

Mt. Rushmore: America's Lasting Legacy

Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: K-8

Curriculum Focus: Social Studies

Lesson Duration: 1-2 class periods

Program Description

Take a good look at Mount Rushmore, from how it was created to how it fascinates visitors. Learn about the men featured on the memorial and the contributions they made to the American legacy.

Discussion Questions

- Who do you think were the most important Americans in history?
 - What did these people accomplish?
 - Why is Mount Rushmore an important monument?
 - Why was George Washington an important American?
 - What did Thomas Jefferson accomplish for his country?
 - What made Abraham Lincoln a good president?
 - Do you think Theodore Roosevelt was a hero?
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Understand the contributions of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt to the United States.
- Create a list of American ideals.
- Design a monument honoring an American hero and the contributions they made to the U.S. legacy.

Materials

- *Mt. Rushmore: America's Lasting Legacy* video and VCR, or DVD and DVD player
- Poster board, 1 per student group
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils

- Examples of U.S. monuments (brochures, pictures, etc.)
- Pencils and erasers
- Lined paper
- Computer with Internet access (optional)

Procedures

1. Talk about the ideals the United States was founded on and historic people who fought for these ideals. A good way to introduce this topic is to watch *Mt. Rushmore: America's Lasting Legacy*. After watching the program, discuss the contributions of the presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt.
2. Ask students to brainstorm examples of American ideals. What does the United States stand for? What ideals are taught in school? What ideals were put forth in the Declaration of Independence and in the U.S. Constitution? Create a class list of American ideals on the white board or on a transparency for an overhead projector.
3. Discuss the list of ideals and ask students to think of historic Americans who embodied or fought for these ideals. What did they do? How did they embody a particular ideal?
4. Divide students into groups of 4 or 5 and tell them that they will design a national monument honoring an American hero or group of heroes that made a lasting contribution to the American legacy. Remind students of the people they named earlier. Why should these people be immortalized? What would be the best way to honor them? Perhaps they would like to design a statue. Or maybe they think it's best to build a playground with a plaque, a museum, or something like Mount Rushmore.
5. Explain to students that they will choose a person or group to honor and decide how best to honor them. They must design a poster and prepare a 1 to 2 page written speech to present to the class. The posters must be colorful, creative, and clearly identify the person or group. They must include the following:
 - Person or group being honored
 - Why they are being honored.
 - Description of the monument, including appearance, location, and building materials.
 - Reason this type of monument is appropriate
6. Allow time in class to work on designs and speeches. Students may look at examples of national monuments at the following Web sites:
 - http://gorp.away.com/gorp/resource/us_nm/main.htm
 - <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/>
 - <http://www.fact-sheets.com/travel/national-parks/>

7. Have groups present their designs and speeches. Allow time for questions following each presentation and then hold a discussion about whether the class would build this monument.
8. Have groups attach their speeches to the bottoms of their posters and display them designs in the classroom.

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students were highly engaged in class discussions; actively participated in group projects; created colorful and unique posters that clearly indicated great thought; wrote speeches that correctly addressed all necessary points; were polite and interested during other presentations.
- **2 points:** Students were somewhat engaged in class discussions; participated in group projects; created somewhat colorful and unique posters that clearly indicated some thought; wrote speeches that correctly addressed most of the necessary points; were somewhat polite and interested during other presentations.
- **1 point:** Students were minimally engaged in class discussions; participated very little in group projects; created unfinished posters that did not indicate much thought; wrote speeches that did not address the necessary points; were somewhat polite and interested during other presentations.

Vocabulary

adversity

Definition: A state of misfortune or affliction; a calamitous event

Context: When Lincoln was inaugurated in 1861 he faced more adversity than any other president in U.S. history.

ideals

Definition: Something one hopes to attain; ideas of perfection

Context: Advocates of freedom and dignity work to uphold the ideals of America.

immortalized

Definition: To make famous forever; provide a memorial to a person or an event

Context: Four great Americans are immortalized in stone on Mount Rushmore.

legacy

Definition: Something handed down by a predecessor

Context: Mount Rushmore honors four presidents who made great sacrifices to ensure the legacy of the United States.

tribute

Definition: Something given or done as an expression of esteem



Context: Gutzon Borglum was a patriotic man who believed that a suitably fitting tribute should honor the American experience.

visionary

Definition: A person with unusual powers of foresight

Context: History looks back at Thomas Jefferson as a great visionary.

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit <http://www.mcrel.org/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Historical Understanding: Understands the historical perspective
- U.S. History: Era 10—Contemporary United States: Understands economic, social, and cultural developments in the contemporary United States
- Language Arts—Viewing: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media; Writing: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process, Gathers and uses information for research purposes; Reading: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

NCSS has developed national guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org>

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
 - Culture
 - Individual Development and Identity
 - Power, Authority, and Governance
 - People, Places, and Environments
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Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>
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DVD Content

Video Index

I. Building Mount Rushmore

Carving the faces of four presidents into a mountain took hundreds of workers, but the idea was the dream of one man. See how Gutzon Borglum created one of America's best-known memorials.

Pre-viewing question:

Q: What four presidents are carved into Mount Rushmore?

A: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt

Post-viewing question:

Q: How long did it take workers to finish carving Mount Rushmore?

A: 14 years

II. George Washington

America's first president was also the first carved into Mount Rushmore. Learn more about the man who led his country to freedom.

Pre-viewing question:

Q: What do you know about George Washington?

A: Answers may include that he was the country's first elected president, that he led the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, or that he lived on an estate called Mount Vernon in Virginia.

Post-viewing question:

Q: Why did Washington reject suggestions that he become king?

A: Washington felt the army, which he lead, should serve the people, not rule them.

III. Thomas Jefferson

The second president carved on Mount Rushmore was Thomas Jefferson. Discover the talents of a man who never counted his presidency among the best of his achievements.

Pre-viewing question:

Q: What do you know about Thomas Jefferson?

A: Answers may include that he was the author of the Declaration of Independence and the third President of the United States, and that he made the Louisiana Purchase.



Post-viewing question:

Q: What are two of the key principles in which Jefferson believed?

A: Freedom of religion and that people should have a say in their government.

IV. Abraham Lincoln

America's 16th president earned his place on Mount Rushmore through his commitment to equality and preserving the union. See how this leader faced one of his country's biggest challenges.

Pre-viewing question:

Q: Why do you know about Abraham Lincoln?

A: Answers may include that he was born in a log cabin, that he freed the slaves through the Emancipation Proclamation, or that he was assassinated.

Post-viewing question:

Q: Why did Lincoln feel that slavery had to be abolished?

A: He felt that America could not be the "home of the free" if some of its people were slaves.

V. Theodore Roosevelt

From atop Mount Rushmore, the sculpture of Theodore Roosevelt looks down on some of the forests he helped preserve. Find out more about the man known as America's first conservation president.

Pre-viewing question:

Q: What do you know about Theodore Roosevelt?

A: Answers may include that he became president after the assassination of William McKinley, that he led the Rough Riders during the Spanish-American War, or that he enjoyed hunting.

Post-viewing question:

Q: How did Roosevelt use his presidency to protect natural habitats?

A: He placed more than 230 million acres under federal protection to make sure they could be enjoyed by future generation.