, retaliate <i>*indicates that the word has been defined in earlier lessons.</i>

**Materials:**

Historic photo Images, included

**Northwest Indigenous Gold Rush History**, Humboldt State University ITEPP, included

Comprehension Worksheet: Gold Rush, included

Vocabulary Black Line Master, included

Definitions Worksheet, included

Vocabulary Worksheet, included

**Preparation:** Title two large posters with *Gold Rush*. Underneath, write *From the Perspective of Euro-Americans* on one, and *From the Perspective of the Native Americans* on the other. Copy and cut out historic photo images. Read, then copy excerpts from the **Northwest Indigenous Gold Rush History** (1 per student) and Comprehension Questions (1 per student).

**Discussion Circle:** Tell students that we live in a place that was inhabited by indigenous people long before white explorers and settlers came to this area. It is a very special place on earth, and it has shaped the language, diet, physical attributes and culture of these peoples, as well as the resources and landscapes surrounding them.

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<sup>1</sup> Burnett, Peter (1851). State of the State Address. Retrieved February 28, 2016 at:  
[http://governors.library.ca.gov/addresses/s\\_01-Burnett2.html](http://governors.library.ca.gov/addresses/s_01-Burnett2.html)

<sup>2</sup> Heizer, Robert F. (1974). The destruction of California Indians. Lincoln and London: Univ. of Nebraska Press, p 243

<sup>3</sup> California Tribal Court-State Court Forum, retrieved February 28, 2016 at:  
<http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/TribalFAQs.pdf>

Ask students if they know that some of the first non-Natives to enter the Klamath River basin were fur trappers for the Hudson's Bay Company in the 1820s; they established the Siskiyou Trail along the Klamath and Trinity rivers into the Sacramento Valley. Ask them if they know why these people are often referred to as “Euro-Americans” (these are people who have settled on the American continent, but whose ancestry is from Europe). Ask students if they know where their ancestors are from.

Ask them why so many Euro-Americans came into this region in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (you may need to explain that this means the 1800s). If needed, explain that gold was discovered in 1849 on the Trinity River (make sure students know where this is), which led to the first major wave of non-Native settlement. Explain that many of these people were prospectors, which mean people who search an area for gold, minerals, oil, etc.

**Activity:** Display the two prepared posters and divide the classroom into two groups: one will represent the prospectors, and one will represent the Natives. Ask them to imagine what they might have felt when the gold rush came to this region. Have them come up with some adjectives to describe the feelings their group might have had: possible answers might be *excited, frightened, curious, adventurous, worried, eager, and/or wary*. Write these up on the white board as students call them out; then ask them on which poster they would put these feelings. Students may decide to put some of the words on both posters. Next, pass out the copies of the historic photographs to selected students, and ask them to pin them on one of the two posters they think the photos best represent that group’s perspective.

**Developing Vocabulary:** Display Vocabulary Black Line Master on the document reader and read the first sentence aloud. Some of these words marked with an asterisk have been defined in earlier lessons. Ask students what the word *indigenous* means. Clarify meaning. Write on board: **indigenous (adj)** - existing naturally in a particular region or environment.

Remind students that there are often many definitions of the same word, but that text context gives us clues on how the word is meant to be understood. The word meanings reflected in the provided sentences matches those vocabulary words they will read later in the lesson’s text.

Pass out the Vocabulary Worksheet and have them fill in the part of speech and the definition you have written on the board for the vocabulary word *indigenous*. As you continue to work through the Vocabulary Line Master, ask students to try to identify the underlined words’ part of speech and provide a “dictionary-like” definition, using the definition on the board as an example. (Model answers are given below). You may ask students to work in groups, as a class, or individually, but make sure they keep this Definitions Worksheet to help them do the Vocabulary Worksheet you assign as homework.

