

### Common Core abbreviations used in this guide:

RL—Reading: Literature  
RI—Reading: Informational Text  
W—Writing  
L—Language  
SL—Speaking & Listening  
RF—Reading: Foundational Skills  
RH—Literacy in History/Social Studies  
M EE—Math: Expressions & Equations

For the complete Common Core State Standards, visit [www.corestandards.org/the-standards](http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards).

★ “A remarkable collection of documents paints a picture of the Klondike gold rush in vivid detail. . . . A memorable adventure, told with great immediacy.”

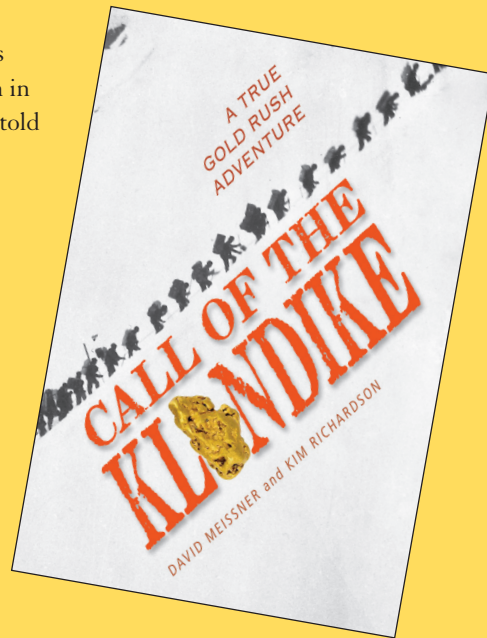
—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

### Call of the Klondike A True Gold Rush Adventure

By David Meissner and  
Kim Richardson

978-1-59078-823-3

Ages 9 and up  
Grades 4 and up  
\$16.95



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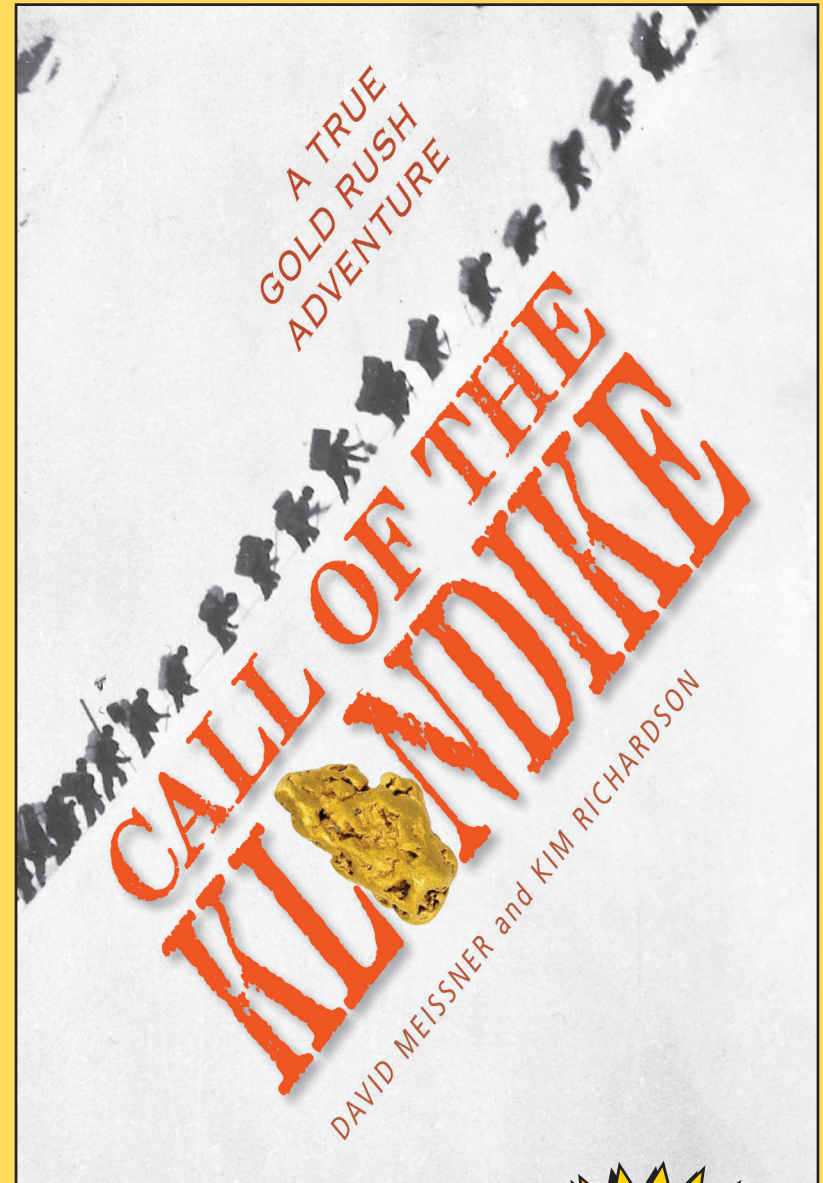
Highlights

