Stage 3 (Year 5) The Australian colonies in the 1800’s

The founding of British colonies and the development of a colony. They learn about what life was like for different groups of people in the colonial period. They examine significant events and people, political and economic developments, social structures, and settlement patterns.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Topic:</th>
<th>The Gold Rush – Analysing sources</th>
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| Key inquiry question: | • What do we know about the lives of people in Australia’s colonial past and how do we know?  
• How did an Australian colony develop over time and why?  
• What were the significant events and who were the significant people that shaped Australian colonies? |

Content

The impact of a significant development or event on a colony: for example, frontier conflict, the gold rushes, the Eureka Stockade, internal exploration, the advent of rail, the expansion of farming, drought. (ACHHK095).

Students:

• identify events that have shaped Australia's identity and discuss why they were significant  
• use a range of sources to investigate ONE significant development or event and its impact on the chosen colony.

In this unit of work the term ‘Indigenous’ is used to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
### Student learning activity

**Students use primary sources to ask historical questions about the past.**

- The activities are designed to introduce students to primary sources as historical records of people, places and events in the past.
- Students examine images and written sources from the State Library of NSW to investigate the experiences of people during the gold rush.

**Activity 1**

- Analyse Sources 1 to 5 and answer the questions.

Who was Eugene von Guerard?
This portrait of von Guerard was drawn in 1855 by Aboriginal artist Johnny Kangatong.

Johann Joseph Eugen von Guerard was born in Austria in 1811. His father was official court painter to the Emperor Francis I.

Von Guerard studied at the Düsseldorf Academy and travelled in Germany and Italy.

In 1852 he decided to join some Frenchmen who were heading to the goldfields of Victoria with the intention of becoming rich.

Instead, von Guerard ended up making his living by doing various sketches at gold fields. He travelled extensively in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania and produced landscape paintings and sketches.

Source 1: Extracts from Eugen von Guerard’s diary, 1852-54.

Jan 11. ...left for Eureka [goldfields] this morning, having chartered two bullock wagons to take our belongings...

Jan 18 After travelling for a week, we have arrived at Ballarat...[on the way we] met a poor young fellow who had been attacked by bushrangers, robbed of his horse and all the money he possessed and then tied to a tree.

Jan 25 Yesterday we went to peg out our claim at Eureka Hill. Our nearest neighbours are Chinamen, Englishmen and Americans.

Jan 27 Having dug to a depth of twenty-four to twenty-five feet...we came upon rock...our only gain being a practice in digging!

April 15 We are subject to periodical unexpected requests to produce our diggers’ licenses. ..[Those who are caught without licenses] are then imprisoned with robbers and other criminals. This is causing a good deal of bad blood.

June 7 ...I found a little pocket of nuggets the weight of which amounted to 1 ¾ pounds.

July 25 Have just heard that news has reached Ballarat of the holding-up by bushrangers of the gold escort between Maclvor diggings and Melbourne, the whole of the gold taken, and several of the escort left dead on the road.

August 20 Am at the moment storekeeper...[some friends] begged me to undertake the job as Armand (their storekeeper) had to go to Geelong.
September 2 One hears quite often of diggers disappearing suddenly, and long afterwards their corpses are found at the bottom of shafts into which they had fallen and been drowned in the mud. Among my new neighbours are several Chinamen who are thriving as butchers. They are frequent customers at my store, but can’t speak a word of any language but their own, so all our dealings are done by sign.

Questions:
1. In which state was von Guerard digging for gold? How do you know?
2. From which other countries did people come to search for gold?
3. What happened to diggers who did not produce their licenses?
4. Identify one significant danger faced by diggers who struck it rich on the goldfields.
5. What job did von Guerard undertake on the goldfields?
6. What was von Guerard’s opinion of the gold rush? How do you know?
Source 2: A satire [send-up] on gold diggers by Thomas Harriott, 1852

2.1. An assistant surgeon on a newly arrived ship decides to try his luck on the goldfields.

2.2. He digs for no reward.

http://www.acmssearch.sl.nsw.gov.au/search/itemLarge.cgi?itemID=998772&size=full&amp;album=1&amp;collection=997303
2.3. He then finds surface gold. But his horse won't carry him AND the gold.

2.4. So he walks, until a bushranger relieves him of the horse and the extra weight of gold.

2.5. He limps back to Melbourne much poorer.
2.6. He opens a chemist shop in Melbourne using some gold he managed to hide from the bushranger.

Questions:

- In your own words, tell the story of the experiences of the assistant surgeon during the gold rush.

- What is Thomas Harriott’s opinion of the gold rush? How do you know?

- Compare von Guerard’s experiences (Source 1) with Thomas Harriott’s experiences (Source 2).

- What are the similarities and the differences?

- Whose opinion of the gold rush do you consider more reliable? Explain why and support your opinion with evidence.

Source 3: The Arrival of the First Gold Escort, Melbourne 1852

**The text says:**

Arrival of the First Gold Escort – by an eye witness

The gold was brought down by three drays, each dray carrying two boxes and drawn by a team of six horses. The boxes containing the gold were about three feet long with six handles, and were carried into the office by six men.

