4th Grade

Instructional Unit Title: Boom and Bust

The teacher may have students brainstorm things/products that are currently in "fashion" for 4th graders so that students can begin thinking about social/cultural trends and the demand for and production of particular goods. (This experience segues to the examination of the demand that brought trappers/traders to Colorado).

The teacher may bring in (trapping/trading) artifacts and primary and secondary sources (letters, advertisements, etc.) so that students may consider the "demands" and social trends that brought traders and trappers (mountain men) to Colorado and the natural resources that facilitated their work in the state.

The teacher may use sources (letters, journals of mountain men) and data about the fur trade economy (trading forts, rendezvous) to have students document the effects of trapping on the landscape and resources of Colorado and the sustainability of this "boom".

The teacher may use documentation of the lives of mountain men and traders to have students examine the opportunities and risks associated with economic decision-making in light of a "boom" that may or may not be sustainable.

The teacher may brainstorm with students the connections between scarcity and value, possibly using terms like "limited/special edition" to guide students' thinking about the status that restricted supply can confer on products or resources (This experience is the segue to the examination of the Colorado Gold Rush).

The teacher may bring in (mining) artifacts and primary and secondary sources (newspaper articles, personal journals, etc.) to help students examine the demands (and dreams) that brought prospective miners to Colorado and the natural resources that facilitated initial mining efforts in the state.

The teacher may use various historical and contemporary sources (including guest speakers) to illuminate the lives of energy workers so that students can compare the economic opportunities/risks of miners, fur traders, and people working in the energy industry in Colorado.

The teacher may use contemporary maps and visuals to help students document and analyze the effects of the search for fuel/energy sources on the landscape and resources of Colorado.

The teacher may bring in artifacts and sources (news clips, articles, etc.) so that students can consider the different fuel sources located in and/or produced in Colorado.

The teacher may brainstorm with students the natural/physical resources that Coloradoans depend on to sustain lifestyles today (This brainstorm session will include many topics but it will ultimately provide the segue to the examination of Colorado's energy production and the state's gas and oil industry).

The teacher may use historical and contemporary sources to document the lives of Colorado miners and their experiences with mining so that students can compare the economic opportunities/risks of miners and fur traders.

The teacher may use maps and demographic data to help students analyze the effects of the gold/silver "boom" on the resources and landscape of Colorado and to consider the sustainability of early mining (and latter mining efforts) in the state.



The teacher may brainstorm with students the things people in Colorado like to do for recreation and sport (this brainstorm session will provide the segue to the examination of Colorado's tourism booms).

The teacher may bring in artifacts (e.g., antique and modern ski equipment) and primary and secondary sources (advertising, letters, etc.) so that students can consider the historical roots (and "booms") of Colorado's tourism and the natural and physical resources that continue to support/sustain this industry.

The teacher may have students map different locations of major tourist destinations in order to document and analyze the effects of tourism on different regions and/or towns of Colorado (e.g., population growth, infrastructure expansion, etc.).

The teacher may use various historical and contemporary sources (including guest speakers) to enable students to comprehend the economic opportunities/risks of the tourism industry and to consider threats to the sustainability of the current 'boom".

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: As a newly hired/newly arrived worker in Colorado's mining, fur trade, energy, or tourism industry you will be corresponding with people "back home" to let them know about your new life and career in Colorado. In your correspondence you will be documenting your reasons for relocating (the "boom" that brought you to Colorado), your concerns (or lack of concerns) for the security of your job, and your thoughts on alternative work/jobs which you could pursue if you choose to remain in the state/territory.

This unit was authored by a team of Colorado educators. The unit is intended to support teachers, schools, and districts as they make their own local decisions around the best instructional plans and practices for all students. To see the entire instructional unit sample with possible learning experiences, resources, differentiation, and assessments visit http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/instructionalunitsamples.