



Gold Rush - Teacher Notes

A fun, but definitely outdoor activity, for warmer months is to get students panning for gold. You can paint some small rocks gold and scatter them in a large tray of sand or even a sand table if you have one available. Add some water to simulate a river and give the students some round shallow dishes (even plastic plates with sloped sides would work) to use as pans.

The action of panning can be a little tricky so it should be demonstrated first and it's likely that students will get wet but they'll certainly have lots of fun! To start panning, students scoop their pans into the sand at the bottom of the tray, collecting a small amount. They then shake their pans as the 'gold' is dense and this shaking will cause it to sink to the bottom of the pan. Student tip the pan forward at an angle of about 40° and dip the pan in and out of the water a few times. This will remove some of the sand. Using a swirling motion and keeping a little bit of water in the pan, if they have picked up any of the gold pebbles, they should now start to see them in the bottom of their pan. It may take several attempts to find 'gold' depending on how many pebbles you have added.



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