Grade 5 -- Informational
There's Still Gold in Those Hills

America experienced a "gold rush" in the middle of the nineteenth century. Gold was discovered in the California mountains in 1848, and thousands of people hurried there. These gold seekers were called *forty-niners*—named after the year 1849. Gold rushes also took place in the present-day states of Colorado, Nevada, Montana, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, Oregon, and Alaska.

Now, 150 years later, the mining operations have long since been abandoned. But, that doesn't mean that *all* the precious metal is gone. In fact, there's still gold in those hills. And with a little luck and a bit of work, people can find it. They can pan for gold like the forty-niners did so many years ago.

Where to Look

Although gold has been found in all fifty states, the best places to search are the states in the western third of the country. Because the metal gets washed out of the mountains by water, a gold seeker looks for a stream. A smaller creek is usually the best place to find gold. A stream that fills with rain water from time to time will have seen a good deal of erosion. It is in these types of streams that gold travels most easily.

With much luck, gold can be found in nugget form, but most often it appears as small flakes. Gold is very heavy and sinks. A miner might look for a little waterfall in the stream. Gold may be below it. Also, gold gets trapped deep down along the banks where the creek bends. It might also be found immediately downstream of a boulder or rock formation in the stream.

Getting to the Gold

A shovel is needed to dig up the rocks in the stream where there might be gold. Also needed is a pan that looks like a pie plate. Gold-panning pans are still sold at sports stores and hobby shops. Knowing how to care for the pan is important.

Any grease or oil in the pan needs to be removed. If there's anything slick in the pan, the flakes of gold will be washed out. The oil from a person's fingers is enough to make this happen. Heating the pan on a fire or the stove is the suggested way to get rid of the oil. Now, it is ready to be used for panning!

A gold seeker digs up a shovelful of gravel from the stream and puts it into the pan. He then dips the pan into the stream and allows the water to soak the material. He shakes the pan a few times to let the heavier bits settle to the bottom. Then, the pan is tipped slightly so that the grass, leaves, pine needles, and any other material float out. The gold will begin sinking to the bottom of the pan.

The panner will want to get rid of the remaining rocks and gravel, but he doesn't want to use his hands. The oil left behind by fingers will wash the gold out. Instead, using a stick, he scrapes out the top inch or so of gravel.

More Water

Unless a gold seeker spies a nugget in the pan (what luck!), he needs to add more water to the mix. He swishes the material in the pan in a slow, circular movement. The pan is tilted slightly so that the lightweight sand slips over the edge. Water is added as needed, and the process is repeated.

Soon, only a small part of the pan will be covered with concentrated material of what appears to be black sand. The swishing motion will spread the sand out in a feather pattern. The bits of material at the tail end of the feather are called *tailings*. This is where the gold bits can be found.

Is It Gold?

The black sand is called magnetite because of its magnetic properties. By using a magnet, the sand can be picked up and moved out of the pan. What gold panners hope to see left behind are flakes of gold. These can be tiny specs or larger flakes the size and shape of breakfast cereal. But people can be tricked by the stuff that twinkles like a crystal. This is probably "fool's gold." The gold they want is yellow with a sheen to it.

Tweezers are used to pick out the gold flakes and place them into a container. Now the gold miner is ready to dig up another shovelful of gravel and begin the process all over again. What if he didn't find any gold? He shouldn't give up. Even the best miners didn't find precious metal in every pan. But like the miners of today who enjoy panning, the forty-niners knew that there was still gold in those hills.

1) Under which subheading would this sentence most likely be found: "Iron pyrite can have the same appearance as gold"? (LA.5.1.6.g)

a) Where to Look
b) Getting to the Gold
c) More Water
d) Is it Gold?

2) Which statement is an opinion? (LA.5.1.6.e)

a) He shouldn't give up.
b) Gold is very heavy and sinks.
c) The oil left behind by fingers will wash the gold out.
d) The bits of material at the tail end of the feather are called tailings.

3) Using the numbered steps, what is the correct order for "Getting to the Gold"? (LA.5.1.6.e)

1. A gold seeker digs up a shovelful of gravel from the stream and puts it in the pan.
2. Any grease or oil in the pan needs to be removed.
3. He shakes the pan a few times to let the heavier bits settle to the bottom.
4. Using a stick, the panner scrapes out the top inch or so of soil. (LA.5.1.6.e)

a) 3,2,1,4
b) 1,2,3,4
c) 2,1,3,4
d) 2,1,4,3

4) Under the subheading "**Getting to the Gold**", which organizational pattern is used? (LA.5.1.6.e)

a) Cause and Effect
b) Description
c) Fact and Opinion
d) Sequence

5) What is the main idea of the passage? (LA.5.1.6.f)

a) Gold mining can make you rich.
b) Gold is mined near streams of creeks.
c) Gold mining takes patience and hard work.
d) Gold can still be found across the country.

C4L Reading - Item Writing Tally Sheet

Grade 5- Informational

Passage Name: **There's Still Gold in Those Hills**

Gr5 Vocabulary	DOK Level	DOK 1	DOK 2	DOK 3	Item Total
LA 5.1.5 Vocabulary: Students will build literary, general academic, and content specific grade level vocabulary.					
LA 5.1.5.a *Apply knowledge of word structure elements, known words, and word patterns to determine meaning (e.g., affixes, abbreviations, parts of speech, word origins)*	1, 2				
LA 5.1.5.c *Select and apply context clues (e.g., word, phrase, sentence and paragraph clues, re-reading) and text features (e.g., glossary, headings, subheadings, captions, maps) to determine meaning of unknown words in a variety of text structures*	2				1
LA 5.1.5.d *Identify semantic relationships (e.g., multiple meanings, metaphors, similes, idioms, analogies)*	1, 2				
Gr5 Comprehension	**DOK Level**	**DOK 1**	**DOK 2**	**DOK 3**	**Item Total**
LA 5.1.6 Comprehension: Students will extract and construct meaning using prior knowledge, applying text information, and monitoring comprehension while reading grade level text.					
LA 5.1.6.a *Identify author purpose(s) (e.g., explain, entertain, inform, persuade) and recognize how author perspective (e.g., beliefs, assumptions, biases) influences text*	3				1
LA 5.1.6.d *Identify literary devices and explain the ways in which language is used (e.g., simile, metaphor, alliteration, onomatopoeia, imagery, rhythm)*	2, 3				1
LA 5.1.6.e *Summarize and analyze the main idea from informational text using supporting details*	2		1		1
LA 5.1.6.f *Understand and apply knowledge of organizational patterns found in informational text (e.g., sequence, description, cause and effect, compare/contrast, fact/opinion)*	2		3		3
LA 5.1.6.g *Apply knowledge of text features to locate information and gain meaning from a text (e.g., index, maps, charts, tables, graphs, headings, subheadings)*	1, 2		1		1

LA 5.1.6.h *Describe the defining characteristics of narrative and informational genres (e.g., textbooks, myths, fantasies, science fiction, drama, periodicals, essays)*	2				
LA 5.1.6.k *Generate and/or answer literal, inferential, critical, and interpretive questions, supporting answers using prior knowledge and literal and inferential information from the text and additional sources*	1, 2, 3	3			3