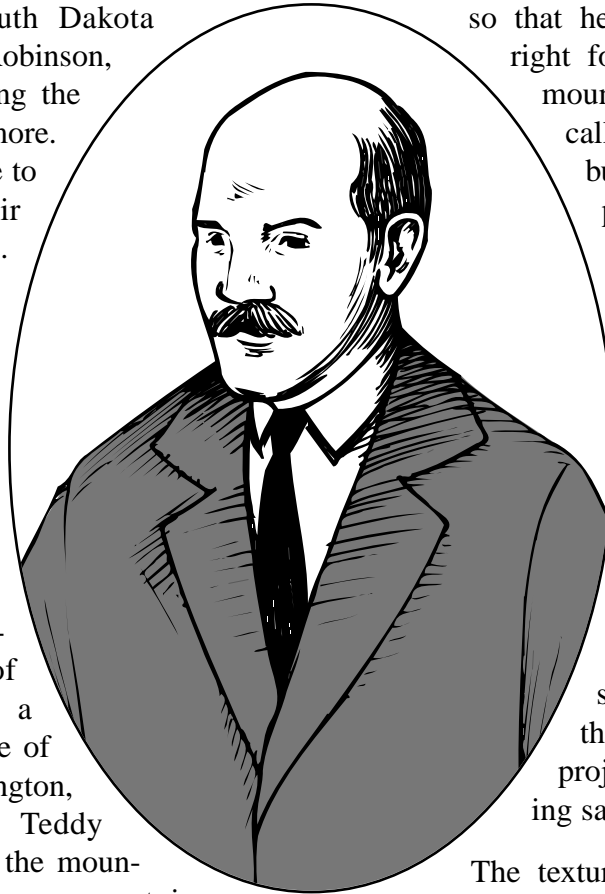


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Mount Rushmore

The secretary of the South Dakota Historical Society, Doane Robinson, first had the idea of carving the sculptures on Mount Rushmore. The project was to be a lure to bring tourists and their money into the state. Robinson was familiar with the art of Gutzon Borglum, whose famous works included the beginning of the sculptures on Stone Mountain in Georgia. Robinson wanted the faces of Westerners such as Lewis and Clark on the mountain, but Borglum suggested that depictions of Presidents would have a greater appeal to the people of the U.S. He chose Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Teddy Roosevelt for the faces on the mountain. Work began on the monument in 1927.



Borglum was a competent sculptor, but a difficult person to work with. His best work included a bronze statue of the Civil War general Philip Sheridan, some of the figures on the outside of the Cathedral of St. John in New York City and the bust of Abraham Lincoln, which is in the Rotunda of the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. He had also begun the sculptures of famous Confederate leaders on Stone Mountain, but he was fired from that job because he was hard to get along with. In retaliation, Borglum destroyed all of his models for Stone Mountain, setting back the completion of the project by 50 years. Borglum had studied sculpture under the famous French master Auguste Rodin. That fact, his body of work on other sculptures and his beginning work on Stone Mountain showed that Borglum had the experience and talent to carve Mount Rushmore.

Borglum first made five-foot plaster models of the four Presidents. He made careful measurements

so that he could get the proportions right for the 60-foot faces on the mountain. Originally, the plans called for waist-length carvings, but the lack of time and money prevented that idea from being completed.

The first step in the project was to blast tons of rock off of the mountain. This was a dangerous job that required engineering expertise. Borglum used a sort of swing by which workers could be lowered down the face of the mountain to do their work. In spite of the great danger of this work, no one died on the project due to Borglum's exacting safety standards.

The texture and solidity of the rock posed problems as well. Jefferson's head had to be repositioned twice because of flaws in the stone. The second time, a crack in the rock posed the problem that Jefferson's nose might eventually fall off, but Borglum solved that problem by tilting the head rather than starting all over again.

Getting money to finish the sculptures was always a problem. Most of the money came from the federal government, but the fact that the work was done during the Great Depression meant that financing was scarce. The work had to be stopped several times due to lack of funds, which is one of the reasons it took 14 years to complete Mount Rushmore. However, the heads were almost done by 1941. (The final polishing on one of the figures was never finished.) Meanwhile, Borglum had died, and his son had taken over the project. Despite the fact that the work was never completed, Mount Rushmore has become a monument famed throughout the world.