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This guide was created by Clifford Wohl, Educational Consultant.

# Educator's Guide



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Highlights





**I**n his author's note for *Call of the Klondike*, David Meissner tells us how the book began: "One night . . . my friend Kim Richardson told me about a bag full of old letters, telegrams, and newspaper articles that a family member had passed down to him. They had been written by his relative, Stanley Pearce, who had been on the front lines of the Klondike gold rush" (page 156).

The things in that bag take center stage in this personal history, a true adventure story that not only relates the events of the Klondike Stampede (1897–1900), but also makes them immediate and real, giving middle-school students a genuine sense of "being there." The primary documents—letters, journal entries, and photographs—underline the fact that history is the story of people (often everyday people), which makes this book a standout.

This educator guide offers activities and discussion questions that extend *Call of the Klondike* into a broad range of curriculum areas: history, of course; language arts (writing, character development, speech/performance, literature); reading; math; critical thinking; and art.

The activities and discussion questions also link the book to Common Core State Standards. These standards are noted in bold at the end of each activity and are described at the end of the guide.

## Before Reading

### Language Arts; Speech/Performance; Art

On page 5, the authors include an excerpt from "The Spell of the Yukon," a narrative poem by Robert W. Service, to help introduce the setting and themes of *Call of the Klondike*.

Robert Service is known as the "Bard of the Yukon." Discuss the meaning of that term. Ask the class what they think the rest of poem will reveal. Then go to the Poetry Foundation's website and read the entire poem: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/175983>. [**RL 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 6.6**]

Next, divide the class into nine groups, assigning each a stanza, and engage them in a choral interpretive reading of the poem. The groups should practice their stanzas and become familiar with the rhyme scheme, rhythm, and meaning. Be sure they take note of their stanza's sentiment, figurative language, and imagery. [**RF 5.4b**]

Have each group create a PowerPoint presentation to show during their portion of the reading, incorporating text and images. Students may find the following websites helpful in selecting photographs: <http://www.nps.gov/klgo/photosmultimedia/photogallery.htm>, <http://dsc.discovery.com/tv-shows/gold-rush/photos/klondike-gold-rush-pictures.htm> [**SL 5.1, 5.5, 6.1, 6.5**]

Perform the poem for other classes and/or your students' parents.

To read more poems by Robert W. Service from the collection *The Spell of the Yukon and Other Verses*, visit <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/207/207-h/207-h.htm>.

## While Reading

### Reading: Vocabulary

There are terms and words used in the book that may be unfamiliar to your students, such as *grub stake*, *stampeder*, and *mutton*. Have students keep a glossary of new vocabulary words and their meanings. [**RI 5.4, 6.4; L 5.4c, 6.4c**]

