

Carving Mount Rushmore



Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

Mount Rushmore, in the Black Hills of South Dakota, shows the giant faces of four presidents: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. Carving them took fourteen years, from 1927 to 1941, and nearly 400 workers.

Each day the workers climbed 700 stairs to the top of the mountain. Steel cables then lowered them down the 500-foot face in a seat called a bosun chair. Boys called call boys sat at the edge and shouted messages, so the workers turning the winches raised and lowered the drillers safely.

Ninety percent of the mountain was carved with dynamite. For the last three to six inches of rock, drillers made holes very close together, called honeycombing, so it could be broken away, often by hand. Then the workers made the faces as smooth as a sidewalk.

In all those years, not one worker died. One worker said, "I am helping to create a memorial."

1. How many stairs did the workers climb each day?

2. How much of the mountain was carved with dynamite?

3. Why were call boys needed on the mountain?

4. One worker said, "I am helping to create a memorial." What do you think the worker meant?

Answer key

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1. How many stairs did the workers climb each day?
700.
2. How much of the mountain was carved with dynamite?
90 percent.
3. Why were call boys needed on the mountain?
They shouted messages, so the workers turning the winches raised and lowered the drillers safely.
4. One worker said, "I am helping to create a memorial." What do you think the worker meant?
Sample answer: the job was more than drilling rock or earning pay; the workers were making something people would come to see for a very long time.