

Globe Lesson 13 - The Gold Rush - Grade 4-5

Skills used Latitude & Longitude
Using scale to measure distance
Determining travel time

Vocabulary forty-niners

Materials Needed Globe in Horizon Ring Mounting

Lesson

For this activity, begin by circling the city of San Francisco on your globe. San Francisco's location is $38^{\circ}\text{N}/122^{\circ}\text{W}$. Just over forty years after the Lewis and Clark expedition, gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in California. Sutter's Mill was located about 120 miles east of San Francisco. As a result of this discovery, thousands of people from all over the world raced to join the gold rush to California. So many people traveled to the state in 1849 that all the new people coming to the gold fields were soon collectively referred to as *forty-niners*.

For the thousands of would-be prospectors living in the eastern portion of the United States, most had only two options for traveling to California. They could travel to Missouri where they could then join wagon trains headed west by way of the Oregon Trail, or they could book passage on ships that departed from eastern ports and sailed south around the southern tip of South America and then north to San Francisco.

Use your globe to compare the lengths of these two routes. We will use New York City as the departure point for our would-be gold miner.

For the overland option, use your globe's mounting ring to draw a route from New York City at $41^{\circ}\text{N}/75^{\circ}\text{W}$, to a location in Missouri at $39^{\circ}\text{N}/94^{\circ}\text{W}$ (site of Independence), to a site in Idaho on the Snake River at $43^{\circ}\text{N}/114^{\circ}\text{W}$, and then on

to San Francisco. Measure the length of each segment and add them together to get the total distance. What was the distance of the overland route? (1.)

For the sea option, use the globe's mounting ring to draw a route from New York to a point just off the easternmost tip of Brazil at $6^{\circ}\text{S}/31^{\circ}\text{W}$, to South America's Cape Horn at $56^{\circ}\text{S}/68^{\circ}\text{W}$, and then to San Francisco. What is the distance of this route? (2.) _____

Which method of travel from the east coast of the United States to California do you think would have been the fastest? (3.) _____ Most sea voyages from east coast ports to San Francisco took about five months, but some of the fast clipper ships did much better. One clipper ship, the Flying Cloud, twice made the trip from New York to San Francisco in just under 90 days. Use the distance you measured above to determine the average daily sailing distance of the Flying Cloud on these two voyages. (4.) _____