### Language Arts: Character; Reading for Details

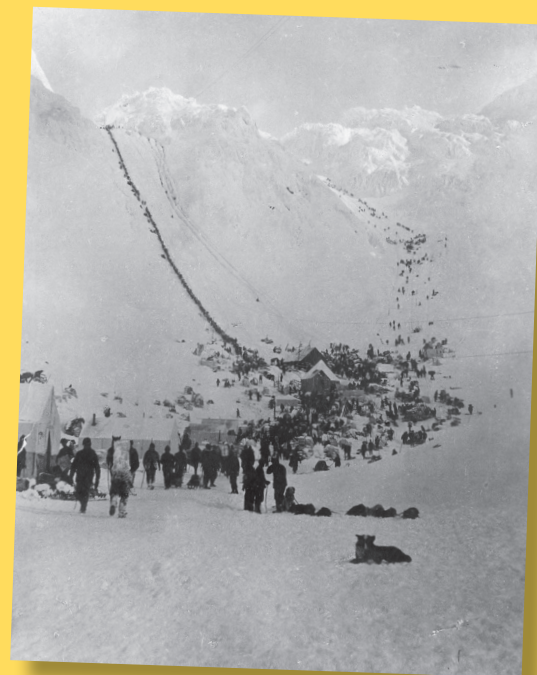
What do your students know about Stanley Pearce and Marshall Bond, the two stampedeers whose story we read in *Call of the Klondike*? Have your students contribute to a classroom list of character traits and background information about the two men (for example, students may note that both men were highly educated, were from wealthy families, and possessed mining experience). Ask them to cite information from the text for each quality they add to the list. When the list is complete, have the class talk about which traits and experiences they think make it likely that Pearce and Bond will succeed. Are there qualities about either man that make some of your students conclude that they will fail? [**RI 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3; W 5.9a**]

Do your students think Pearce and Bond are like most of the stampedeers who went to the Yukon? Is finding gold the only thing they are after? Students should cite specifics in the text to back up their opinions. If you need a place to begin, consider Stanley Pearce's letter on page 46.

### Math; Economics

The Klondike gold rush began when "sixty-eight rugged miners . . . brought back an astounding four thousand pounds of gold" (page 14). That gold was valued at one million dollars. In today's market, one million dollars may not sound like a lot, but back in 1897 it was a great deal of money.

Have your class calculate what four thousand pounds of gold is worth in today's market. Brainstorm with your students to decide what they will need to know to make this calculation. Work with them to create an equation to solve the problem. [**M 6 EE.A.1, M 6 EE.A.2**]

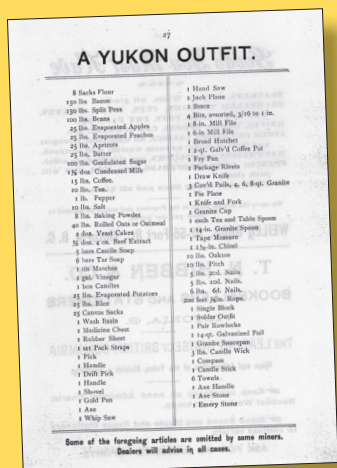




## Research; Discussion

As reported in the *Denver Republican*, Stanley Pearce arranged to act as a correspondent for the paper during his journey to and stay in the Klondike: “Republican readers may be assured of getting the first and reliable news from the new Eldorado . . .” (page 27).

Have your students research and write about the reference to Eldorado. How was the Klondike the new Eldorado? Their work should include the history of Eldorado and how it is used as a metaphor. Does it foreshadow future events? What books have they read, TV shows or movies have they seen, or video games have they played that parallel the search for Eldorado? Do they know of other myths that have a similarity to Eldorado? If your students were to set a modern-day Eldorado, what would it be? Would it exist physically or virtually? One connection you might discuss with students is the relationship between the Klondike gold rush, the dream of Eldorado, and modern-day lotteries. [URL 5.8; RI 5.9; SL 5.4, 6.2; W 5.1, 5.7, 5.8, 6.1, 6.7, 6.8; RH 6.7]



*Reading: Vocabulary; Social Studies: History; Math: Discussion*

On page 15, you will find a list of items that stampedeers like Stanley and Marshall would have purchased for their trip to the Klondike. Your students should recognize many of the items, but not all. For example, this list suggests ten pounds of oakum, one single block, and a fourteen-inch granite spoon. What are these used for?

