

Alaska

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT STANDARDS BASED ASSESSMENTS (SBA)

Reading Item Sampler

Grade 8



Alaska Department of Education & Early Development

INTRODUCTION

The Assessment Item Sampler is designed to help teachers assist students to do their best on the Alaska Comprehensive System of Student Assessment, Standards Based Assessments in grades 3 through 9. Data Recognition Corporation, the contractor designing the Standards Based Assessments, produced this item sampler from questions developed for Alaska.

The Standards Based Assessments are designed to estimate the degree to which students have mastered the Academic Performance Standards for reading, writing, and mathematics outlined in the Grade Level Expectations. These assessments are written specifically for Alaska and are the foundation of the Alaska school accountability system. Results are valuable for districts, schools, and students. Results are used to measure a school's Adequate Yearly Progress in accordance with No Child Left Behind. Additionally, these assessments, because they are consistent across grade levels, provide the ability to gauge students' academic progress. This test combined with other information from classroom and local assessments provides districts with valuable student performance data and degrees of mastery.

The Assessment Item Sampler was developed to give students and teachers a practical way to become familiar with the kinds of test questions that will appear on the Standards Based Assessments. The Assessment Item Sampler is in no way a predictor of the test taker's ability to perform on the actual Standards Based Assessments, nor are the questions the same as those on the actual test. The questions on the item sampler reflect the type of questions one might see on the actual assessment. The length of the item sampler does not reflect the amount of time it will take for a student to complete the actual Standards Based Assessments. The purpose of the sampler is to help teachers become familiar with the Standards Based Assessments and give them a tool to use with students as they prepare for the assessment.

Additional copies of the Assessment Item Sampler can be downloaded from the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development Web site by going to <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/sba.html>.

**Read the passage about the creation of Mount Rushmore.
Then, answer the questions that follow.**

America’s Favorite Rock Group—Mount Rushmore

by Mel Boring and Leslie Dendy

You could climb into one of George Washington’s eyes and hide there. Abraham Lincoln’s mouth is wider than 3 king-size beds in a row. If you had to shave Thomas Jefferson’s rough granite chin with a regular razor, it would take you at least 19 days. Teddy Roosevelt’s glasses would weigh about 37,000 pounds if they had real glass lenses.

The sculptor made the faces on Mount Rushmore enormous to match the four presidents’ contribution to American history. And each year enormous crowds flock to see these four famous faces. On an average day, enough people visit Mount Rushmore to make a circle around the mountain more than 25 times. That’s well over 2 million visitors a year, which makes Mount Rushmore “America’s favorite rock group.”

But it isn’t just the sculpture’s huge size that attracts so many people to Mount Rushmore National Memorial. The faces on the mountain look so real that visitors say you can almost hear them speak. Some even claim the four men look real enough to stand up, walk over, and shake hands. What makes the carvings so true to life? How was a small mountain of cold, silent stone turned into four massive, lifelike heads some fifty years ago? And who carved them so realistically?

The sculptor was Gutzon Borglum, born of Danish immigrant parents in Idaho in 1867. Borglum once put his

sculpting ideas into these five words: “I don’t like anything puny.” And he proved it by making the heads of the Mount Rushmore presidents so large that they would fit bodies 465 feet high—nearly as tall as a 39-story building.

In 1924, Doane Robinson, a South Dakota lawyer and historian, wanted to build a monument to America’s greatness. He thought the Black Hills of his state would be a perfect spot. Robinson called on the famous sculptor Borglum, who arrived that September with his twelve-year-old son, Lincoln. They explored the hills, and among the ponderosa pine and Black Hills spruce, they found Mount Rushmore. It seemed the perfect rock to carve.

The mountain faced southeast, so the rockface would be sunlit almost all day. And it was huge, towering 500 feet above all surrounding mountains. Borglum and Robinson chose “Democracy” as the theme for the carving, and they decided that Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt would best embody that theme. Together these four presidents represent the four phases of our country: its birth, its growth, its preservation, and its protection.

“Thirty feet on that mountain looked like a small potato or a large peanut,” Borglum said. So he decided to make the heads of the presidents 60 feet high. But carving those gigantic faces would be

Reading Item Sampler: Grade 8

difficult for the workers. How would they know where Washington’s nose should go, for instance, when they couldn’t see his whole face? To solve this problem, Gutzon made a 60-inch-high plaster model of the presidents in his studio at the foot of the mountain.