***indigenous\**** – adj. existing naturally in a particular region or environment

***prospector*** – n. a person who searches an area for gold, minerals, oil, etc.

**holocaust** – n. an event or situation in which many people are killed and many things are destroyed

**garrison** - n. a military camp, fort, or base

**hydraulic** – adj. operated by the pressure of a fluid

**indentured** – adj. required to work for a certain period of time

**placer mining** – n. the process of getting gold or other valuable minerals, usually from a river or lake, by washing away the sand that surrounds it

**skirmish** – n. a brief and usually unplanned fight

**vigilante** - n. a person who is not an official but who tries to catch and punish people

**retaliate** – v. to get revenge against someone

**Preparing to Read:** Tell the students that today you will read two excerpts from the **Northwest Indigenous Gold Rush History: The Indian Survivors of California's Holocaust**. Tell them that the idea for this publication was conceived by Laura Lee George in response to California's three-year (1998-2000) celebration of the Gold Rush. Laura Lee was the Director of the Indian Teacher and Educational Personnel Program (ITEPP) at Humboldt State University, and a member of the Karuk Tribe. In order to bring the Native perspective on the Gold Rush to a broad audience, she divided ITEPP's 44 student members into groups to collect information on the local indigenous history of this era. In 1998, personal interviews, archival photos and literature reviews were compiled and edited, and the booklet was published.

**Reading Activity:** As there are some difficult concepts in this article, it may be helpful to have students take turns reading these excerpts aloud. You might choose to stop when questions arise and clarify. Another possibility is to have the students read the texts on their own, highlighting words or concepts that they would like to talk about during the discussion period.

**Discussion:** Using prompts taken from the **Comprehension Worksheet: Gold Rush**, ask students some or all of the questions to solicit a respectful classroom discussion of the text. Ask them if they were surprised at some of the comments that the interviewee made?

**Comprehension:** Pass out the **Comprehension Worksheet: Gold Rush**. Have students read the questions silently, and then put a star next to the questions that ask for their *opinion*. Explain to students that the answers they write in response to these questions will not be marked wrong for their content, but will be graded simply for the use of proper English, punctuation, and capitalization, as well as their ability to write legibly and in complete sentences. Assign for Worksheet for in-class work.

**Vocabulary:** Assign the Vocabulary Worksheet to students. You may choose to have them return to their groups that wrote up their definitions for the words for group work.

**Research and Writing Activity** – Students research for original texts that talk about what happened between Natives and non-Natives during the Gold Rush Era in California (1848-1855). Then, ask them to write a short summary of what they found out, and write a one-page opinion piece about their texts. Students may choose to illustrate their stories with their own drawings or with photographs, but remind them to reference all the materials they used to develop their work.

## Vocabulary Definitions

Name \_\_\_\_\_

*Write down the vocabulary words used in the Vocabulary Black Line Master in class and add their part of speech and definitions in the spaces provided below.*

**Vocabulary Word    Part of Speech    Definition**  
**(n./adj./v./adv.)**

<b>Indigenous</b>		

**Vocabulary Black Line Master**

1. The people of the Karuk, Yurok and Klamath Tribes are indigenous to the Klamath River Basin.
2. My grandfather was a prospector who mined for gold on the Salmon River.
3. Millions of Jewish, handicapped and homosexual people were murdered in the Holocaust of World War II.
4. There used to be a garrison stationed in Hoopa that served as a military camp for U.S. soldiers during the many years of conflict between white settlers and the local Natives.
5. The effects of the water pressure used in hydraulic mining destroyed many Indian villages and the environment.
6. My mom treats me like an indentured servant: I have to do what she says all the time!
7. They used to use mercury to help wash away all the sand from the gold when they were placer mining.
8. They all got sent to the principal's office for fighting during that skirmish this morning on the playground.
9. The vigilantes responsible for keeping that drug dealer until the police got there are heroes, if you ask me!
10. I just hope they don't retaliate when they get out of jail and try to get revenge on them.

**Vocabulary Worksheet**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

indigenous	prospector	holocaust
garrison	hydraulic	indentured
placer mining	skirmish	
vigilante	retaliate	

*Choose the best vocabulary word from the word bank on the left to complete the sentences below. You may refer to the Vocabulary Definition Worksheet completed in class, if needed.*

1. My sister is sure to \_\_\_\_\_ once she finds out I told on her for wearing mom's necklace.
2. A lot a people talk about World War II as being a \_\_\_\_\_, but some people don't realize that there is a history of people in the U.S. killing millions of others simply because of their race or religion.
3. Stinky Pete is a \_\_\_\_\_ featured in Disney's Toy Story 2 movie as a mean gold miner character.
4. Many students who were enrolled in distant Indian boarding schools had to spend their summer vacations as \_\_\_\_\_ servants.
5. The effects of \_\_\_\_\_ mining are still seen in our region: piles and piles of rocks on the landscape.
6. There are \_\_\_\_\_ people on every continent, and many of them still have to fight for their right to live in their homelands.
7. Sometimes you see packs of \_\_\_\_\_ in the old Western movies who track down horse thieves or murderers in order to bring them to jail.
8. The \_\_\_\_\_ in Hoopa was called Fort Gaston.
9. Tensions were high even before the game started as a pre-game \_\_\_\_\_ formed on the field before warm-ups.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ is done on stream beds to mine for mineral deposits.





**An Indigenous Perspective**, Excerpt from Northwest Indigenous Gold Rush History:  
The Indian Survivors of California's Holocaust



Lonix Landry interviewed Julian Lang about the impact of the Gold Rush as told by his family elders and his research into the tribal history of the period. Lang is a member of the Karuk tribe, a published author and Karuk tribal scholar, who with his partner, Lyn Risling, have helped revive certain Karuk ceremonies.

Photo courtesy of Florraine Super, Karuk tribal member

*There were little garrisons up and down the Klamath River-I don't know if they had one at Orleans. In 1849, that's when the miners first discovered gold in northern California, and then, instantly, White men started coming into our country. They were from everywhere, from all over the world. The first wave came and they stripped out the gold, they took as much as they could. A law was made that allowed the "miners" to make indentured slaves out of women, young, like 14 years old. They would just take them, just go into their houses and take them-they were in a territory with no women. Overnight, tent cities and white people jammed the river bars along the Klamath. I imagine there were a bunch of cut-throats, too. These were people who wanted money bad, willing to do anything to get it. We [the Karuk tribal people] start at Bluff Creek. [7-8 miles upstream of the confluence of the Klamath and Trinity Rivers].*

*There were some little placer mining that went on over here-Red Cap is here-and Orleans is over here, and then the Klamath goes on up [stream]. [Above Orleans] there are all of these little places, villages, Peach Creek, Aameekyaaraam. There wasn't too much gold in there though, very little easy gold.*

*There were trail systems everywhere, the Indian highways. You could go to Happy Camp, to the Forks of the Salmon, and over the mountains to Weitchpec. All of the village-sites, nearly all of the village sites were flats', open meadows that sat above the river called benches. Nowadays, many of those benches, the site of the actual villages, are gone. After the first wave of miners in*

*1849-1850, the second wave were more determined to strip away all the earth with hydraulics, so that, today, the old villages are bedrock. The meadows are gone, everything.*

*Then end result was that up here at Katimiin and Somes Bar (they were separate places in the old days), the Salmon River runs this direction, every village was wiped out. The mid- and upper-stretches of the Salmon River were the site of much mining. Black Bear Mine was the most famous mine, established in the late 1860s-era. It turned out to be one of the richest gold mines in the world. There are reports that Black Bear was bringing in millions of dollars per week, I don't recall the figures. The first 49-ers, though, were not interested in long-term mining, unless they struck it rich. Nearly all of the first wave were looking to 'strike it rich'.*

*Remember there were no 'whiteman towns' prior to 1849-1850. The country was all Indian, there were the Karuk Peoples and the Konomihu Shasta and the Klamath River Shasta, with the Yurok and Hupa further downstream and southwest. The Chimariko were over the mountains south of us. In 1850, the Indian village that became Happy Camp was, relatively speaking a big village area. There was a World Renewal Ceremony there at Clear Creek. Overnight this area was inundated. There were 60 thousand people roaming through the surrounding hills and river bars looking for gold. The impact was devastating for them, the Happy Camp Indians.*

*There were skirmishes and even what was called "Indian Wars," Indians repelling the white miners from taking their wives and daughters. In 1850-1851 the whites living around Orleans announced that there was to be a war, all the Indian villages were to be burned unless certain named men, my great-great-grandfather was one of them, were turned over for 'killing a cow.' The vigilante group burned many of the houses at Panamniik (today's town of Orleans) and continued on up to the village-center called Katimiin. When they were scheduled to attack, a second group of white men, led by a man named Brazille, a Frenchman, interceded, and so, the houses in and around Katimiin were not destroyed as they had been both upriver and downriver.*

### **We Are All Mad**, Excerpt from Northwest Indigenous Gold Rush History: The Indian Survivors of California's Holocaust



**Ron Griffith spoke with his grandfather, Charlie Thom, about their family's history of the Gold Rush. Mr. Thom was a respected Karuk elder (1928-2013).**