Divide the class into teams. Each team must go through the list and research the use of each item. Some food items will be easy to research, while some of the non-food items will be more difficult. Allow

each team to work for about thirty minutes. Award points for correct answers: one point for a correct food answer, and two points for a non-food answer. How many items were students able to identify?

If your students were to go on a similar adventure today, what would they bring? Each team should come up with their own list for their modern-day adventure. Set a budget for the teams. They should keep in mind that they will have to carry everything on their lists.

With a nod to modern times, you should allow your students to bring one item of technological advancement. Which do the students think will be most useful in the Klondike? Is it GPS, access to Google Earth, e-mail, or clothing made of lightweight, high-efficient fabric?

Have the students evaluate each other's lists to determine which items are most and least useful. [W 5.1, 5.7, 6.1, 6.7; SL 5.1, 6.1, 6.3; L 5.4c, 6.4c]

## Social Studies: History; Research

The story of *Call of the Klondike* began on July 17, 1897 for Stanley Pearce and Marshall Bond. But the story of the discovery of gold in the Klondike began a year earlier on August 16, 1896. Have students research and then discuss the circumstances of that discovery. Their findings should include but not be limited to: who found gold; who staked the first claim and why it wasn't the original discovery; and why it took an entire year for the rest of the world to learn about the discovery.

[RI 5.1, 5.6, 6.1; SL 5.1, 5.3, 6.1; W 5.7, 6.7]

*Language Arts: Writing; Critical Thinking*

Your students know how to express themselves in 140 characters on Twitter, but can they do the same in just six words? An activity from the National Writing Project demands just that: the six-word memoir.

The six-word memoir teaches critical thinking and requires students to choose words precisely. Format of the memoirs is flexible: the words can make up a sentence or simply be a group of words that together express a thought or idea. To get some practice, your students should write six-word memoirs for themselves. Their memoirs could be about what they are thinking now or what their hopes and aspirations are. Then they will be more comfortable writing about the people in *Call of the Klondike*. After reading the book, your students should write six-word memoirs for Stanley Pearce, Marshall Bond, Jack London, and for unnamed stampeders: one who struck it rich and one who did not fare well in his search for gold.

The memoirs can be used as captions to pictures or superimposed on images that are reflected by the memoir. [W 5.3, 5.4; RI 6.9]

*Language Arts: Literature*

The author Jack London spent time in Dawson City with Pearce and Bond. Besides his classic story, *The Call of the Wild*, London wrote short stories of the north. The most famous is *To Build a Fire*. Originally published for children on May 29, 1902, in the magazine *Youth's Companion*, London later realized there was a larger story, so he rewrote it and it was published in *The Century* magazine (volume 76) in August 1908. With your students, read and compare the two versions. You can find them both at <http://www.jacklondons.net/buildafire.html>.

You can view and discuss a short film adaptation of Jack London's *To Build a Fire*, narrated by Orson Welles, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBB06RLmCcU>.  
[RL 5.9, 6.7, 6.9; RI 5.6, 6.6, 6.7]

*Language Arts: Writing*

Stanley Pearce and Marshall Bond's letters took weeks, if not months, to reach their parents back home. Today, messages are transmitted instantly through e-mail, blogs, Facebook, and Twitter.

Have your students place themselves on Pearce and Bond's team in their quest for gold. Their goal will be to make daily reports using snail mail and modern-day media.

Divide the class into three expedition groups. Each group will transmit reports using different media. If you do not already have a class e-mail list, create one.

**Group 1** will write traditional letters twice per week to their parents or friends back home.

**Group 2** will send their messages as e-mail—again, twice per week.

**Group 3** will write blogs chronicling the adventure. (A blog is basically a journal available over the Internet.) For your purposes, the blogs may be sent as e-mail rather than be posted more broadly on the Internet. Students should write blog entries twice per week.

Have all of your students send out daily Twitter messages—tweets—to their classmates. (Of course, all messaging should go through you and then be retransmitted to the students.)

