

Teacher Guide

Grades 5–6

Jason's Gold

Will Hobbs

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JASON'S GOLD

by
Will Hobbs

Teacher Guide

Written by
Sammie Underwood

Note

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Please note: Parts of this novel may contain descriptions of violence. Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with them.

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Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Predictions, inferences,
supporting judgments,
identifying attributes,
drawing conclusions

Critical Thinking

Research, evaluating,
brainstorming, analysis,
compare/contrast

Literary Elements

Character analysis, genre,
dialogue, figurative language,
story map

Vocabulary

Dictionary use, definitions,
synonyms, antonyms, parts of
speech

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, joke telling,
movie trailers

Writing

Report, essay, letter,
short biography

Across the Curriculum

Geography—mapping;
Mythology—Jason and the
Golden Fleece, Charon;
History—Klondike gold rush,
time line, “Yellow Legs,” blue
laws; Culture—Tlingit Indians;
Cooking—rose hip tea, berry
bannock; Science—midnight
sun; Art—poster, advertisement;
Health—gangrene

Chapters One–Five

After his father's death, 15-year-old Jason Hawthorn travels from his home in Seattle to New York City to prove his independence to his older brothers. When Jason hears that gold has been discovered in the Klondike, he starts back to Seattle. Jason plans to use his inheritance and part of each of his brothers' inheritances to journey to the Klondike, but then he discovers that his brothers have gone ahead of him with all the money. A determined Jason stows away on a steamer bound for Alaska. He meets a young man named Frank "Yid" Barker, who introduces him to wealthy Captain Smith. Jason later discovers that the captain and his associates' wealth stems from a pickpocket operation.

Vocabulary

prospectors
obliged
resigned
hesitant
creased
crouching
creased
calculations
ferocious
blurry
presumed
depart
mercy
generous

Discussion Questions

1. What is important about the date July 17, 1897? (*This was the date that a gold ship arrived in Seattle with two tons of gold from the Klondike. It marks the beginning of the Klondike gold rush.*)
 2. For what mythological character is Jason named? From what you know about Jason, which is more appropriate? Support your opinion with evidence from the novel. (*Jason is named after the Greek mythological hero Jason, leader of the Argonauts, who goes in search of the Golden Fleece. Answers will vary. Suggestion: Yes, because Jason loves adventure, is eager to take on challenges, and is going after treasure.*)
 3. What were Jason's original plans? How did they change, and what does Jason decide to do? (*Jason had planned to travel from Seattle to New York to live there for a year, and then return home. After living in New York for ten months, Jason hears about the gold discovery in the Klondike and decides to return to Seattle early so he can head to the Klondike and find his fortune.*)
4. How do people in Seattle react to the Klondike gold discovery? What is the reaction in other places? (*Seattle is a hive of activity as people prepare to leave. The mayor of Seattle resigns and opens a steamship company to take people north. People leave their jobs, and the streetcars stop running. All day and into the night people clog the streets and huge piles of supplies are strewn everywhere. Confusion and excitement reign. Each day, people from all over the United States and Canada are heading west. Similar exciting discoveries are happening all over the world.*)
5. What supplies does the old man on the train tell Jason he will need? How much does Jason estimate the trip will cost? How will he get the funds? (*The old man tells Jason he will need a thousand pounds of food, clothing, a gold pan, a pick and shovel, saw, and nails, oakum, and a "Klondike stove." Jason estimates he will need about \$1,000. He plans to use the \$500 his father left him and borrow \$250 from each of his brothers' inheritances.*)
6. Describe conditions in the cannery where Jason used to work. How does Jason's work experience influence his decisions now? (*Working at the cannery was dangerous. Kids often lost limbs and fingers. Jason was underpaid and worked long hours, six days a week in the foul-smelling factory. Jason's experience working in the cannery has helped him form a goal—to work for himself and strike it rich. Jason's previous work experience motivates him to make a big change.*)

7. Describe each of Jason's brothers, and compare them to Jason. (*Abraham, the oldest, is serious, cautious, and quiet. He is tall and lanky with a mustache and a slight limp. Ethan has dark, curly hair and a full beard. He has impish green eyes and a hearty laugh. He is a joker, is strong, but always defers to Abraham in matters of judgment. Jason's brothers stick together and are prudent in their decisions. In contrast, Jason is independent, stubborn, and impetuous. Like his brothers, he is a hard worker and unafraid of a challenge.*)
8. What does Jason find out at Mrs. Beal's that takes "the wind... out of his sails" (p. 20)? Why is Jason surprised at this turn of events, and how does he feel? (*Jason's brothers have gone ahead of him to the Klondike. They have used all the money, including his inheritance. Jason is surprised that his practical, cautious brother would undertake such an adventurous endeavor. Answers will vary, but Jason most likely feels disappointed, left out, and let down.*)
9. What is Jason's new plan? How does he start off on his journey, and what supplies does he have? Do you think Jason's plan is practical? (*Jason plans to catch up with his brothers. He stows away on the Yakima—a steamship heading to Alaska. He has a trunk full of clothes, some cheese and bread, his bedroll, and a book. Answers will vary. Some students might think Jason's plan is practical since Jason's brothers are only three days ahead and Jason is traveling lighter. He could catch up with them. Others may think Jason's plan is impractical since he has no alternate plan in the event that he does not catch up with his brothers.*)
10. Who finds Jason hiding on the ship? What evidence makes you think this person is not a "Klondiker," and what is Jason's impression of him? (*Frank "Kid" Barker finds Jason. Unlike the rest of the Klondikers aboard the ship, Kid Barker is wearing an expensive suit and a derby hat and has a jackknife. He has a pretty, young-looking face with a scar over his eye and speaks with a fake British accent. He does not seem to be in any rush to reach the Klondike. Jason decides Kid Barker is a "sleazy fellow" and does not trust him.*)
11. What does Jason find out about Kid Barker and his associates? What do they want Jason to do in Seattle? What is Jason's response to their request, and what does this say about Jason? (*Jason finds out that Kid Barker and his associates are pickpockets. They have a system where Kid Barker finds out who is carrying a lot of money and one of the others steals it. Kid Barker's group wants Jason to help them continue stealing when they reach the Klondike. Jason vehemently refuses Kid's request, saying his father taught him about honor. This tells the reader that Jason is a good person who wants to do the right thing. He is not a thief.*)
12. **Prediction:** How do you think Barker will make Jason regret his decision?