*My name is Charlie Thorn. I lived on (the) Klamath River all my life, but today I live in Scott's Valley. I knew about the Gold Rush. There was a lot of gold taken out, taken from Humboldt, Siskiyou, Shasta and Trinity (counties). All the rivers had gold, a lot of gold. And then in my time in the Thirties there were great, great hydraulic mines, taking everything clear down to the bedrock. Gold (was found), bigger than my fist and a lot of nuggets. Seven to eight ounce pieces of gold, and I myself dug for gold during the Depression. I've seen a lot of hydraulic mines in my time, right around Orleans, Klamath River and Oak Bottom. And pressure mines all the way up the river, clear to Happy Camp.*

*Placer gold, water moving, hydraulics, erosion, everything taken. I seen that, they (miners) took a lot of Indian land. So you see, Karuks really suffered from this mining. Because all there was left was rock, with all the gold gone. I heard in the history of the mining of gold, of rock plows, way back in 1851 when the first gold hit. The Gold Rush of California, there were thousands and thousands of people, thousands and thousands of people came in 1851.*

*According to my grandfather, he had to run and hide to survive back in the mountains, scale the mountains, for years and years and years, fleeing from the gold rush miners. But he survived, he got to tell me a lot of things, and of course they (miners) killed a lot of Indians. They killed the Shasta tribe over gold, and today the Shasta tribe is not even recognized as a tribe, because the federal government is so scared to recognize them, because they have evidence of wrongdoing. They can go back to 1848 and 1851. 1860s, all the way through there, they're so scared to recognize them because they have a strong case.*

*I'm telling you they really raped this land, and I am a full-blooded Indian from the Karuk tribe and it really disturbs me. How this thing came about I don't know. Greed, a lot of bloodshed, and I look at the country today. What it is. How can they turn the soil upside down and out and do nothing about it? Today we are living in a rock pile along the Klamath. We're living in a rock pile. No more soil. The erosion came and hit.*

*But what they (miners) did, what, you call them "human beings," (they) were extra wrong taking everything. They are still taking, and know to take the gold, silver, nickel and coal, and they took the water and then they took the timber. Oh! Man, I'm telling you. We are all mad.*

The newspaper Alta California gives a surprisingly truthful portrayal of miner-Native conflict in Scott's Valley. "Your correspondent also labors under a mistake in representing the late killing of some 40 Indian at the upper crossing in a 'fight.' It was a cold-blooded, unprovoked massacre. An Indian, sometime in the early part of March, has been shot by a white man at Happy Camp. The Indians on the rivers were exasperated, and perhaps threatened retaliation. At all events, some miners were alarmed, raised a party, surrounded the Rancheria at the Ferry, and killed every man and some women; then proceeding up the river two miles, surrounded another village and killed every man, but one, who escaped wounded, making a total of some 30 to 40 killed. All accounts agree in stating that the attack was wholly unexpected by the Indians, who from the date of the treaty of Scott's Valley in November, had been perfectly quiet and unoffensive ..." The Article was [published on May 21, 1852 and] signed by R. McKee.