Mount Rushmore Questions

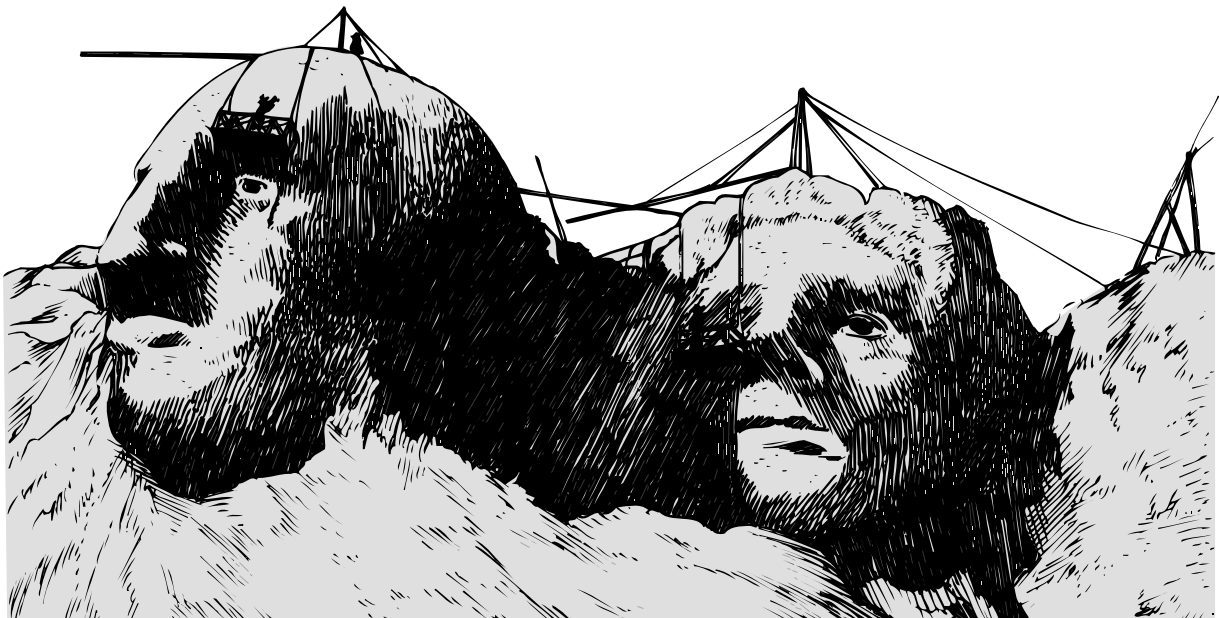
1. What are three problems that Borglum had to overcome in order to complete the carvings on Mount Rushmore? _____

2. a. The models of the heads were five feet tall, and the finished heads were 60 feet tall. What is the ratio or proportion of the size of the models to the size of the completed figures? _____

- b. Washington's head is 60 feet tall, and his nose is 20 feet long. How much of the entire sculpture is taken up by the nose? _____

3. What President who was in office during or after 1930 would you choose to be added to the mountain? Explain why you chose the President. _____

4. Thought Question: Borglum was a difficult person to work with. Why do you think that his workers would continue with him over such a long time span? _____



The Life of George Washington



Did you know that George Washington was offered the position of king of the United States, and that he turned it down? Washington's integrity and willingness to give up power at the end of two terms are two reasons that he is honored with a sculpture on Mount Rushmore.

The Washington family had lived in the Virginia Colony since the mid-1650s. George was born at Pope's Creek plantation in Westmoreland County, Virginia, on February 11, 1731. (A badly needed change in the calendar put his birthday on February 22, which is the date more familiar to us.) George had two older half-brothers whose mother had died. George's father Gus then married Mary Ball, and George was the oldest of the five surviving children of that marriage. Gus Washington made his money from growing tobacco and mining iron ore. Gus died when George was 11 years old.

George's first occupation was surveying. He got his first job at age 16 when he surveyed Mount Vernon for his older brother Lawrence. In 1748, Lord Fairfax hired George to survey his land in the Shenandoah Valley in Maryland. George

became the official surveyor for Culpepper County in 1749.

Washington's first battle experiences occurred during the French and Indian War. The French and Indians defeated Washington in 1754 at Fort Necessity in the Ohio Territory. Washington was with General Braddock in 1755 when the British forces were again beaten. Braddock was mortally wounded, and his troops retreated from the battle; but Washington had fought bravely.

Washington entered politics and began courting Martha Dandridge Custis, a wealthy widow, in 1758. He succeeded at both pursuits, being elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1758 and marrying Martha in January 1759.

George continued in the House of Burgesses and was drawn into the growing dispute between Britain and her colonies. The colonists protested the new taxes levied on them to help pay off the debt caused by the French and Indian War. Washington joined the rebels in 1769 when the House of Burgesses passed a resolution protesting the Townshend Acts. The colonists formed the First Continental Congress in 1774. Washington was one of the delegates. After the battle at Lexington and Concord in 1775, John Adams nominated Washington to lead the colonial army. He was unanimously elected to that post.

The Revolutionary War was difficult for Washington. Colonial victories were few at first; money for supplies for the soldiers was slow in coming from Congress; men deserted in large numbers; and General Benedict Arnold turned traitor. Finally, with the aid of French ships, Washington's troops surrounded General Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781; and the British surrendered. The peace negotiations dragged on for two more years, but by 1783 the colonies had won their independence.

There followed a difficult period of adjustment under the Articles of Confederation. This government proved to have no power: national defense, international trade, the judicial system and finan-