The Blue Stone building on the left was in the occupation of the Government at the time; the ground floor being used as a gold office and the two upper stories occupied by the Surveyor-General, Robert Hoddie and his staff of draftsmen and clerks.

When the escort arrived the clerks and draftsmen of the Survey Department were looking down on the scene from the windows, and the next day nearly the whole staff sent in their resignations, determined to try their luck at gold digging. The central group represents two lucky diggers of the sailor class spinning a yarn to some new chums. On their left is a new chum Chinaman stopping to listen to the astonishing accounts of a countryman of his who has just returned from the goldfields.

**Questions:**

- What is a ‘new chum’?

- According to Source 3, what happened when the Government workers heard about the rich finds in the goldfields?

- Explain how the gold rush affected society in the 1850s.
Source 4: Sketch of the inside of William Essington King’s tent on the Braidwood goldfields in 1852.

Questions:

- Carefully examine inside of the tent and label the main objects you can identify.

- Do you think William Essington King was an ordinary miner? How do you know?

- What type of work did William Essington King do on the goldfields? Use evidence to support your conclusion.

Source 5: A typical mining camp in NSW or Victoria, 1855-60

Questions:
- Carefully examine Source 5 and identify the following:
  - mine shafts (2)
  - men with shovels
  - gold washing cradle
  - ordinary miners’ tents
  - the Gold Commissioner’s tent – how do you know?
- Which tent in this painting is similar to the inside of the tent shown in Source 4?
- Conduct your own research on gold washing cradles.
  - where did this technique of washing gold come from?
  - explain how a gold washing cradle works.

ANSWER TO SOURCE 4:

There is substantial furniture, locked boxes, scales, books, writing materials, pistols and it has two rooms, which is far too spacious and luxurious for an ordinary digger. There are no picks, shovels, axes or other tools.

Between 1852 and 1859 William Essington King was the gold commissioner on various gold fields.

His job was to keep law and order on the field, issue mining licences and register gold claims.
ANSWER TO SOURCE 5:

The tent that is similar to William Essington King’s tent (Source 4) is the one with the Government flag on top.

It is large and appears to have at least two rooms.

We can assume it belongs to the Gold Commissioner.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Background notes for teachers</th>
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<td>The first mention of gold being found in Australia was by a convict in August 1788. He claimed some gold dust found in his possession was from a source in Sydney Harbour. It was later found he had been filing down a gold coin and using the story to get clothing and other items from ships’ crews; he was severely punished.</td>
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<td>It is however possible that gold was found within the first thirty years of settlement. Oral tradition in the Macquarie family says that in 1820 Mrs Macquarie (Governor Macquarie’s wife) gave gold found in NSW as a wedding present to her niece in Scotland.</td>
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<td>The first official mention of the discovery of gold is in 1823, shortly after the Macquaries left. Surveyor James McBrien, who was surveying Fish River, east of Bathurst, wrote in his Field Book that, ‘at this place I found numerous particles of gold in the sand’.</td>
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<td>In 1839 Polish explorer Count Paul Strzelecki observed gold particles in Gippsland rock but Governor Gipps, who feared convict unrest if they heard of the discovery, asked him to say nothing. Similarly in 1844 when geologist W B Clarke presented Gipps with a gold sample he found near Bathurst, Gipps supposedly told him, ‘Put it away, Mr Clarke, or we shall all have our throats cut’.</td>
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<td>It was not until 1851 that Edward Hargraves was credited with, and rewarded for, finding a location with a significant quantity of gold. This honour was later disputed by various people including William and James Tom and John Lister who had worked the site Hargraves claimed to have found alone. In 1891 a Committee recognised these men and not Hargraves as the first people to discover payable gold in Australia.</td>
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<td>By this time Australia had changed forever. In 1852 gold was also discovered in much larger quantities in the newly named colony of Victoria. This created massive social upheaval and led to the settlement of new areas. The 1850s gold rushes altered the nature of Australian society permanently. It caused a huge influx of migrants, a sudden increase in wealth, and was significant in bringing about a desire for self-government and the end of the transportation of convicts.</td>
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**NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum History K - 10**

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<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Historical Skills</th>
<th>Historical concepts</th>
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| HT3-1 describes and explains the significance of people, groups, places and events to the development of Australia | **Comprehension: Chronology, terms and concepts**  
- use historical terms and concepts (ACHHS099, ACHHS118)  
**Use of sources**  
- locate information related to inquiry questions in a range of sources (ACHHS102, ACHHS121)  
- compare information from a range of sources (ACHHS103, ACHHS122)  
**Perspectives and interpretations**  
- use historical terms and concepts (ACHHS099, ACHHS118) | - **Cause and effect:** events, decisions or developments in the past that produce later actions, results or effects  
- **Significance:** the importance of an event, development or individual/group |

**Learning across the curriculum**

- Literacy
- Difference and diversity
Resources

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<tr>
<th>Diaries from the Field. Surveyors’ Field books. Field Book 205 - Traverse of Road from Emu Plans to Bathurst. Survey of portion of Macquarie and Fish Rivers 1823</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surveyor James McBrien. See page 60 for his notation on finding gold.</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Library of New South Wales, ‘Discover’ Collections, ‘Eureka! The Rush for Gold’</td>
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