

LESSON PLAN

American Symbols and Celebrations

Level: Literacy, Low Beginning

Suggested Length: 1 class period

Civics Test Questions

- #52—What do we show loyalty to when we say the Pledge of Allegiance?
- #95—Where is the Statue of Liberty?
- #96—Why does the flag have 13 stripes?
- #97—Why does the flag have 50 stars?
- #98—What is the name of the national anthem?
- #99—When do we celebrate Independence Day?
- #100—Name two national U.S. holidays.
- Related Test Item:
- #64—There were 13 original states. Name three.

Reading Test Vocabulary

- American flag, states
United States, U.S.
- Columbus Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Memorial Day, Presidents' Day, Thanksgiving
- What, When, Where, Who, Why
has, is/are/was, name
a, for, in, of, on, the, to, we
many, people

Writing Test Vocabulary

- flag, free, states
United States
- July
- Columbus Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Memorial Day, Presidents' Day, Thanksgiving
- has, is/was
and, for, in, of, on, the, to, we
blue, fifty, one, people, red, white

Objectives:

Students will:

- understand the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance and explain its purpose
- explain the symbolism of the stars and stripes on the American flag
- identify the location of the Statue of Liberty
- name the title of the national anthem
- identify July 4th as Independence Day
- name the national U.S. holidays and identify the respective dates for the current calendar year
- discuss other well-known U.S. symbols and holidays
- name three of the 13 original states

Materials:

Several wall calendars and pocket calendars for the current year

U.S. flag and U.S. wall map

Handouts: **The American Flag**, **Saying the Pledge of Allegiance**, **The Statue of Liberty**, **National U.S. Holidays**, and **Complete the Chart—Holidays**

8.5" x 11" visuals

Optional handout (Literacy Level Writing Practice): **The Pledge of Allegiance**

American Symbols and Celebrations Lesson Answer Key



Lesson Overview and Notes to Teacher:

This lesson introduces national symbols and holidays related to U.S. history. It includes information on the American flag, the Pledge of Allegiance, the Star-Spangled Banner, the Statue of Liberty, and national U.S. holidays. Additional 8 ½" x 11" visuals and ideas for using them in the classroom are included to help reinforce the readings. Students study the Pledge of Allegiance and do a matching exercise on new vocabulary. In the handout about the holidays, the students examine a current year calendar and identify the relevance of each holiday and when it is celebrated. The Literacy Level Writing Practice handout

The Pledge of Allegiance gives students a chance to review the words of the pledge.

For background to the discussion on the flag, refer to the beginning level lesson, Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence. See page 4 of the student handouts for a map activity on the original colonies. Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids located at www.bensguide.gpo.gov is also a useful resource about the symbols covered in this lesson.

Introduction: Display a U.S. flag and a U.S. map in your classroom. Write **American flag** on the board and ask the students **What do you think of when you see this flag?** Write key words from their answers on the board. Write

stars and **stripes** on the board and ask a student to come up and point out them out on the flag. Ask **How many stars are on the flag? (50)**. Then ask **How many stripes are on the flag? (13)**.

Guided Practice: Distribute the handout **The American Flag**. Write **symbol** on the board and tell the students **Flags are symbols for different things. What things do flags represent? (countries, states, teams, schools, ships, etc.)** Go over the paragraph, reading each sentence 2-3 times out loud for the students to hear. Have the students repeat each line after you. Ask the students **Why does the flag have 13 stripes and 50 stars? (The stripes represent the original colonies and Each star represents a state.)** Use the U.S. map to show the connection between the states and the stars. Have a more advanced student come up to the map to show where the 13 colonies were located. If you wish, distribute the map of the colonies (page 4 from the Thomas Jefferson lesson) to introduce or reinforce that the 13 stripes stand for the 13 original

colonies. If you have already taught about the colonies, ask the students to name them while you write them on the board. Remind your students that they will only need to name three colonies for the Civics Test. Ask them to name the colors of the flag and write the answers for the students to copy. Point out that this vocabulary (**colors, red, white, blue**) is on the reading and writing portion of the test. Explain the background of "The Star-Spangled Banner" and help the students with the pronunciation of the title. Point out that **Why does the flag have 13 stripes?, Why does the flag have 50 stars?, What is the name of the national anthem? and There were 13 original states. Name three.** are questions on the Civics Test.

Practice: Distribute the handout **Saying the Pledge of Allegiance**. Have the students examine the photograph and continue with the paragraph in the same manner as above. Demonstrate the proper etiquette for reciting the pledge to a flag in the classroom. Then model the pledge line by line. Have the students repeat after you several times until they feel comfortable saying it themselves without assistance. Review the new vocabulary in the matching exercise at the bottom of the handout and discuss the meaning of the words in the pledge. Ask the students if they have a similar practice in their native country related to their flag. Ask for volunteers to demonstrate their customs or pledge. Point out that **What do we show loyalty to when we say the Pledge of Allegiance?** is an item on the Civics Test.

Distribute the handout **The Statue of Liberty**. Ask the students **What do you think of when you see the**

Statue of Liberty? Have a student come to the board and show where it is located on the U.S. map. Discuss the photograph with the students. Explain that the United States is often called "a nation of immigrants." Point out that the immigrant family in this early 1900s photograph most likely came to the United States by boat. Ask your students what different ways immigrants have come here and why they came. Write key words from their answers on the board. Review the sentences in the paragraph as previously described. Point out that **Where is the Statue of Liberty?** is an item on the Civics Test.

Display a large wall calendar in the classroom. Distribute the handout **National U.S. Holidays**. Write **holiday** on the board and ask the students what it means (**special day, celebration**). Ask your students **Are there any holidays this month? Last month? Next month?** Then explain that there are special holidays that are official federal

holidays and distinguish them from other popular or religious holidays that many Americans celebrate. Review the paragraph line by line as described previously. Discuss with your students what their favorite holiday is and why. Write on the board **What is your favorite holiday? My favorite holiday is _____ and Why do you like it? Because _____.** Elicit from the students different reasons why they like a certain holiday and put their answers on the board in simple terms such as **because my family is together, because we have special foods/music, because we remember/honor _____, because we go to church/mosque/shrine/temple.** Students can fill in their answers to these questions on their handouts. Model the dialogue with several students. Then have the students practice the dialogue in pairs. In discussion about the holidays, you can also ask questions like **Do you have an Independence Day in your country?, What holidays celebrate famous people in your country?, Do you have a holiday to celebrate mothers and fathers?, and What other holidays do you have in your country?**

Distribute calendars for the current year to small groups or pairs of students. Draw the students' attention to the wall calendar for the year. Practice the months of the year again, and for fun, have them name the months backwards starting with December. Then, go around the room and have each student name a month in the correct order. If someone makes a mistake, go back to the first student and start around the room again. Distribute the handout **Complete the Chart—Holidays.** Review the ten national U.S. holidays and have the students tell you which month they occur. Then have them look up on the current year calendar to find the exact date each holiday occurs in the current year. They should fill in each holiday and the current year date (some months have more than one holiday so they should include all in that month's space). They can also fill in other popular holidays in the chart and the dates for them. Make sure the students understand that on the Civics Test, the item **Name two national U.S. holidays** refers only to the ten official U.S. holidays and not to other popular holidays.

Using the 8.5" x 11" Visuals: The large visuals provided in this lesson would work best if printed out in color. They include an American flag, a bald eagle, Mount Rushmore, the Statue of Liberty, the Liberty Bell, and other relevant images. You can display these around your classroom or use them for further discussion during

this lesson. Ask your students if they can think of other American symbols besides the flag and Statue of Liberty. Emphasize to your students that applicants need only know information about the symbols in the items covered in the Civics Test.

Additional Writing Practice for Literacy/Low Beginning Students: The handout **The Pledge of Allegiance** is included for optional copy work.

Francis Scott Key and the Star-Spangled Banner



*In "The Star-Spangled Banner," by Percy Moran, Francis Scott Key points at the flag flying over Fort McHenry.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-6200.*

The Pledge of Allegiance



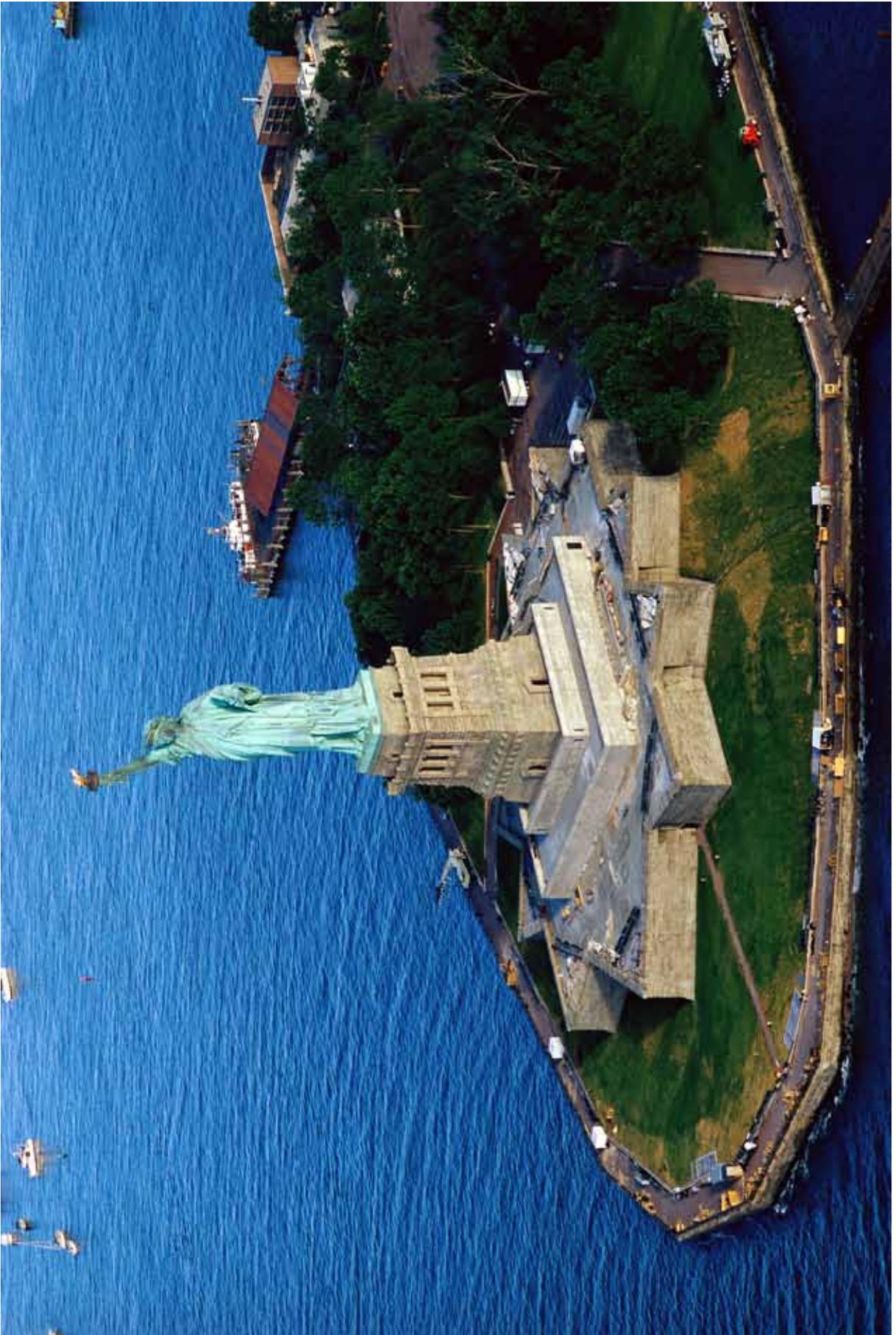
**I pledge allegiance to the flag
of the United States of America
and to the Republic for which it stands
one nation under God, indivisible
with liberty and justice for all.**



