

Week 3

Read **pages 49-72** this week.

Pre-Guided Reading

We are learning to understand what we read.

Read through the text and synthesize key information. Highlight vocabulary that you may be unsure of.

Shopping and housework

Most diggers brought some supplies of food with them to the diggings. They bought what they could from local stores when these ran out. If supplies were not available, they sent away to the nearest town for them.

General stores

Some people quickly realised they could make more money by setting up shop than from digging for gold. They opened general stores that sold everything. Huge sacks of flour and sugar were stacked on the floor, shelves were filled with packets of tea, sacks of coffee beans, tins of sardines, jars of pickles and a variety of other food items. Panning dishes, cradles, picks and shovels hung from the rafters.

Canned food

At the time of the Western Australian gold rushes, there were improvements in canning technology. This meant a wider range of tinned foods was available and diggers had far more choice.

Writing to his parents in 1896, Campbell Deland described the 'enormous variety' sold in local stores:

Plum puddings, custards, roly-poly, cauliflower, cabbage, turnips, celery, beans, asparagus, boiled mutton, beef, pork ... ox-head, ox-cheek ... in fact any dish you can imagine is done up in tins & only needs warming.

(*roly-poly* – a steamed pudding made with jam)

This store, which is recreated at Sovereign Hill in Ballarat, Victoria, stood on Main Road, Ballarat.

One of the largest stores at the Ballarat diggings

Golden stories

The Clendinning's general store

Martha Clendinning and her sister went with their husbands to the Ballarat diggings. In 1854 they opened a store selling tea, coffee, sugar, candles, matches, tobacco, jams and bottled fruits. Among their most successful items were baby clothes. As Martha Clendinning later wrote:

... these had never appeared on any goldfield before ... Those [women] who possessed babies managed by hook or by crook, in many cases, to obtain a share of their husband's gold, and visited our store for some of the precious articles. Our investment proved a paying one, we soon had to send to Melbourne for a further supply.



Buying and selling

In the early years of the gold rushes, most diggers bought and sold things using gold rather than coins and notes. On the Victorian diggings in 1852, the digger Edward Snell wrote in his diary that he had:

Sold the cart for 10 ozs of gold and Charley the horse for 10 1/2 ozs.

(*ozs* – ounces is a unit of mass. 10 ounces equals 283 grams)

'Ready Reckoners'

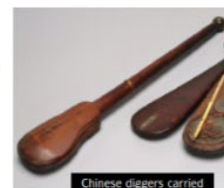
Most diggers carried around little books called 'Ready Reckoners' that showed the value of specific amounts of gold. Every shop had gold scales and there were lots of stories about the tricks used by shopkeepers to cheat diggers.

Ellen Clacy accompanied her brother to the Victorian diggings in 1852 and described some of these tricks:

[One] mode of cheating is to have glass pans resting on a piece of green baize; under this baize, and beneath the pan which holds the weights, is a wetted sponge, which causes that pan to adhere to the baize and consequently it requires more gold to make it level ... A common practice still is for examiners of gold dust to cultivate long finger-nails, and, in drawing the fingers about it, gather some up.

(*baize* – a soft wool fabric like felt)

Diggers could convert their gold dust into currency at local banks or gold traders, but the price offered was usually less than in cities such as Sydney and Melbourne. Most preferred to send their gold by the government escort to the nearest major town.



Chinese diggers carried scales like these to weigh their gold



This digger (pictured on the left) keeps a wary eye on the gold buyer as he weighs up his gold to pay for the goods the digger has just bought

Post Guided Reading

By drawing, compare the different landscapes that Alf and his mother Elizabeth saw of travelling to Ballarat and when arriving to Ballarat.

Vocabulary

pitted	Find and write excerpt	Draw a picture to represent the word
mound	Find and write excerpt	Draw a picture to represent the word
berserk	Find and write excerpt	Draw a picture to represent the word
hocks	Find and write excerpt	Draw a picture to represent the word
torrents	Find and write excerpt	Draw a picture to represent the word
sabbath	Find and write excerpt	Draw a picture to represent the word