

Cobblestone™

A NOVEL LOOK AT HISTORY

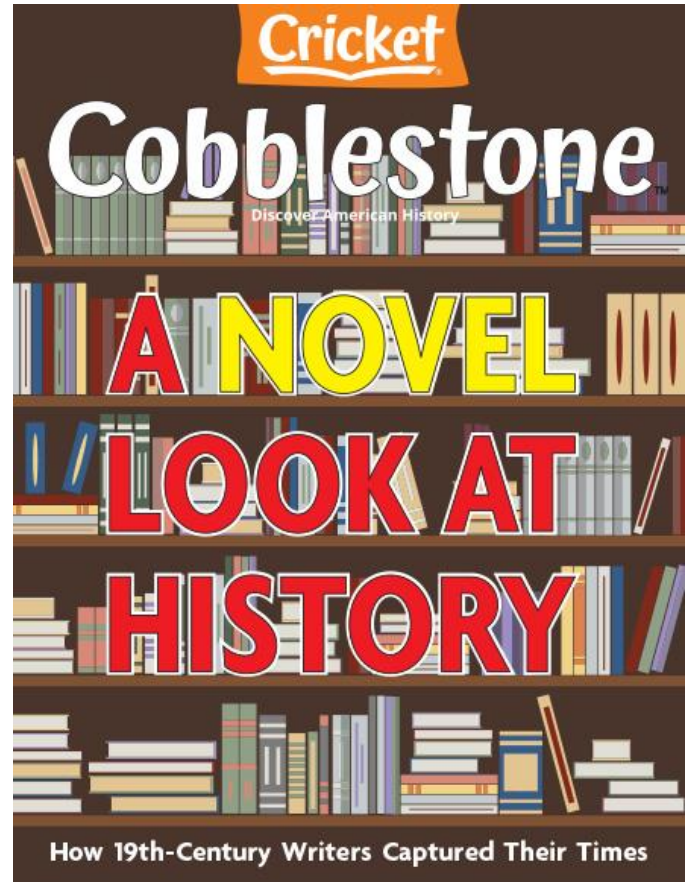
In this issue, students dive into the literary works of nineteenth-century American writers to discover how they shaped perceptions of what being an “American” meant at that time.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How did nineteenth-century writers help shape American identity?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will learn about the impact of nineteenth-century American writers on American society.
- Students will use information about a historical source—including the maker, date, and intended audience—to judge how useful it would be for studying a topic.
- Students will write persuasive arguments.
- Students will describe how people’s perspectives shaped the historical sources they created.
- Students will explain connections between historical contexts and people’s perspectives.
- Students will write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences.
- Students will analyze the impact of personal perspectives on their own historical narratives.
- Students will create a timeline to estimate the timing of historical developments that impacted American society.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core Social Studies skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

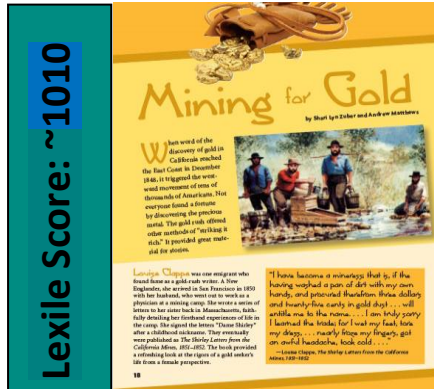
- **Mining for Gold**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1010L
- **Cooper’s Frontier Adventures**
Expository Nonfiction, ~950L
- **Great Thinkers**
Expository Nonfiction, ~850L

Cobblestone® Teacher Guide: September 2024

Mining for Gold

pp. 18–20, Expository Nonfiction

Use this article about how nineteenth-century American authors wrote about the Gold Rush to teach students to evaluate sources.



RESOURCES

Historical Source: Usefulness of Sources Organizer

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will use information about a historical source—including the maker, date, and intended audience—to judge how useful it would be for studying a topic.
- Students will write persuasive arguments.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **rigors** (p. 18) difficult and unpleasant conditions or experiences that are associated with something
- **journalism** (p. 19) the profession of writing for newspapers or magazines
- **authentic** (p. 20) something that is real or genuine

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How did nineteenth-century writers help shape American identity?

Have students close their eyes and imagine they are living during the 1850s. Explain that they can live anywhere they want and be any type of person—old or young, rich or poor, city-dweller or farmer, etc. Tell them to take an imaginary look around and note what they see, hear, etc. Finally, ask students to share ideas on what they would write about the 1850s, given their unique perspective.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Define each word with students. Then arrange students in small groups and have them practice using two or even three of the words in a single sentence. Finally, tell students to look for these words as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

After all students have read the article, use these prompts for a class discussion:

1. What particular event in history were these three writers writing about?
2. What type of sources did each author create about this time period?
3. Instruct students to pick a topic they'd like to know more about and then share their answers to this question: Which of the sources mentioned in the article would be useful for studying your topic?

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Judge Usefulness

INSTRUCT: List the following types of historical sources on the board: diaries and notes, essays and other nonfiction secondary works, personal letters, newspapers, interviews, fictional stories, autobiographies, works of historical fiction. Then pair students and ask them to use the *Usefulness of Sources Organizer* to evaluate each source's usefulness to them for the task of writing an essay on nineteenth-century writers and their impact on American culture. Reconvene as a class and review the Benefits & Challenges section of the organizer, ensuring students' answers align with these concepts.

ASSESS: Have students review the topics they chose at the end of the Read & Discuss section. Then have each student select three sources from the article that they could use to research their topics. Have students write a one-paragraph persuasive argument explaining why the sources they chose would be good ones for researching their topics.

EXTEND

English Language Arts: Ask students to write their own pretend letter home describing the Gold Rush.

Usefulness of Sources Organizer

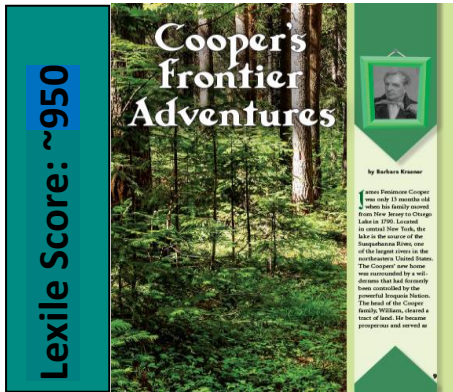
Historical Source: Every type of historical source—whether fiction or nonfiction—can be useful when conducting historical research. In this exercise, imagine you need to write an essay on nineteenth-century writers and their portrayal of the Gold Rush. Read through the types of sources and determine how useful each would be to you.

Type of Source	Benefits & Challenges of Using This Type of Source	Ways This Type of Source Can Be Useful in Writing an Essay on: Nineteenth-Century Writers and Their Portrayal of the Gold Rush
Diaries/Notes	Benefits: insight, direct quotes Challenges: inability to generalize; limited perspective	
Autobiographies	Benefits: insight, direct quotes Challenges: inability to generalize; limited perspective	
Personal Letters	Benefits: insight, direct quotes Challenges: inability to generalize; limited perspective	
Interviews	Benefits: insight, direct quotes, answers to direct questions Challenges: inability to generalize	
Essays & Other Nonfiction Secondary Works (i.e., newspapers)	Benefits: fact-oriented, often describes historical context Challenges: lack of insight or detail	
Fiction	Benefits: plot, character, and conflict help convey historical context Challenges: few facts, difficult to verify facts	

Cooper's Frontier Adventures

pp. 9–11, Expository Nonfiction

Explore what motivated nineteenth-century author James Fenimore Cooper to write about life on the early American frontier.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will describe how people's perspectives shaped the historical sources they created.
- Students will analyze the impact of personal perspectives on their own historical narratives.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **Federalist (p. 10)** a person who supported the strong central government created by the Constitution in 1789
- **Anti-Federalist (p. 10)** a person who rejected the strong central government created by the Constitution in 1789
- **American frontier (p. 11)** the region to the west of most American settlements in early nineteenth-century America, near the Appalachian Mountains

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How did nineteenth-century writers help shape American identity?

Ask students to share their perspectives on the early American wilderness and the sources or experiences that may have influenced their perspectives.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Review the vocabulary words with the class. Then ask students to use these words to make predictions about the topic of the article. If necessary, reveal the title of the article to help students guess the topic.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article. Then use these prompts for class discussion:

1. What were some of Cooper's early life experiences?
2. What ideas and topics did Cooper write about?
3. How did growing up "between civilization and the frontier" influence Cooper's later writings?

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Sources

INSTRUCT: Use the activity below to help students understand how people's perspectives can shape the way they present information.

1. Have students choose a modern-day movement or cause they feel passionate about. This might be something simple, like opening a club, something social, like ending domestic abuse, or something political/international, like fighting child poverty.
2. Have students create a simple drawing to call attention to their cause. Make sure students use only objects or symbols to communicate their ideas—no words.
3. Have students exchange drawings with a partner and instruct the partner to explain the ideas communicated through the objects or symbols in their drawing. Then instruct the owner of the drawing to explain how their beliefs about the topic influenced the objects and symbols they chose to include in their drawing.

Finally, explain that students' beliefs can influence what they write in the same way that they influenced what they drew in this activity.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to connect each of Cooper's works mentioned in the article to one of his experiences in life. Explain that they may have to infer some of these connections.

EXTEND

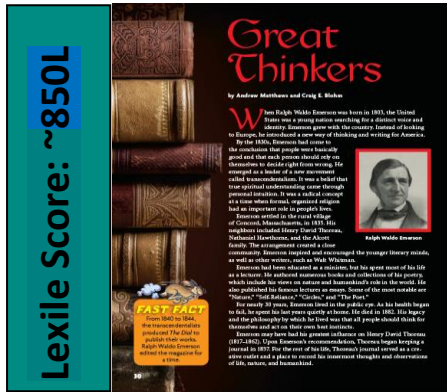
Language Arts: Have students write an essay on something that has influenced them in an important way.

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Great Thinkers

pp. 30–31, Expository Nonfiction

Invite students to dive into nineteenth-century authors Emerson and Thoreau to learn about their influence on later historical figures such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi.



ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How did nineteenth-century writers help shape American identity?

Ask students to suggest a belief or value that they think is having a significant impact on American society today. Then ask them to name a modern literary work that addresses this belief or value in some way. Example: The Twilight series addresses belief in the supernatural, which seems to be having a significant impact on American society.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Write the following sentences on the board. Then ask students to decide which words from the vocabulary list should be used to complete the sentences.

- _____ actions can sometimes generate the opposite kind of response.
- A very good friend may feel like a _____ soul.
- I trust my _____ in most situations.

READ & DISCUSS

Read the article with a partner, and then use these prompts for discussion:

1. What is transcendentalism?
2. How did the subjects of Emerson's essays reflect the values of transcendentalism?
3. How did the subjects of Thoreau's books and essays reflect the values of transcendentalism?

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Explain Connections

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that people's perspectives are often shaped by the time period in which they live. Ask pairs of students to role-play a discussion between Emerson or Thoreau as a transcendentalist, and a religious authority, such as a minister or priest. The topic of conversation might be nature, morality, or resisting authority. Then have pairs share how they think the differences between traditional religious views and transcendentalist views may have shaped Emerson's and Thoreau's writings.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to select a contemporary literary work (article, poem, short story, novel, etc.) that reflects the historical context in which it was written and explain their choice to the class.

EXTEND

Math Have students create a timeline and plot and label the dates mentioned in the article. Then have students estimate the period in which the transcendentalist movement had its greatest influence on American society.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will explain connections between historical contexts and people's perspectives.
- Students will create a timeline to estimate the timing of historical developments that impacted American society.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **intuition** (p. 30) the ability to understand something immediately, without the need for conscious reasoning
- **kindred** (p. 31) similar in kind, or related
- **nonviolent** (p. 31) using peaceful means rather than force to bring about social or political change