

Element 1 – Classroom Context

Gold Rush Letter Activity

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This lesson was piloted in a suburban public high school with a student population of around 2000 encompassing grades 9-12. It was presented to two sections of Advanced Placement United States History students, comprising 33 and 27 students respectively. The high school schedule is a straight, 90 minute block schedule where class periods are 90 minutes each day and students take United States History as a semester long course. All students have a district issued laptop computer with internet access. The lesson includes both content and skill-based components, challenging students to learn, use and hone historical thinking skills.

The letter at the forefront of the lesson is from a private collection and has never been published.