

Lesson Title: Mount Rushmore – Does Teddy Measure Up?

Lesson Design by: Deborah L. Sherard, Benton High School,  
Grade 11, American History, July 2005

## Teaching Traditional American History Project

Funded by U.S. Department of Education

Mike Lair, Project Director

<http://www.chillihistoryproject.com/>

**Lesson Overview:** This lesson will allow the students to evaluate President Theodore Roosevelt and make a determination as to whether they believe that he should have been the fourth president chosen to be immortalized on Mount Rushmore.

**Objectives:** After completing this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Identify the characteristics that the creator used in determining which presidents to carve into the mountain
- Identify and evaluate policies and programs related to the use of resources
- Use geography to evaluate the events of the past, explain the present and plan for the future
- Defend the choice of Gutzon Borglum to include Theodore Roosevelt in his final work

**Materials:** Textbook of teacher choice discussing the four presidents carved onto Mount Rushmore (Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, T. Roosevelt)

[www.americanparknetwork.com](http://www.americanparknetwork.com) Mount Rushmore

[www.nps.gov/thro/](http://www.nps.gov/thro/)

[www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents](http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents)

<http://sc94.ameslab.gov/TOUR/gwashington.html>

<http://sc94.ameslab.gov/TOUR/tjefferson.html>

<http://sc94.ameslab.gov/TOUR/alincoln.html>

<http://sc94.ameslab.gov/TOUR/troosevelt.html>

Any other web sites of the teacher chooses for these presidents

**Class Time:** This lesson will be over the course of two or three class periods. The teacher should introduce Mount Rushmore and the history of the mountain and allow the students time to research the information, and then the final writing.

### **Teacher Input:**

1. History of Mount Rushmore given by the teacher. (See attached)

2. Allow students to research the characteristics of the four presidents chosen by Gutzon Borglum to be carved into Mount Rushmore. Students may use any sources.
3. Class discussion on Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and T. Roosevelt.
4. Final writing assignment given by the teacher.

**Activities:**

1. Textbook background as summarized by teacher.
2. Research by students.
3. Classroom discussion between teacher and students
4. Students will write a paper defending Gutzon Borglum's choice of including Theodore Roosevelt on Mount Rushmore.

**Questions for review:** The teacher may allow the students to research answers they found while doing their original research. Other questions may arise such as:

Q: Why was there a discussion about Teddy being included?

A: *He had only been dead 8 years and history had not judged his presidency and because he was a close friend of Borglum.*

Q: How and why were the four chosen?

A: *Washington because he lead us through the Revolutionary War and he was the father of our country, Jefferson because he was the father of the Declaration of Independence and his vision of creating a nation from coast to coast, Lincoln because of his stance on slavery and his leadership during the Civil War, and T. Roosevelt because of his vision of America in the world and also because of his protection of our natural resources and his expansion of the National Park System.*

**Closure:** The final discussion between the students and the teacher should be sufficient to help the students retain this information.

**Assessment:** The final assessment will be a paper that each student writes defending the choice of Gutzon Borglum to include Theodore Roosevelt into the carving of Mount Rushmore. The student must have done sufficient research so that they can clearly understand the choice made and to defend it.

**Resources:** National Park Foundation: Official Guide – Mount Rushmore & the Badlands

“A People without history are like the wind on the buffalo grass . . .”  
Lakota

## **Attachment for History of Mount Rushmore**

In 1923 the idea of putting South Dakota on the map came from the superintendent of the South Dakota Historical Society, Doane Robinson. He wanted to put Western figures such as General Custer, Buffalo Bill Cody, Lewis and Clark, and others marching along South Dakota's skyline. He spoke of this to everyone he knew and those who would listen.

He was met with mixed emotions from those living in South Dakota. Many saw it as a great tourist trap while others viewed the damage that would be caused by the intruders and the destruction of the landscape. Robinson knew that U.S. Senator Peter Norbeck would be behind anything that would help his state so he contacted him for support. Norbeck was well respected in the Senate and was a frequent visitor at the White House, so he took up this cause and pushed for the project. Senator Norbeck contacted sculptor Gutzon Borglum with a proposal for this project. Borglum would not do the project as Robinson had hoped, he would not do regional heroes and instead decided to immortalize American Presidents. It was all three men (Robinson, Norbeck, and Borglum) that selected the four presidents to be carved into the side of Sugar Loaf Ridge (renamed Mount Rushmore after a New York lawyer who had come to the Black Hills to help miners with their claims and stayed and helped the area grow).

Senator Norbeck and Congressman William Williamson received federal funding in 1925 allowing for this project to begin. President Calvin Coolidge spent three months in the Black Hills in 1927 and he was there for the formal dedication of Mount Rushmore on August 10, 1927.

Gutzon Borglum did not see his work finished. His death and the entry into World War II put the project on hold. On October 31, 1941 his son stopped working on the sculpture and it is as we know it today. Gutzon Borglum had planned on carving the four presidential figures more fully (to the waist) and he had planned on building a vault into the canyon for storage of historical documents and records of the monument.

\* This information was paraphrased from the Mount Rushmore & The Badlands National Park Foundation Official Guide.



A glimpse of visitors to Mt. Rushmore



View of Mt. Rushmore From Viewing Area



View of Mt. Rushmore At Nightfall



## Mount Rushmore - Does Teddy Measure Up?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

	Criteria				Pts.
	4	3	2	1	
<b>Position Statement</b>	Position is clearly stated and consistently maintained. Clear references to the issue(s) are stated.	Position is clearly stated and consistently maintained. References to the issue(s) at hand are <b>missing</b> .	Position is stated, but is <b>not maintained consistently</b> throughout work.	Statement of position <b>cannot</b> be determined.	_____
<b>Supporting Information</b>	Evidence clearly supports the position; evidence is <b>sufficient</b> .	Evidence clearly supports the position; but there is <b>not enough evidence</b> .	Argument is supported by <b>limited evidence</b> .	Evidence is <b>unrelated</b> to argument.	_____
<b>Organization</b>	Structure of work is <b>clearly</b> developed.	Structure developed reasonably well, but <b>lacks clarity</b> .	Some attempt to structure the argument has been made, but the structure is <b>poorly developed</b> .	There is a <b>total lack</b> of structure.	_____
<b>Tone Of Letter</b>	Tone is <b>consistent</b> and enhances persuasiveness.	Tone enhances persuasiveness, but there are <b>inconsistencies</b> .	Tones <b>does not</b> contribute to persuasiveness.	Tone is <b>inappropriate</b> to purpose.	_____
<b>Sentence Structure</b>	Sentence structure is <b>correct</b> .	Sentence structure is generally correct. Some <b>awkward sentences</b> do appear.	Work contains structural <b>weaknesses and grammatical errors</b> .	Work <b>pays little attention</b> to proper sentence structure.	_____
<b>Punctuation &amp; Capitalization</b>	Punctuation and capitalization are <b>correct</b> .	There is <b>one error</b> in punctuation and/or capitalization.	There are <b>two or three</b> errors in punctuation and/or capitalization.	There are <b>four or more</b> errors in punctuation and/or capitalization.	_____
				<b>Total----&gt;</b>	_____

Teacher Comments: