



# Gender Roles During the Gold Rush

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**Subject:** History

**Topic:** Integrated

**Grade Levels:** Elementary; 4

## Overview

This lesson seeks to introduce students to the California Gold Rush by examining the gender stereotypes of the time. This lesson asks students to consider how gender roles and stereotypes have changed since the Gold Rush.

**Time:** 45 minutes

## Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- Become familiar with the history of the California Gold Rush
- Understand that gender roles and stereotypes change over time
- Engage with gender roles and stereotypes

## Essential Questions:

What gender roles were perpetuated during the time of the Victorian Era? What were the role of women during this time?

Who was Charley Parkhurst, and why is he an important person to discuss when learning about gender roles in the time of the Gold Rush?

## Standards:

HSS 4.3.3. Analyze the effects of the Gold Rush on settlements, daily life, politics, and the physical environment (e.g., using biographies of John Sutter, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, Louise Clapp).

HSS 4.3.4. Study the lives of women who helped build early California

CCSS SL 4.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher- led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

## Vocabulary:

*Victorian Era:* the period of time when Queen Victoria ruled over England - this era influenced and shaped the world in many ways

*California Gold Rush:* a period of time when thousands of migrants arrived in California to mine and search for gold

*Gender roles:* a set of social and cultural beliefs or expectations about appropriate behavior for men/boys or women/girls

*Gender stereotypes:* over-generalizations about the characteristics of an entire group based on gender

**Teacher Background:** The teacher should be familiar with what gender roles and gender stereotypes are. The teacher should have knowledge of the history of the Gold Rush, and should be familiar with who Charley Parkhurst was. The teacher should be aware of how gender roles and gender stereotypes are impacted by historical context.

### **Materials:**

- Computer
- Projector
- Copies of Gender Roles [worksheet](#) for every student
- Writing utensils (colored pencils, markers, crayons, etc.)

### **Instructions:**

1. Introduction (10 mins)
  - a. Introduce the topic
  - b. Show the Gold Rush Simple History video, found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iydRkC0gMZI>
  - c. Ask students to describe what effects the Gold Rush had on California (e.g. Population boom, new jobs, immigration)
  - d. Review the definitions for gender roles and gender stereotypes (first slide of presentation). Ask students to consider several questions:
    - i. What are some examples of gender roles or gender stereotypes that you can think of?
    - ii. Do you think gender roles and stereotypes today are different than they were in the past?
  - e. Explain to students that gender roles and gender stereotypes have changed over time, and that during the Gold Rush, gender roles and gender stereotypes were different from what they look like today.
2. Presentation (20 mins)
  - a. Show the [“Gender Roles During the California Gold Rush”](#) presentation, found at
3. Conclusion (15 mins)
  - a. Pass out a copy of the gender roles worksheet to every student and ask them to use the knowledge they learned from the presentation to artistically

represent what they think gender roles looked like in the past. Explain to students that they should also consider what has changed now, and to draw what they believe gender roles look like now, and how they could look in the future if we challenge gender stereotypes today.

- b. Encourage students to talk through their ideas with other students while they draw and to discuss with each other what they have drawn.

**Assessment Ideas:** Have students read *Riding Freedom* about Charley Parkhurst (available for purchase at: <https://www.amazon.com/Riding-Freedom-Pam-Munoz-Ryan/dp/0439087961>) and write a book report or a letter from Charley to a friend from Vermont describing his life in California.

### **Relevant Resources:**

"Gold Rush Stories of Women Pioneers." *The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco*, San Francisco Chronicle , 9 Sept. 1900, [www.sfmuseum.org/hist5/foremoms.html](http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist5/foremoms.html).

Hughes, Kathryn. "Gender Roles in the 19th Century." *The British Library*, The British Library, 13 Feb. 2014, [www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gender-roles-in-the-19th-century](http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gender-roles-in-the-19th-century).

Marsh, Jan. "Gender Roles in the 19th Century." *Victoria & Albert Museum*, The British Library, 13 Feb. 2014, [www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gender-roles-in-the-19th-century](http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gender-roles-in-the-19th-century).

Taniguchi, Nancy J. "Weaving a Different World: Women and the California Gold Rush." *California History*, vol. 79, no. 2, 2000, pp. 141-168., [www.csus.edu/al/cche/gold-rush/images/taniguchi.pdf](http://www.csus.edu/al/cche/gold-rush/images/taniguchi.pdf).

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