Created by: Deb Hicks, Donnesville Elementary School

Grade level: 5

Primary Source Citation: *Life on the plains and among the diggings; being scenes and adventures of an overland journey to California: with particular incidents of the route, mistakes and sufferings of the emigrants, the Indian tribes, the present and future of the great West* by Alonzo Delano (New York: Miller, Orton & Co., 1857). "California as I Saw It:" First-Person Narratives of California's Early Years, 1849-1900, The Library of Congress *American Memory*, http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/expref/oregtral/delsev.html.

Allow students, in groups or individually, to examine the text while answering the questions below in order. The questions are designed to guide students into a deeper analysis of the source and sharpen associated cognitive skills.

Level I: Description

1.   What does this piece of text seem to be about?

2.   What does the title tell you about the piece?

3.   What time period is this piece from?

4.   Who is the author of the piece?

Level II: Interpretation

1.   Who was the intended audience for this piece of writing?

2.   There are dates used as headings in this piece of text. What do you think that means?

3.   Alonzo writes, "May 30 … as we looked over the broad expanse of prairie, till earth and sky seemed to blend, we could not repress a feeling of loneliness …" What might cause someone to feel loneliness on the prairie?

Level III: Analysis

1.   Compare the distance traveled on May 19 and May 20 to the distance traveled on May 30. What was one reason that the travel slowed so dramatically?

2.   Why do you think Alonzo wrote in his May 31 entry, "… and were I to make the trip again, I would make it a point to stop every seventh day …"?

3.   After reading the June 3 entry, tell why the road was littered with cast-off articles. Then describe the difference of conditions of the cast-off items. In what condition do you think you would have left the cast-offs?