

MYTH vs HISTORY

Lesson Plan for "The Alaska Myth" Podcast, Episode 3

Grade Level: Adapt for
6th - 12th grades

Subject: Social Studies /
Alaska Studies / History

Topic: Gold Rush
Mythology versus History

Objectives and Goals

Students will:

- Compare and contrast mythology and history of the Alaska Gold Rush
- Appreciate the importance of learning true histories

Materials

- [The Alaska Myth podcast, episode 3](#)
- Gold miner image, attached
- Notes sheet, attached
- Access to historical images of gold rush and/or drawing materials

Assessments

1. Students create a visual representation of the contrast between the mythology and the history of the gold rush. Students find or draw one image that shows the mythology of the Alaskan gold rush and one image that shows the history of the Alaskan gold rush in contrast to the mythology

2. Students to write a reflection in response to this prompt using the following quotes:

How do mythologies about the past influence our understanding of history?

“History is a set of arguments that help us understand the past. It looks at the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ of the events that unfolded.”

“Mythology is a set of stories which appear to be about the past. Mythology uses historical symbols ... While mythology appears to be about history. It’s actually more about the present than the past.”

Activities (30-90 minutes)

Opener:

Display iconic gold miner image. Ask students to share what they notice about the image and what does it tell us about the gold rush. Invite students to describe other iconic gold rush imagery and to share other common themes from what they know about Alaska’s gold rush. Who participated? Why? What was it like?

Main lesson

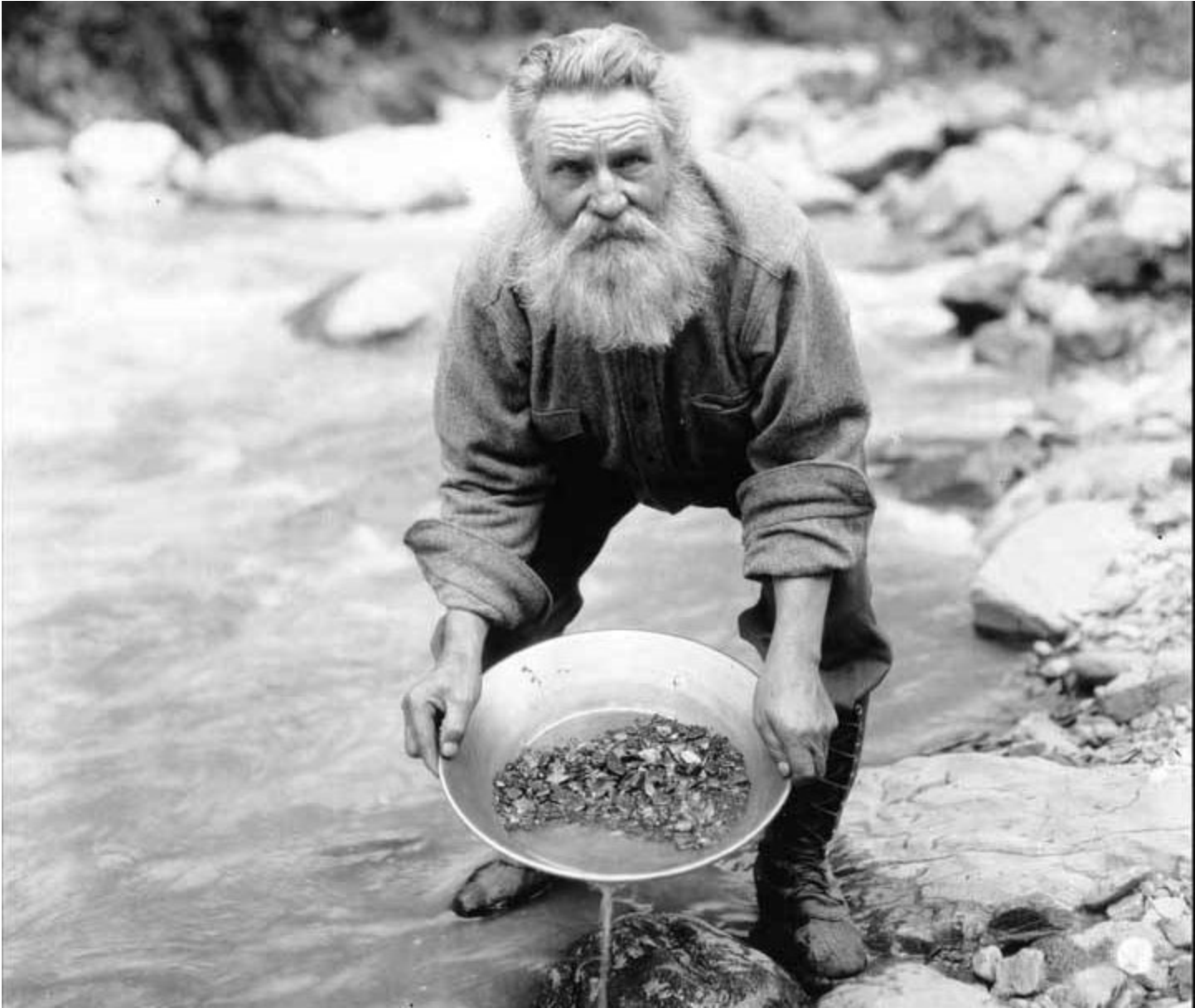
Ask students to discuss with a partner: what is the difference between history and mythology? Invite 1–2 students to share. Tell them this lesson will further explore this topic.

For students with middle school reading levels, review these vocabulary terms before playing: industrialization, wage labor, social mobility, emasculation, dredge.

Play podcast episode 3 (3:02 - 11:30)

Ask students to listen for imagery that stands out to them and to listen for the key differences between the mythology and the history of the gold rush. Students can take notes on the attached two column note sheet.

In groups of 3–4 have students share what stood out to them most from the podcast. Then share 1–2 notes from each column. After sharing, ask them to write a short reflection on the bottom of the notes sheet.



"Two-Step" Jake Hirsch panning for gold.
(Delano Photo/Alaska State Library Historical Collections)

Notes :

record images, words, ideas

History

Mythology

Reflections