

Goldfields by Trevor Jacob (Jacaranda Software 1986).

Designed for upper primary and secondary Social Studies classes. A simulation of life on the diggings. For use on BBC (also Apple II+/IIe/IIc and Commodore 64/128 with disk drive). A printer is optional. Package includes Disk, Teacher's Guide (13pp), black-line masters, and Goldfields Journal. Cost \$65.

Publisher's description: *Goldfields is an historical simulation that provides students with opportunities to explore the possibilities of life in the goldrushes of the nineteenth century, as well as developing reading and language skills.*

A good simulation provides a realistic representation of a process or activity where the real situation is dangerous, costly, or otherwise inaccessible. *Goldfields* is highly successful here in that students are transported to the life and times of the goldrush era.

The computer simulates the journey from Suze Port to the goldfields, the passage of time, and the various dangers to avoid in just trying to survive. Students must make many decisions — whether to mine or work in a pub or general store for instance, what type of mining to choose, even whether to try to avoid the high cost of a miner's licence.

Although *Goldfields* is designed for use in social studies, it has possibilities across the curriculum, involving note taking and study skills, creative writing, art, drama, even basic arithmetic. For use in the language classroom, the

activities that the program gives rise to are limited only by teachers' imaginations.

The program involves complete immersion in language, following instructions, discussion, searching and locating information, and making decisions. Students will probably work in groups, giving rise to much discussion, even deciding what is the criterion of success. The accompanying Goldfields Journal is filled with information about all aspects of mining (pegging a claim, puddling, operating a cradle) as well as details of life on the goldfields last century.

The designers of *Goldfields* deserve full credit for effectively utilising the potential of the microcomputer and for the imaginative accompanying materials.