Supplementary Activities

1. **Character Analysis:** Begin the Character Attribute Web on page 27 of this guide.
2. **Geography:** Use the Gold Rush Map on page 28 of this guide to begin tracing Jason's journey. Start in Seattle, and continue this activity as you read the novel and find out Jason's route. (Stops so far on Jason's journey should include Seattle, Vancouver Island [Canada], and Victoria [Canada].)
3. **Mythology:** Read the Greek myth "Jason and the Golden Fleece." Can you find any similarities between Jason of the Argonauts and Jason Hawthorn? Make a list of similarities and differences between the two, and continue adding to this list as you read the novel and find out more about Jason Hawthorn.

Word Map

Definition

Synonym

Antonym

Vocabulary Word

Pronunciation

Part of Speech

Sentence

Gold Rush Map

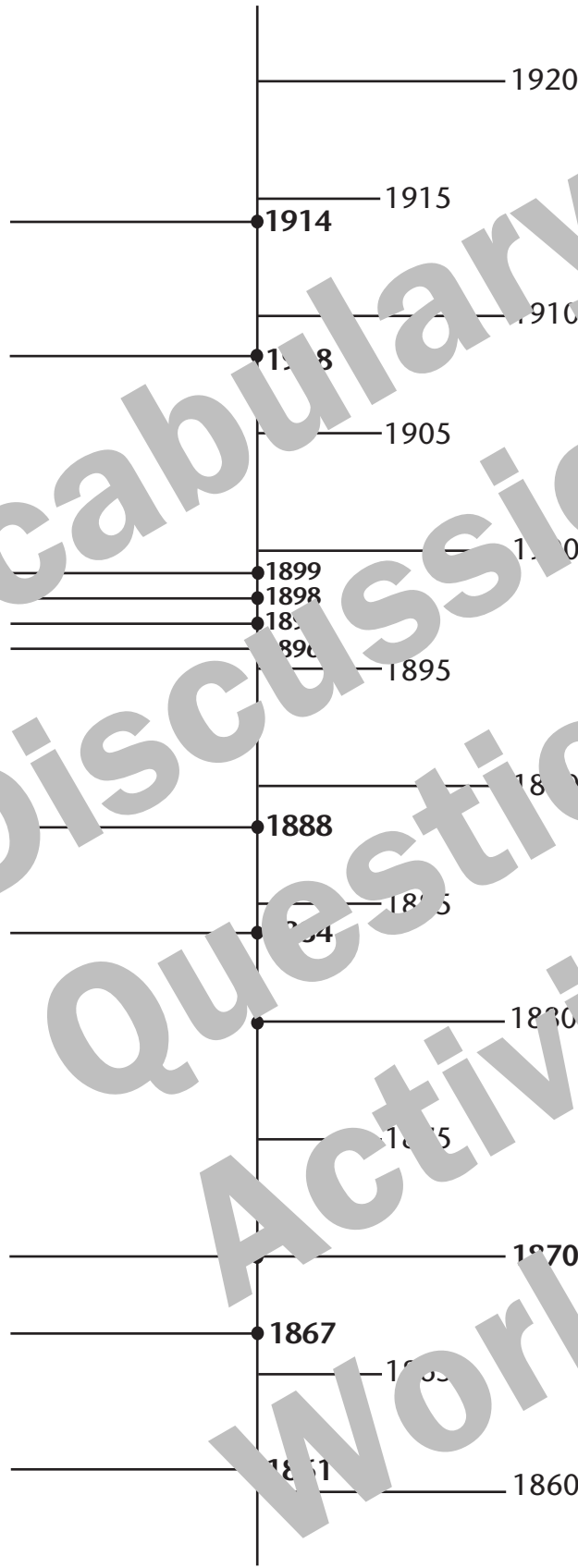
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Time Line

Directions: Use what you have learned from the novel and Internet resources to match each important event to the year it happened. Write the number of the event to the left of the correct boxed date. (You may list more than one event in one year.)



1. A steamship arrives in Seattle loaded with one million dollars in gold.
2. Yukon is made a territory.
3. Alaska becomes a territory.
4. Alaska is purchased from Russia.
5. Indians agree to let prospectors use Chilkoot Pass.
6. Mining begins in Nome, and the Klondike gold rush is officially over.
7. The gold of Bonanza Creek is discovered.
8. The gold rush reaches its peak as thousands of prospectors cross the Chilkoot and White Pass trails.
9. Gold is discovered on Kenai Peninsula.
10. The Yukon population reaches over 30,000.
11. Gold is discovered in Livengood near Fairbanks.
12. Gold is found at Stewart River.
13. Gold is discovered in Iditarod.
14. Gold is found at Sumdum Bay.
15. Gold is found at Telegraph Creek.
16. "Soapy" Smith is killed.
17. Gold is found in the Klondike.
18. An avalanche kills 60 people on Chilkoot Pass.