

Letter Assessment

_____ (date)

Dear _____,

I would like you to know a little bit about a city called Georgetown in Colorado.

In 1864, _____

Then in 1866, _____

In 1867, _____

As it happened in 1868, _____

Then in 1877, _____

The bust came in _____. Now Georgetown is a good place to visit.

Your friend,



The Birth of a City and Railroad in the Rocky Mountains

Modified for ELL

The Boom

In **1864** three miners discovered silver in a rich quartz ledge in Colorado. Fifty pounds of quartz, gave them 1000 ounces of silver to the ton. Soon many miners came to get rich. In the spring of 1864, there were only four cabins and a couple of tents. However, by the end of summer, miners had used all the trees from the forest to build cabins along two mountain streams. Originally two towns were built. One was near the streams and other one was at the bottom of Leavenworth Mountain. The town at the meeting of the two streams was known as Griffith, and the one at the base of the mountain was known as the Elizabethtown.

In **1866**, at a public meeting to make a post office, the two towns were combined and the name Georgetown was adopted.

By **1867** Georgetown was the center of silver mining. During 1867, the Anglo-Saxon mine was discovered. The Anglo-Saxon Mine assayed ore at \$23,000 dollars a ton. Now 5000 miners were now located in Georgetown. Roads were built to bring stagecoaches from Denver. Banks were opened. Hotels were built, and churches were opened. Georgetown quickly became a center of wealth.

In **1868**, Georgetown became the fastest growing city in Colorado. In just four years, what had once been a small mountain town had turned into a city. It was called, "The Silver Queen of the Rockies." Between 1860 and 1893, the mines in the area brought more than \$200,000,000 in gold, silver, copper, and lead.

However, the boomtown faced a serious problem. Many mines were located in faraway places. These mines needed to transport their ore great distances to smelters. People opened wagon roads and charged a fee to use the roads. Another group of people planned a railroad from Golden, Colorado, to the mines at Georgetown. In 1861, they discovered the pass through the Rockies and called it Loveland Pass.

In **1877**, the railroad was completed and connected Denver, Colorado, to Georgetown. Building the railroad was a feat in engineering. To get the railroad from Georgetown to Silver Plume, another silver rich town, the elevation rose 638 feet in a 2.5-mile distance. This was too steep for a locomotive to pull. The narrow valley walls were too steep for a switchback system, so another answer had to be found. The Georgetown loop was born. The Loop is a snake-like arrangement of track to lessen the steepness of the climb. The railroad crosses over itself on Devil's Gate Bridge. The bridge spans 300-feet across the valley. It is 95.6 feet in distance from the creek below. In all, the railroad completed three-and-one-half circles to get from Georgetown (altitude 8476 ft.) to Silver Plume (altitude 9,114 ft.).



The Bust

The railroad served the needs of Georgetown and its mines for many years. Changes in the federal silver laws ended the great need for silver. Colorado's mining was bust. More and more people got cars, and passenger traffic on the railroad dwindled. The railroad went bankrupt and was reorganized in **1890**. By **1899** it was in trouble again and then became a part of the Colorado and Southern Railroad.

Today

The Colorado Historical Society has revived the railroad, and it has become one of today's most famous tourist attractions. The bridge has been rebuilt and the steam train takes tourists on a breathtaking and sometimes, heart-stopping journey between Georgetown and Silver Plume.



Letter Writing Prompt: The Birth of a Rocky Mountain Railroad: The Birth of Georgetown and the Loop Railroad

You are a miner in the silver mines writing a friendly letter home to your parents. Describe what is happening during the years given on the letter assessment.

Checklist:

_____ Write at least 1 sentence for each year given.

_____ Do NOT just copy sentences from the reading. You must use your own words.

_____ Write at least one sentence on how people changed Colorado when they built the railroad.



Storyboard

Name _____

Draw at least 1 picture for each year listed. Look at the reading for ideas.

The Birth of a City and Railroad in the Rocky Mountains

1864	1866	1867
1868	1877	Today

