

#### Element 4: Reflection

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I had a good time rolling out this lesson to students. I had never had time to build a lesson that incorporated the Gold Rush letter and was excited to share it with students. I was surprised at how much fun the students had trying to transcribe the letter. They would have worked another 15-20 minutes on it if I let them. They also really appreciated the transcription that I provided later. I liked the question that students asked of the letter, especially the questions concerning the various routes and transportation. I was not surprised that they were fascinated with the reference to the Donner Party, however. I was impressed with the students' ability to find information regarding their questions without much direction from me.

Although I knew that the class time would go quickly, it still felt rushed at points. This was particularly true of the time I gave students for synthesis of their primary and secondary sources. If I had had more time, I would have liked to have various pairs share their findings with other groups. This would have made for greater depth in the final write-up (see attached examples).

Generally students enjoyed the lesson and appreciated being able to examine a primary source. I was encouraged that many of them mentioned the connection between skills and content to one degree or another. I was concerned that there were still a few students that seemed to take a minimal amount of information away from the lesson (see attached examples). Overall I was very pleased with the lesson and the skills that they practiced will serve them well as we move into more historical writing throughout the course of the semester.