## Instructional Unit Title: Back in the Day... Primary Sources Come Alive Colorado Gold Rush

Drama and Theatre Arts

4th Grade

The teacher may have students brainstorm the ways in which people get news (today) as a way to help students begin considering how people in the past (i.e., before television and the internet) heard about "current events."

The teacher may bring in (historical) examples/snippets of living newspapers (scripts) and newsreels to introduce the idea of a "news play" so students can examine how drama/theatre can communicate important news events.

The teacher may utilize contemporary news stories as the basis for improvisational pieces so students can experiment with performances that reflect/capture different perspectives on an issue/event.

The teacher may introduce the basis for a news play (the timeline, people, conflict, and outcomes of the Colorado gold rush) that will enable students to comprehend the significance of this event in (Colorado and US) history.

The teacher may use primary and secondary sources as the bases for students to explore through improvisational games (e.g., improvisational interviews) multiple perspectives on the gold rush (miners and their families).



The teacher may bring in primary source visuals (e.g. photos of miners, miners' families) to help students consider the ways in which media and/or tableaux can help enhance the story and illuminate characters' perspective(s) in a dramatic performance.

The teacher may revisit the (gold rush) timeline and "characters" so that students can begin considering which perspectives can best convey the story of the conflict and its outcomes in a dramatic performance.

The teacher may facilitate discussions about the differences between people's actual experiences vs. portrayals of the experience so that students may critically examine the ways in which actors' beliefs/opinions can (intentionally or unintentionally) influence performance choices.

The teacher may use the sources explored thus far to allow students to discuss and analyze the historical "characters" that best illustrate aspects of the conflict and best represent multiple perspectives (around the discovery and mining of gold in Colorado).

The teacher may use primary and secondary sources as the bases for students to explore through improvisational games (e.g., improvisational interviews) multiple perspectives on the gold rush (Native Americans, tribal representatives).



The teacher may provide contemporary news stories (about Colorado gold mining) so students can analyze the ways in which historical events can still resonate today.

The teacher may bring in examples of audience participation techniques so students can analyze and consider the best ways to get feedback on the impact of a news play performance.

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(Post Performance Assessment)
The teacher may revisit the bases
of the news play (texts) and the
performance itself so students
can reflect on the strengths and
limitations of dramatic
renderings of history.



PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: You have been hired by a local historical agency to commemorate the Colorado gold rush by creating a news play designed to inform people (of the time) about the event. Your play will be a sequence of monologues designed to present the diversity of perspectives. That is, as a news play, you will seek to authentically document the beliefs, actions, and experiences of the miners, miners' families, tribal representatives, and/or others involved in or affected by the rush. In addition to the historical accuracy and focus, however, your play should also emphasize the significance of the gold rush; it should connect mining goals, processes, and outcomes with contemporary audiences.

This unit was authored by a team of Colorado educators. The unit is intended to support teachers, schools, and districts as they make their own local decisions around the best instructional plans and practices for all students. To see the entire instructional unit sample with possible learning experiences, resources, differentiation, and assessments visit <a href="http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/instructionalunitsamples.">http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/instructionalunitsamples.</a>