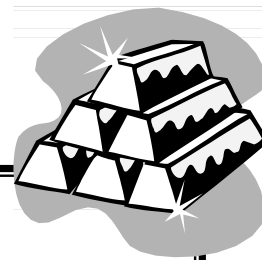


All That Glitters



Springboard:

Students should read “African Gold” and answer the questions.

Objective: The student will be able to explain how gold mining affects the economies and cultures of some African nations.

Materials: African Gold (Springboard handouts)
Gold International Position Paper (handouts)
National Union of Mineworkers Position Paper (handouts)
Mining Mediation Record – (handout)

Terms to know:

mediators –people asked to make a decision or suggest a compromise in a dispute

labor union – an organization of workers that protects the interests of its members (in terms of wages, working conditions, etc.)

management – people who control a company

market – 1. the demand for a product or service; 2. to sell a product or service

profit – income or gains from investments

Procedure:

- ∴ In discussing the Springboard, explain *that the situation in South Africa is not quite as positive as the passage might lead students to believe. This lesson more closely examines South Africa’s gold mining.*
- ∴ Explain that *this lesson is a simulation in which students will be acting as a panel of government mediators in a labor dispute between a miners’ labor union and a South African gold mining company.*
- ∴ Students should read the “Position Papers” of the management and the labor in groups. (FYI: The company is a fictitious company based on the world’s largest gold producer. The union is real and much of the information included came from its website.)
- ∴ They should then discuss what they read and complete the “Mining Mediation Record.”
- ∴ Have the groups share their ideas and discuss. (Answers will vary.)

African Gold

Africa is one of the most important producers of gold, providing 30% of the world's supply. With 45% of the world's mineable reserves, the continent has a huge potential for earnings. The country of South Africa produces 26% of the world's gold now, making it the world's largest producer, but many other countries in Africa have mining operations which are expanding.

Ghana is Africa's second largest producer and Zimbabwe is third. In fact Sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing a **surge** in gold exploration. Many large deposits have already been found and the search continues. These discoveries may someday transform the economies of some of Africa's poorest countries. Before the 1990's corrupt governments and poor infrastructure kept companies from investing in many countries. Now with democratic reforms and new government policies encouraging business, foreign companies are showing new interest in the region.

Tanzania and Mali are rapidly becoming Africa's newest producers. Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire have been producing as well. The Congo, Niger, and Mozambique have great potential, but will need more political stability to take full advantage of their resources. Recent discoveries have also been made in Senegal and Burkina Faso, and others are expected.

Which percentage best describes the amount of the world's gold in Africa?

- A. 30%
- B. 45%
- C. 26%
- D. not given

The top three gold producers in Africa are

- A. South Africa, Ghana, Zimbabwe.
- B. Ghana, Zimbabwe, Tanzania.
- C. Tanzania, Mali, South Africa.
- D. Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal.

Which definition of the word "surge" applies to its use in the passage?

- A. rise and roll with a swelling motion
- B. large and swelling wave
- C. move or go forward in a mob
- D. sudden, sharp increase

The tone of this passage could best be described as

- A. gloomy.
- B. hopeful.
- C. excited.
- D. curious.

African Gold

Answers and Explanations



Africa is one of the most important producers of gold, providing 30% of the world's supply. With 45% of the world's mineable reserves, the continent has a huge potential for earnings. The country of South Africa produces 26% of the world's gold now, making it the world's largest producer, but many other countries in Africa have mining operations which are expanding.

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Which percentage best describes the amount of the world's gold in Africa?

- A. 30%
- B. 45% *
- C. 26%
- D. not given

(The passage states that Africa has 45% of the world's mineable reserves, which means the amount of gold in the world.)

The top three gold producers in Africa are

- A. South Africa, Ghana, Zimbabwe. *
- B. Ghana, Zimbabwe, Tanzania.
- C. Tanzania, Mali, South Africa.
- D. Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal.

(South Africa is the largest producer in the world, and Ghana and Zimbabwe are second and third in Africa, so A is the correct answer.)

Which definition of the word "surge" applies to its use in the passage?

- A. rise and roll with a swelling motion
- B. large and swelling wave
- C. move or go forward in a mob
- D. sudden, sharp increase *

(Students should replace the various definitions in the sentence for the word to see which makes the most sense.)

The tone of this passage could best be described as

- A. gloomy.
- B. hopeful. *
- C. excited.
- D. curious.

(Even if students are unfamiliar with the concept of "tone" in writing, they can figure this question out based upon the choices. The passage cannot be described as gloomy, excited, or curious.)



gold international®
growing the market for gold

POSITION PAPER

Gold International is a global company with mines and production facilities on four continents. We cannot deny that our purpose, as for any company, is to earn money. It is our belief that a healthy company provides jobs and greatly helps the economies of the countries in which it operates. This has been the case with our company and South Africa. We employ tens of thousands of the nation's workers.

