

# *The Legacy of Mt. Rushmore*

## Lesson Plan

**Grade Level:** K–8

**Curriculum Focus:** U.S. History

**Lesson Duration:** 1–2 class periods

### ***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***

- Discovery School video on *unitedstreaming: Mt. Rushmore: America's Lasting Legacy*. Search for this video by using the video title (or a portion of it) as the keyword.

Selected clips that support this lesson plan:

- George Washington
- Thomas Jefferson
- Abraham Lincoln
- Theodore Roosevelt
  
- 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://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>