At the end of each week, the students should evaluate the differences in these communication methods. Which transmitted the most information; which conveyed feelings best; which provided a global view most effectively?  
[W 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.10, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.10; SL 5.1, 5.3, 6.1, 6.3]

### Visual Art/Photojournalism

Besides Pearce and Bond's journal entries, letters, maps, and newspaper articles, there are dozens of photographs used in *Call of the Klondike*. Photographers Frank LaRoche and Eric A. Kegg went to the Klondike to visually chronicle the gold rush. Their photographs tell the story where words were not enough. One striking example is the photograph of dead and dying horses on the White Pass Trail (pages 48–49). On page 51, a photograph captures a line of stampedeers trudging up the mighty Chilkoot Pass. Have students locate their favorite photographs in the book and discuss what makes them so compelling.

Your students can become photojournalists, too, and create their own photo essays. Each photo essay should be of a single theme, a specific emotion, location, or object.  
[W 5.2, 5.3, 5.8, 6.2, 6.3, 6.8; RH 6.1]

### Language Arts: Writing; Cooperative Learning

Divide students into three groups to complete projects they can share with the class.

**For Group 1**, have students combine talents to create a scrapbook about Pearce and Bond's adventure. They can be as creative as they like. For example, they can take photographs of each other wearing Klondike gear set against painted backdrops of the terrain. They can write up articles for the *Klondike Nugget* to paste into their collections. When the scrapbook is complete, it should be presented to their classmates and left in a spot where the other groups can look through it.  
[W 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.8, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.8]

**For Group 2**, have students compare and contrast the book with videos of the Klondike gold rush. There are many videos available, including:

*National Film Board of Canada: "City of Gold,"* written and narrated by Pierre Berton. [http://www.nfb.ca/film/city\\_of\\_gold/](http://www.nfb.ca/film/city_of_gold/)

*The Klondike Gold Rush: Photographs from 1896–98*, by Graham Wilson. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wotxPTqKdCo>

You can also go to YouTube and search for videos of the Klondike gold rush. Assign students to view a couple of the videos you select. Then they should compare the videos to the story of Stanley Pearce and Marshall Bond and report to the class.

[RI 5.6, 5.9, 6.6; SL 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 6.1, 6.5]

**For Group 3**, ask students to look carefully at the photograph on pages 42–43 showing a "traffic jam" on the White Pass Trail. Have them describe details. Does anyone notice that there are no women in the photograph? Have the class leaf through other photographs in the book. Do they notice any women? Often overlooked, women went to the Klondike for the same reasons as men. Have this group read an article about women of the Klondike: [http://www.explorenorth.com/library/yafeatures/klondike\\_women.html](http://www.explorenorth.com/library/yafeatures/klondike_women.html). Then, students should report to their classmates on what they learned. [RI 5.7, 6.7; W 5.7, 6.7; SL 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 6.1, 6.5]

## After Reading

### Discussion Questions

Why were Stanley Pearce and Marshall Bond so eager to go to the Klondike?

[RI 5.2, 6.2]

What were the social and economic circumstances in the United States that prompted so many people from all walks of life to stop what they were doing and trek to the Klondike in search of gold? [RI 5.9]

On July 17, 1897, Marshall Bond sent a telegram to Stanley Pearce's father that included the line: "Reasonable, accessible and no hardships a man need fear" (page 18). And in a letter, he wrote, "I do not anticipate any hardships that we shall not . . . be able to overcome" (page 32). Was he correct in his estimation of the situation? [RI 5.2, 6.2]

Did Pearce and Bond look upon their adventure as a success or as a failure? How do your students view it? [RI 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3]

The Klondike gold rush ended almost as quickly as it began and left casualties in its wake. Thousands of horses died, and stampedeers died in shipwrecks, from illnesses and accidents, or were murdered. But perhaps a greater tragedy is the effect it had on the land and the native peoples of the Yukon. Have your students discuss the plight of those Native Americans and the long-term effects of the gold rush that are still evident today. Is there a lesson to be learned? If the gold rush were to happen today, would the result be the same? [W 5.1, 6.1; SL 5.1, 5.4, 6.1, 6.4]

