

## These notes are for:

- Ages 8+
- Primary years 3-6

## Key Learning Areas:

- Australian History

## Example of:

- Illustrated non-fiction

## National Curriculum Focus\*:

History content descriptions include:

Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ACHHK061	ACHHS081	ACHHK093	ACHHK115
ACHHK062	ACHHS082	ACHHK094	ACHHK116
ACHHS065	ACHHS083	ACHHK095	ACHHS117
ACHHS066	ACHHS216	ACHHK096	ACHHS118
ACHHS067	ACHHS084	ACHHK097	ACHHS119
ACHHS215	ACHHS085	ACHHS098	ACHHS120
ACHHS068	ACHHS086	ACHHS099	ACHHS121
ACHHS070	ACHHS087	ACHHS100	ACHHS122
ACHHS071		ACHHS101	ACHHS123
		ACHHS102	ACHHS124
		ACHHS103	ACHHS125
		ACHHS104	
		ACHHS105	
		ACHHS106	

\*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.

## Themes:

- Gold
- Life on the goldfields
- History
- Civics and Government
- Miners/diggers
- Immigration

\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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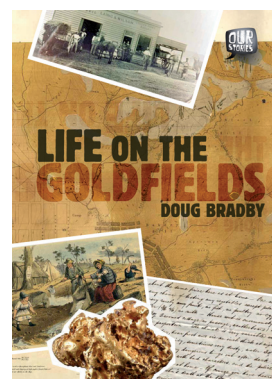
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## Life on the Goldfields

### Our Stories: Life on the Goldfields

Author: Doug Bradby  
ISBN: 9781742032139  
ARRP: \$17.95  
NZRRP: \$19.99  
October 2012



## Synopsis

### What was life actually like on the goldfields?

People travelled from all over the world to seek their fortune on the Australian goldfields. But when they got to Australia, they found life was tough. The diggers lived in makeshift tents that didn't keep out the weather or thieves. The food was bad, clean water was scarce and every day was full of danger.

How did these early emigrants make a life for themselves in this harsh new place? Focusing on the Victorian diggings, *Life on the Goldfields* shows how these improvised communities became town and cities.

## Author Information

In 1858, Doug Bradby's paternal grandfather walked to Ballarat as a 10-year-old boy with his widowed mother. His maternal grandfather worked as a contractor erecting poppet heads on the Ballarat mines. He dismantled the last mine in Ballarat in 1920. Doug is a retired history teacher and taught for 30 years in Ballarat schools. He is currently Sovereign Hill's ambassador to local schools and a guide at the gold museum.

## How To Use These Notes

These notes provide a variety of discussion questions and activities that can be used with *Life on the Goldfields*. Please select according to the level, learning style and targeted outcomes of your students.



## Before Reading

- View the cover and title. Identify the following:
  - » The title of the book
  - » The author
  - » The publisher
- Discuss the following: What is the role of the author? What is the role of the publisher?
- From the front and back cover what information can you learn about the book? What do you think this book is about? What information do you think will be covered in this book? What type of book is this and where would you expect to find it in your library?

## Discussion Questions

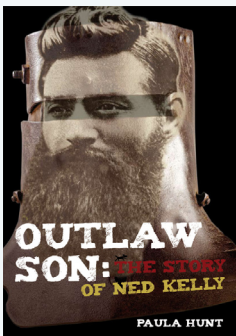
- What is gold? What is it used for? Why did the prospect of finding gold bring so many people from all over the world to Australia?
- Write a diary entry that one of the gold diggers may have written on an average day on the goldfield. This activity can be extended based on skill level; you could include diary entries for travelling to Australia by sea, travelling from Melbourne to the goldfields, building a cottage etc.
- Make a guide for an emigrant who has just arrived in Australia to be a gold digger. Use the information on page 11 as a starting point. Make sure to cover what the emigrant should expect with regards to weather, food, living conditions and the basics of gold digging. Design your guide in a desktop publishing program or by hand.
- What was Australia like just before the gold rush? How did the sudden arrival of thousands of hopeful gold diggers from around the world change the culture and development of Australia? How do you think Australia would be different now if gold was not discovered in 1851?
- What is sly-grog? Why did the gold diggers make and sell this?  
*“One of the party was appointed tent keeper and cook, a job they usually accepted with embarrassment.”* page 14  
Why would the tent keeper and cook be embarrassed about his job?
- *“The day ended with a march led by bagpipers and the singing of “Auld Lang Syne”.*” page 20  
Listen to a recording of *Auld Lang Syne* and look at the lyrics (a good place to start is [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auld\\_lang\\_syne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auld_lang_syne) or search on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)). Why would this song have been popular for the diggers?
- Research any local goldfield activity in your area. If there was none, find out what was the closest goldfield. When did it begin? How did it affect the development of that area?
- Build a timeline of the development of the goldfields. Start from the discovery of gold in 1851. Use pictures and facts to illustrate your timeline. Visit your school or local library to find other books on the topic or search for information on the internet. Use an online interactive timeline creator such as Time Toast ([www.timetoast.com](http://www.timetoast.com)) or Tiki Toki ([www.tiki-toki.com](http://www.tiki-toki.com)).
- As a class have a discussion on the reliability of information found online. Are all websites reliable? Discuss how addresses ending in .gov or .edu are generally reliable, but other addresses ending in .com need to be used with caution. Why can some websites feature unreliable information?
- Write a short story based on one of the photos or drawings in *Life on the Goldfields*. Look for visual clues in the image for an idea of who these people are, what they are doing, whether they are successful or not. Your story can be from the perspective of any of the people in the image.

- Diggers from different parts of the world named places after areas in their home country (see page 12). Can you think of any place names in your local area that have been named after another location? Research the history of that name by looking online or prepare a question sheet and use that to interview different members of the community. Why was the local place given that name?
- Why would people travel from their homes to the goldfields in Australia, given the dangers and since they would be separated from their family? Prepare a list of advantages and disadvantages for a potential migrant to come to Australia in the 1850s.
- Divide the class into groups to make a podcast based on a section of the book. This podcast should have students explaining their understanding of the subject, not just reading from the book.
- How is gold mined today? Research and explain how gold mining techniques have evolved since the gold rush of the mid-1800s

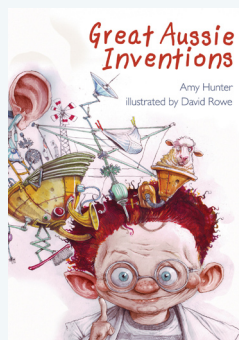
## Further Reading and Activities

- Gold Rush (interactive Flash game from the National Museum Australia)  
[http://www.nma.gov.au/education-kids/classroom\\_learning/multimedia/interactives/gold-rush](http://www.nma.gov.au/education-kids/classroom_learning/multimedia/interactives/gold-rush)
- The Australian Gold Rush  
<http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/austn-gold-rush>
- Gold!  
<http://www.sbs.com.au/gold/>

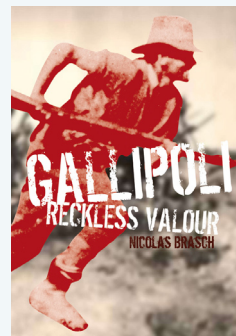
## Other great titles in the Our Stories series



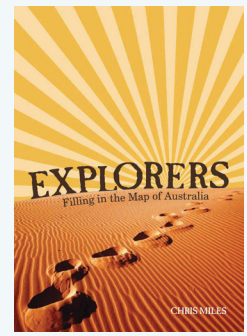
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