

# Going for the Gold!

**Developed by:** Jen Reiter, 2104 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail <sup>TM</sup>

**Discipline / Subject:** Social Studies

**Topic:** Alaskan Gold Rush

**Grade Level:** 2-8, others with adaptations

## **Resources / References / Materials Teacher Needs:**

North to Alaska Song: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSt0NEESrUA>

Getting Started Image from the National Parks Service:  
<http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/75skagway/75getting.htm>

Gold Rush Timeline: <http://library.alaska.gov/goldrush/stories/timeline.htm> - you will need to print and cut into strips

Article Tying the Gold Rush into the Iditarod Trail: <http://www.alaskacenters.gov/iditarod.cfm>

Gold Panning Demonstration: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrhsjVH\\_LO8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrhsjVH_LO8)

Klondike Gold Rush Story: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dcsYMTyZcE>

Routes to the Klondike: <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/75skagway/75locate1.htm>

Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park, Skagway, Alaska: <http://www.nps.gov/klgo/index.htm>

For gold panning simulation (materials needed per group):

Large container filled with water

Two pie pans to serve as gold pan

Fishing weights of various sizes spray painted gold – these need to be divided into containers filled with sand

## **Lesson Summary:**

The students will gather information about the discovery of gold in Alaska and experience gold panning.

## **Standard's Addressed: (Local, State, or National)**

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

**Learning Objectives:**

TLW create a timeline of the events associated with the Alaskan Gold Rush.

TLW identify the connection between the discovery of gold in Alaska and the historic Iditarod Trail.

TLW participate in a simulation of gold panning.

**Assessment:**

Students could be assessed on a journal entry about the gold panning simulation.

## **Procedural Activities:**

### Motivation:

Play the music video “North to Alaska” for the students. Ask them if they know what the words “North to Alaska, we’re going north, the rush is on” refer to.

### Getting Started Photo Analysis:

Display the getting started image from the National Parks for the students to analyze. Have them look at the picture and discuss what they see. It sometimes helps to divide the photograph into quadrants to allow the students to focus more on what is in the photo. Gather ideas from them about the time and place they think the photo shows. What do they think is going on in the photo?

### Timeline:

Have the students estimate a timeframe they think is accurate for the Alaskan Gold Rush.

Have the students create a human timeline to display the various stages of the discovery of gold in Alaska. This is a great time to discuss the idea that gold was discovered in many places in Alaska and to realize just how important it was. Discoveries of gold led directly to the founding of at least three of Alaska’s major cities!

Ask them if they are surprised by anything in the timeline? I’m always surprised at how “modern” the dates are... I always thought it happened much longer ago!

### Tying in the Iditarod Trail:

Display for the students the article and photo to tie the Iditarod Trail into the Gold Rush timeline.

### Gold Panning Simulation:

Divide the students into teams of four and assign each team a claim to stake. Each claim should be outfitted with a large container of water, two pie plates to serve as gold pans, and a container filled with sand and hidden “gold nuggets.” Show the students the how- to video, and then let them try their hand at panning for gold. Have the students collect their gold.

Debrief about the experience. Be sure to point out to the students that not all gold was gathered this way, and discuss the pros and cons of the method.

### Klondike Gold Rush:

Introduce the students to the Klondike Gold Rush and the role that Skagway, Alaska played by showing the Klondike Gold Rush Story video. NOTE: You may want to stop the video at the 7:35 mark. The last portion discusses the idea that the stampedeers could buy anything they wanted with the gold including enough wine to fill a bathtub and a girl to take a bath in it! Not a conversation I wanted to have with sixteen eight and nine year old boys, but it may be okay with older students.

Show the map of the routes and discuss the different choices of ways to get to the Klondike to stress Skagway’s role in the event.

## **Materials Students Need:**

Gold panning simulation materials – see teacher material list above

## **Technology Utilized to Enhance Learning:**

See Materials section

**Other Information:**

More on the history of the Iditarod Trail as a gold trail:

<http://iditarod.com/about/booms-and-busts/>

[http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/alaska/iditarod\\_trail.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/alaska/iditarod_trail.pdf)

**Modifications for Special Learners/ Enrichment Opportunities**

1. Students could journal about their experiences from the point of view of a stampede to the Klondike.
2. The Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park has a Junior Ranger program that they allow students to download, complete, and mail in to receive their badge. We completed the activities in the booklet together as a class. If you choose to do this, you will need to pull some photographs from the park's site or other online sources to fill in some sites that are supposed to be visited at the park. <http://www.nps.gov/klgo/forkids/beajuniorranger.htm> They also have some videos in the multimedia section that would be good for an introduction to the park.
3. The Gold Rush Kid by Mary Waldorf makes a great read aloud during this unit!

**Additional Information**

Skagway: Gateway to the Klondike unit and lesson plans from the National Parks Service:

<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/75skagway/75skagway.htm>