Up on the mountain, each head was first carved into a rough, egg-like shape. Then Borglum used a kind of carve-by-numbers system. It was called “pointing” and worked like this: A heavy wire was hung from the top of each mountain head. Gutzon then hung smaller wires on his model. If the wire on the model measured 30 inches down to the tip of Washington’s nose, the workers measured 30 feet down on their mountain-measuring wire and marked that spot for the nose. In this way, thousands of bright red dots were painted on the mountain faces.

After that, holes were drilled at each of the red spots by workers suspended in “cages” and “swing chairs.” The men stuck dynamite sticks in the holes and blew off the unwanted stone. The deeper the hole—such as one for an eye socket—the more rock was removed.

Thousands of dynamite-packed holes, inches apart, made it possible to chop away 50 to 60 tons of granite at one blast. Nearly a billion pounds of stone were removed from Mount Rushmore by this kind of dynamite-carving. You can still see these rock chips lying at the foot of the mountain today.

When the four heads were dynamited down to within about 6 inches of where the final faces would be, the workers used air-driven drills and jackhammers and worked from platforms built against the side of the mountain. Finally, for the finer

carving, the men used hammers and hand chisels. If you could rub your hand on the presidents’ faces today, they would feel like concrete pavement.

During the blasting and chiseling, Gutzon Borglum spent more than half his time away from the monument, trying to raise money to pay for it. During those times, his son Lincoln oversaw the mountain carving—which was taking twice as long as expected. Most Americans were enthusiastic about the Mount Rushmore project. But few of them had any money to donate because of the Great Depression of the 1930s. On many occasions, money ran out, and the carving nearly stopped.

In 1930, schoolchildren were asked to give dimes and quarters to help carve the mountain. Because of the Depression, they brought pennies instead. Still, some two thousand dollars were collected, and by the time the monument was finished, schoolchildren and other citizens had given a total of \$153,992. The federal government paid the rest of the \$989,992.32 it cost to make this grand carving.

By 1941, Mount Rushmore was nearly finished. Then, suddenly, tragedy struck. Gutzon Borglum’s heart had been weakened by years of work in the mile-high altitude of the Black Hills. He had also been rushing about the country to raise money for his “Shrine of Democracy.” In February 1941, he went to Chicago with his wife, Mary, to raise funds by speaking on the radio. There he had a heart attack and died on 6 March at age seventy-four.

Fortunately for the project, Lincoln Borglum had worked with

Reading Item Sampler: Grade 8

his father on most of the Rushmore construction. Lincoln was now twenty-eight, and work on the monument continued under his supervision. By 31 October 1941, the heads of the four presidents were finally completed.

The granite in Mount Rushmore wears away at the rate of about one inch every 100,000 years. At that slow pace, the 60-foot heads of America's favorite rock group are bound to be around for at least 72 million years.

Reporting Category: Word Identification Skills
Grade Level Expectation: 3.1.2

1. As used in the passage, puny means
 - A difficult.
 - B undersized.
 - C magnificent.
 - D unattractive.

Reporting Category: Analysis of General Content and Structure
Grade Level Expectation: 3.9.1

2. How is the sculptor's admiration for the four presidents evident in his choice of a location for the monument?
 - A The mountain is among pines and spruce in a wilderness area.
 - B The Black Hills are visited by over two million tourists each year.
 - C The mountain is the tallest in the area and is illuminated throughout the day.
 - D South Dakota is in the middle of the country and accessible to all Americans.

Reading Item Sampler: Grade 8

Reporting Category: Forming a General Understanding
Grade Level Expectation: 3.4.1

3. Which alternative title would be **most** appropriate for the passage?
- A “The Uses of Dynamite”
 - B “The Faces of Democracy”
 - C “The Preservation of America”
 - D “The Life of Gutzon Borglum”

Reporting Category: Forming a General Understanding
Grade Level Expectation: 3.4.2

4. The Mount Rushmore project was completed by
- A Doane Robinson.
 - B Mary Borglum.
 - C Gutzon Borglum.
 - D Lincoln Borglum.

Reading Item Sampler: Grade 8

Reporting Category: Forming a General Understanding

Grade Level Expectation: 3.3.2

Short Constructed Response (2 points)

5. Why was Gutzon Borglum a good choice as the sculptor for Mount Rushmore?
Use one example from the passage to support your response.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“America’s Favorite Rock Group” © 1992 Mel Boring and Leslie Dendy. Reprinted with permission of Mel Boring.



**Reading Item Sampler
Grade 8**

Copyright © 2005 by Alaska Department of Education & Early Development. The materials contained in this publication may be duplicated by Alaska educators for local classroom use. This permission does not extend to the duplication of materials for commercial use.