

**SECRET HOMEWORK!!! SSSSHHHHHHHH!!!!**  
**ADULT HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT – 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As part of the Gold Rush Trip to Coloma, each student will be receiving two surprise letters from home. These letters should be addressed to your child, be handwritten, and made to look old: written on parchment paper, a paper bag, maybe burnt around the edges, crumpled up, coffee stains, ink blots, smudges of dirt, tied and rolled with a string, wax stamp closure...be creative!

Please include the following:

1. Ask your child to tell you about their travels west. Which route did they take? Did they travel across the country by wagon train, around South America by ship, or through Panama (no canal back in 1849!) How was the journey? What kinds of adventures/challenges did they face along the way?
2. Ask your child what life is like in their new Gold Rush town (Coloma). What are the temperatures and landscapes like? Ask them what kind of work they have found or are doing. Examples might include: How's the gold panning comin' along? Have you found work at the Blacksmith shop? Still baking those great pies? How is the sewing business?
3. Next, pretend you are writing from the East coast, or Missouri, where the trip/trails West began. Tell them about things that have happened since their departure. Examples might include: the cow had a calf, Aunt Sue had another baby, the barn caught fire, the crops failed/were plenty, etc.

Students will enjoy these letters from “home.” It is crucial that EVERY child receives these letters, so please take your homework seriously. We will have large envelopes ready, with class lists, kept in the office where Mrs. Devine will check the letters off as they come in. PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR CHILD’S NAME AND THEIR TEACHER’S NAME ON THE FRONT OF YOUR LETTER. **Drop them off in the OFFICE** as they are completed. DO NOT BRING THEM INTO THE CLASSROOM! They are due **no later than Thursday, November 9th.**

Thanks so much!

## Sample Gold Rush Secret Letter

(Please **handwrite** and use old looking paper. Soaking white paper in coffee or tea will give the paper a rustic look.)

Dear Sam:

It's been a very cold and rainy autumn on the farm, and we are missing you terribly. Your Pa and I hope that you are finding life in California warm and prosperous.

Pa and I went to church on Sunday and sat next to old Mrs. Smitty and her daughter, Bella. They wanted us to wish you the best of luck in the mines. Bella made a special point to ask about you. Preacher Zander wanted to make sure that you are still doing your nightly reading.

The storm the other night took us by surprise. We lost two cows in the rising of the water, but the rest of the herd is fine. Your horse, Blue, had a colt the other day and she is the spitting image of her mother. We hope that you will be able to ride her when you return back home to us in the next year or so.

Your sister, Arabella, is learning how to read and write. She is working hard in school and has read from her primer book. She is a good student, but is bothered by her neighbor in school, John Martin. We are hoping that her teacher speaks to him so she can concentrate more.

Pa, Arabella, and I wish you the best, son. We hope that you are well and that the gold in your pocket gets heavier by the day.

Blessings to you,

Mother