

SACRAMENTO

Strike gold in the epicenter of the California Gold Rush, where students can pan for gold, explore an authentic mine, and stroll through historic towns. State history and politics are also on display in museums and government buildings.

Why Brightspark?

Safety And Security

We regularly conduct strict audits of our vendors, ensuring they act in accordance with safety, security, and quality standards.

Our Tour Directors

You deserve the best, so we only use experienced and enthusiastic Tour Directors who are experts on their destinations.

Quality, Custom Tours

Our programs are designed for you, by you. From STEM-based DC tours to performance trips to some of our country's top music cities, we have a destination for every budget and every passion.

Industry Experience

With over 50 years of experience providing custom tours, Brightspark is a leader in student travel.

Travel Protection & Incident Coverage

With our 24/7 emergency hotline, comprehensive general insurance, and an industry-leading refund guarantee program, we've got you covered.



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Day 1:

- Meet your Tour Director and board your private motor coach.
- Take a tour of the **California State Capitol**. A neoclassical building based on the U.S. Capitol, it is home to the state government of California and includes both chambers of the state legislature and the governor's office. During your visit, students will learn about each different branch of the state government.
- Explore the history of the Golden State at the **California Museum**. The official state history museum also houses the California Hall of Fame. Hear the story of immigrant journeys and the epic tales of the California Gold Rush, and take advantage of special exhibits showcasing the state's many illustrious residents.
- After lunch, explore **Old Sacramento**. Built in the 1800s on the banks of the Sacramento River, the town was the western end of the Pony Express and the Transcontinental Railroad. Travel back in time as you walk through the 28-acre National Historic Landmark District and State Historic Park. Activities include riverboats, railroads, horse-drawn carriages, and bike rides. The site's museums, shops, dining, and entertainment transport you to the Wild West during the Gold Rush.
- Take a journey to olden times at the **California State Railroad Museum**, dedicated to exploring the role the locomotive played in connecting California to the United States. The interactive museum features 21 beautifully restored trains, the oldest dating back to 1862. Learn about the tools and technology used in railroad transportation, explore the building of the transcontinental Union Pacific Railroad, relive the divisive Pullman Strike of 1894, and fast-forward to the age of high-speed rail travel.
- Visit **Sutter's Fort**, built in 1839 and originally called New Helvetia by its founder, John Sutter. Now a State Historic Park, the living museum includes artifacts, buildings, and traditions from the earliest (and first non-Indigenous) settlement in the state's Central Valley. Guides in period clothing bring to life the pioneering days of California's earliest forts.
- Enjoy a **traditional pioneer dinner** at Sutter's Fort before settling into your hotel.

Day 2:

- Be sure to eat a hearty breakfast before departing to the **Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park**, encompassing most of historic Coloma. You'll spend the morning among the Sierra foothills joining the California Gold Rush of the late 1840s. The site honors James Marshall's discovery of gold in January 1848, which led to one of the largest human migrations in the world and the urban development of northern California. While at the park, you will learn about the different ethnic communities that made their way through the area, experience life in the mining town, and even pan for gold in the river!
- Enjoy lunch in the small town of **Coloma** – population 529! The sparsely-inhabited "ghost town" is still a tourist attraction due to its historic connection to the California Gold Rush. While many buildings in town are abandoned, others have been restored and converted into museums.
- Venture inside the mountains during a tour of the **Gold Bug Park & Mine**, an authentic 1880s mine in nearby Placerville. The town was originally known as Dry Diggin's due to the local tradition of moving dry soil to water to extract the gold. This history of "hard rock" mining is brought to life at the Gold Bug Mine, now an immersive, hands-on museum where students can get an inside look at the 19th-century mining industry. Your tour also includes a visit to the **Hendy Stamp Mill**, teaching students about the process of extracting minerals from the ore, and a stop at the Blacksmith Shop.
- Enjoy free time to explore the rest of the park. Don't miss **Hattie's Gold Rush Museum**, featuring gold mining tools, artifacts, and drawings of the period. An interactive exhibit showcases local geology. Other on-site activities can include nature walks, art lessons, or writing workshops.
- Depart for home.