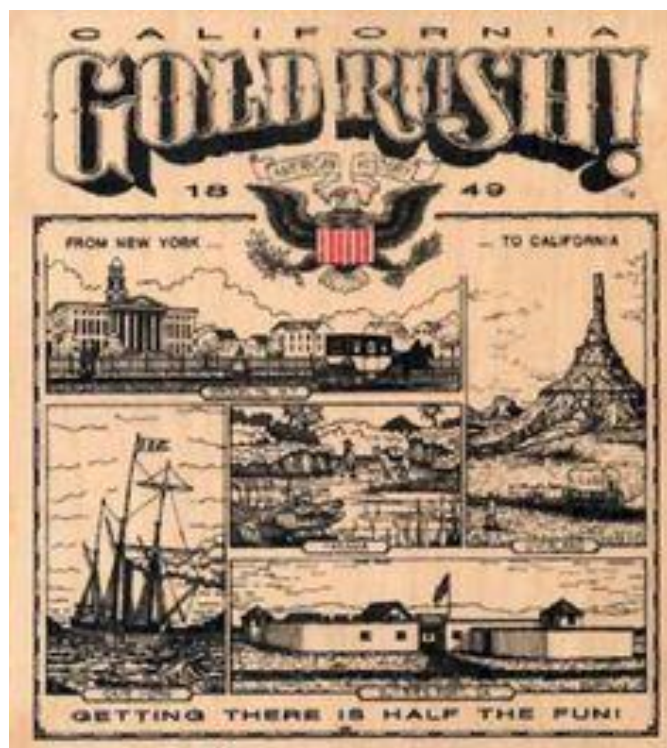
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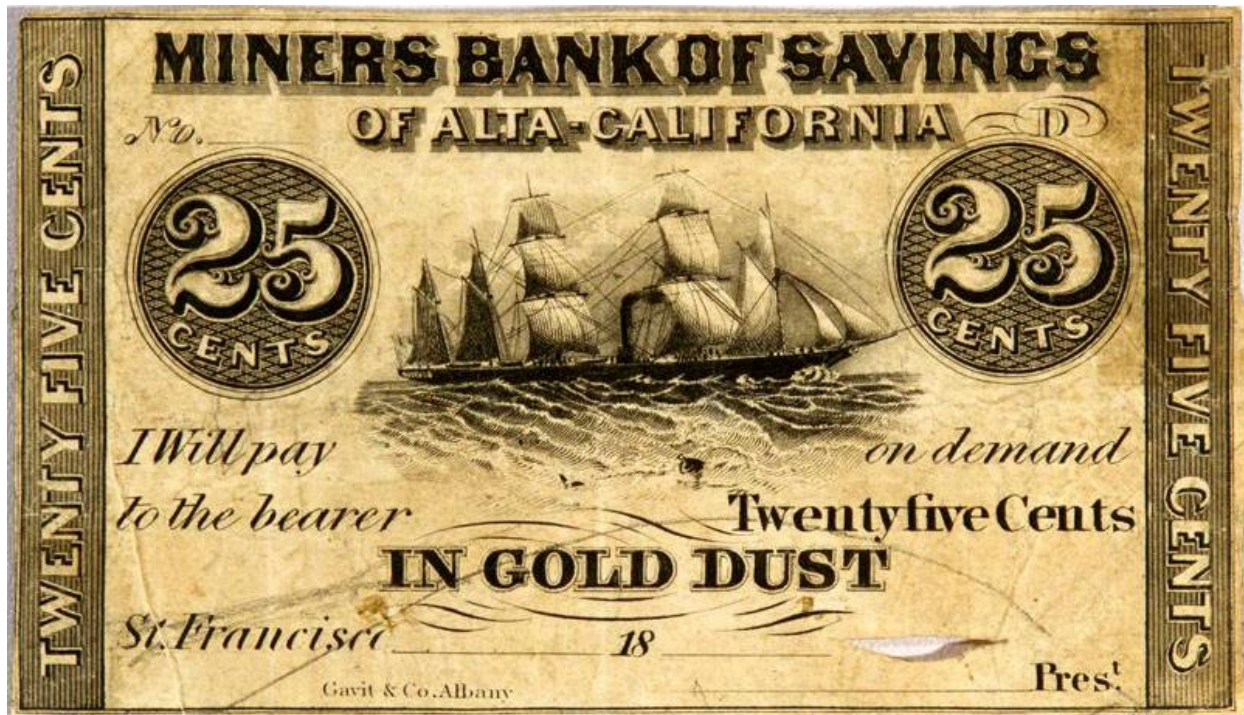


CREATED BY SCOTT QUINN  
HUMBOLDT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
NOVEMBER 1990  
UTM ZONE 10, NAD 83

ACRES = 1,048,818  
SQUARE MILES = 1,639

CREATED BY SCOTT QUINN  
KARUK TRIBE OF CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehension Worksheet: Gold Rush

1. Describe the miners that came to California during the Gold Rush according to Native oral tradition? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How would you compare the differences between Native worldview and miner worldview?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How do you think the miners viewed the Native people? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Estimate the population increase during the Gold Rush for the Karuk Ancestral land.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Julian Lang mentions child slavery, something that continued after slavery was outlawed in the United States. How was money made through slavery? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why did Julian Lang mention that there were no non-Indian women in the early days of the Gold Rush? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. How did hydraulic mining affect the Karuk villages and the land? How and why did the miners contribute to the genocide of Native People? \_\_\_\_\_

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In the article, Charlie Thom described one way his grandfather's family protected themselves and defended their families. What was it? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Compare and contrast the miners' worldview and the modern non-Native American worldview. \_\_\_\_\_

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9. In your opinion, why did ITEPP students to create this booklet? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What are ways you can help yourself, your family, and your community heal from the negative effects of the California Gold Rush? \_\_\_\_\_

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