**Writing About Texts: Practice with Constructing Response Questions – Sample “Gold Rush”**

Directions: Read the passage on the left.  Don't forget to warm it up!  Read the question carefully.  Highlight the key words in the question that are telling you what you need to write about.  Use the highlighter to locate evidence from the text to use in your answer.  Use words from the question in your first sentence.  Write your answer in several sentences and include evidence from the text.  Reread to make sure you answered the whole question.

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| Westward Expansion  The California Gold Rush  The year was 1848. John A. Sutter was building a new sawmill in Coloma, near Sacramento, California. The area was mostly wilderness. He never expected the treasure that the unexplored land held. In January 1848, the chief builder of the sawmill, found Sutter one rainy afternoon. The chief made him lock all of the doors to his office. Then, in a secret voice, the chief told Sutter about a discovery that would change the entire West Coast of the United States. He had discovered gold in the stream near the sawmill.  Sutter asked all of his workers to keep the news a secret for just 6 weeks. But it was hopeless. The news spread like wildfire.1 Everyone wanted some gold. The American West was advertised all over again as a land full of promise and wealth. Soon accounts of gold were greatly exaggerated. In early 1849 the editor of the New York Tribune wrote: “Fortune lies upon the surface of the earth as plentiful as the mud in our streets.” People had gold fever.  Tens of thousands of men traveled to the west coast to seek their fortune.  These men were nicknamed 49’ers. High in his hopes, one  man called California, “a land of glittering dreams.”  However, life was not always rosy for the miners. Their day-to-day life was very difficult. Most miners never found the slightest trace of gold, much less enough to strike it rich. Still, the vast California countryside contained endless possibility. This sense of possibility was the allure of the American West.  Adapted from readworks.org |  | **Question** |
| What inference can be made about the author’s message about the Gold Rush? Use details from the text to support your answer. |
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| The California Goldrush was all about men wanting gold. | The author’s message in this passage is that the Gold Rush was hard for the men. Thousands of men came to look for gold. It was difficult. | The author’s message in this passage is that even though the Goldrush brought thousands of men to California, the possibility of finding gold wasn’t as easy as it sounded. The accounts of gold were exaggerated. Life was difficult. Many miners never even found any gold. The hope for finding gold was what brought them to the west, but their dreams often didn’t come true. |