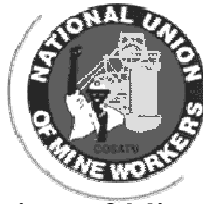
The process of mining gold is a costly one, and our costs in South Africa have been rising since the 1960's. Mining in this country is underground, and over the years the amount of gold we have been able to extract has dropped steadily. Consequently, we have had to dig deeper and deeper at an increasingly higher cost to the company.

Underground mining requires that deep shafts be dug into the earth. We are currently working at depths of over two miles underground. When gold is located, tunnels are dug to the gold ore, which is drilled and blasted from the rock. On the average about six tons of ore have to be collected to produce one troy ounce of gold. A troy ounce is the standard measure of weight for gold, equal to 1/12 of a pound. Once the gold ore is extracted, it must be refined. In this process the gold is removed from the ore, melted, and molded into bars for sale. The entire process is expensive and our cost per troy ounce in South Africa is the highest in the world, so our profits have dropped yearly.

In addition to paying higher production costs, Gold International has also spent large sums of money to insure the health and safety of our workers. We have installed expensive ventilation and air conditioning systems deep in our mines. Doctors are hired to work on-site at the mines to perform health checks on our miners. We have built what we consider to be comfortable barracks for our workers to live in, since many come from distant villages to work for us. We provide balanced meals and even offer limited entertainment. Our on-site facilities are certainly not luxury hotels, but they meet the basic needs of our workers, many of whom come from far worse conditions in their home villages.

In recent years efforts have been made to give the mineworkers' union a greater say in company decisions. Mineworkers can now elect their own safety officers. Black mineworkers are now present on committees that investigate any accidents that occur, and workers have the right to refuse to do any job they believe is too dangerous. We want to prevent problems.

Our company, like any mining company, would love to be able to say that we never have accidents, but this is not the case here in South Africa or anywhere in the world. Mining is a dangerous business. The companies know that, and the workers that accept jobs with the companies know that as well.



National Union of Mine Workers

Position Paper

Underground mining is a risky process, and is even more dangerous at great depths as in South Africa. The underground shafts and tunnels disturb the balance of rocks, gasses, and water that has existed for thousands of years. Drilling and blasting to extract gold ore disturbs the rock and can cause many hazards.

Underground floods can occur when hidden water sources are released; explosions can result when methane gas pockets are opened; tunnels can collapse on workers. At the depths at which we work, rock bursts caused by small earthquakes from the blasting are a constant threat. Workers who spend eight hours a day, six days a week in narrow, poorly lit, hot spaces fear for their lives, as they should, because accidents are common.

Another threat to mineworkers is disease resulting from years of dust and dirt in their lungs. Dust diseases usually take a long time to develop, and mineworkers may have retired to their villages where they receive no treatment by the time the disease becomes severe. If workers begin showing symptoms of lung disease on the job, they are usually sent back to their villages. Our organization estimates that at least one million workers have suffered from lung disease in the last century.

Our estimates show that between 80,000 and 100,000 mine workers have lost their lives in accidents since mining began in South Africa in the late 1800's. Hundreds of workers die each year in South African mines. In South Africa an accident does not qualify as a disaster unless six or more workers are killed. There were 450 disasters in the 20th century, including one incident in 1960 that claimed 460 workers and a mine fire in 1986 that killed 137.

Though some efforts to improve safety have been made, the statistics related to deaths and injuries have changed little. Our union would offer the explanation that the mining company has not done enough to improve the conditions of its workers. Nelson Mandela's government passed a law in 1996 requiring that mining companies allow workers to participate in company decision-making. Black workers can now elect their own safety officers, help investigate accidents, and refuse to work in situations they believe to be too dangerous, but little has changed.

The reasons for the lack of progress are both racial and economic. 84% of mineworkers are Black, and 90% of company management is White. The risks of mining have mostly affected black workers. White managers are rarely, if ever, exposed to the dangers. White workers in the mines are usually gang leaders who work away from the blasting and drilling and are rarely hurt. Generally speaking black workers are mostly poor and uneducated. They need the work, and they fear that if they complain they will lose their jobs.

Profit also plays a large role in the situation. Proper safety measures cost money because they either add to the cost of producing gold or they slow production. Either way, profits are reduced. Another factor is the use of bonus pay to increase production. Managers and workers are paid to speed the work, which can and does result in accidents, injuries, and even deaths. To this union it seems that Gold International too often places greater importance on company profits than on the safety and well-being of its workers.



Mining Mediation Record



What do you think are the most important points made by Gold International? _____

What do you think are the most important points made by the National Union of Mine Workers? _____

What, if anything, do you think the labor union could do to help make gold mining more profitable? _____

What, if anything, do you think the company could do to help make gold mining safer? _____