Saying the Pledge of Allegiance



Statue of Liberty



Independence Day Parade

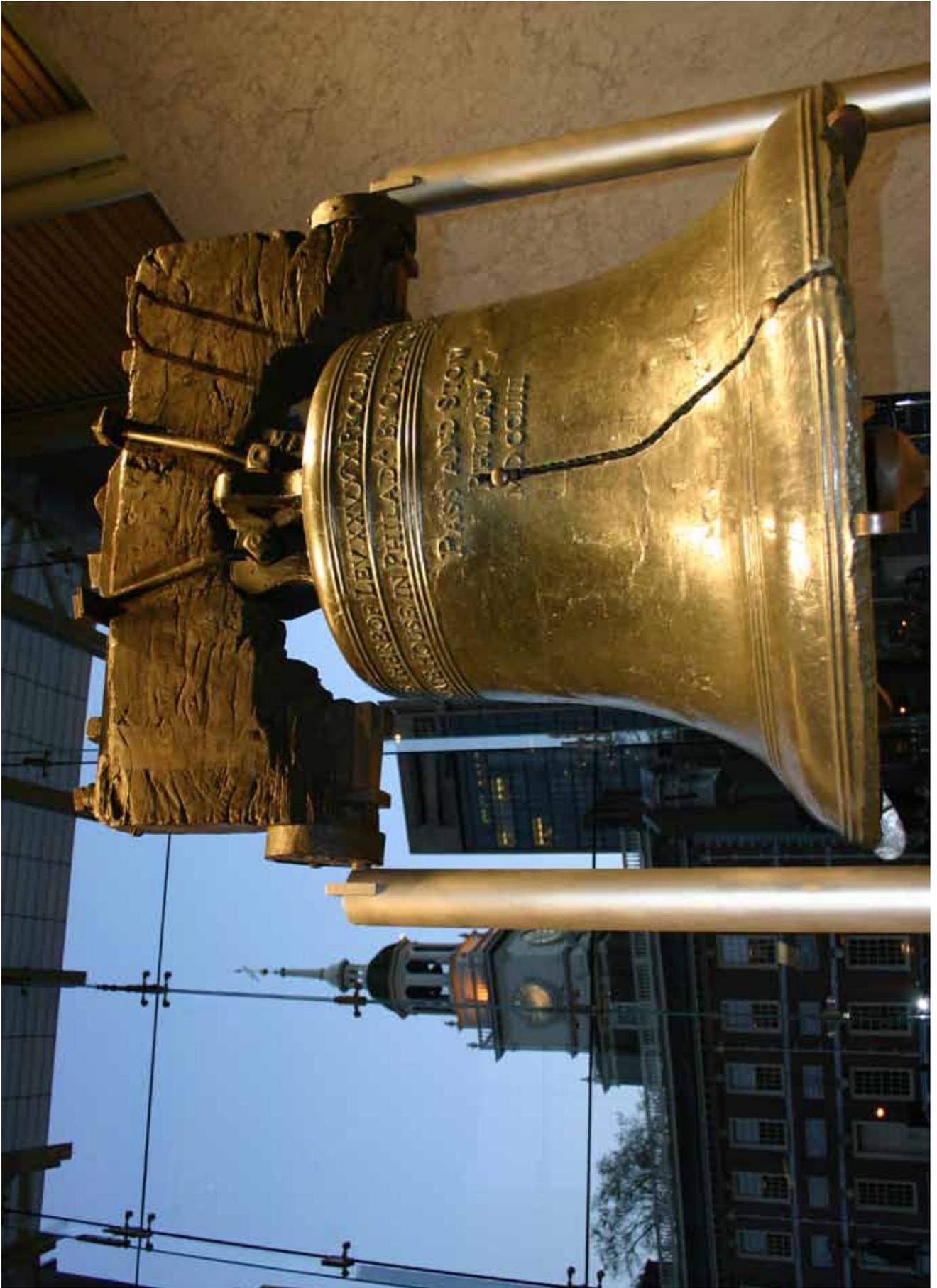


*A band plays patriotic music in an annual Independence Day parade in Garrett Park, Maryland.
Courtesy of the Newman family.*

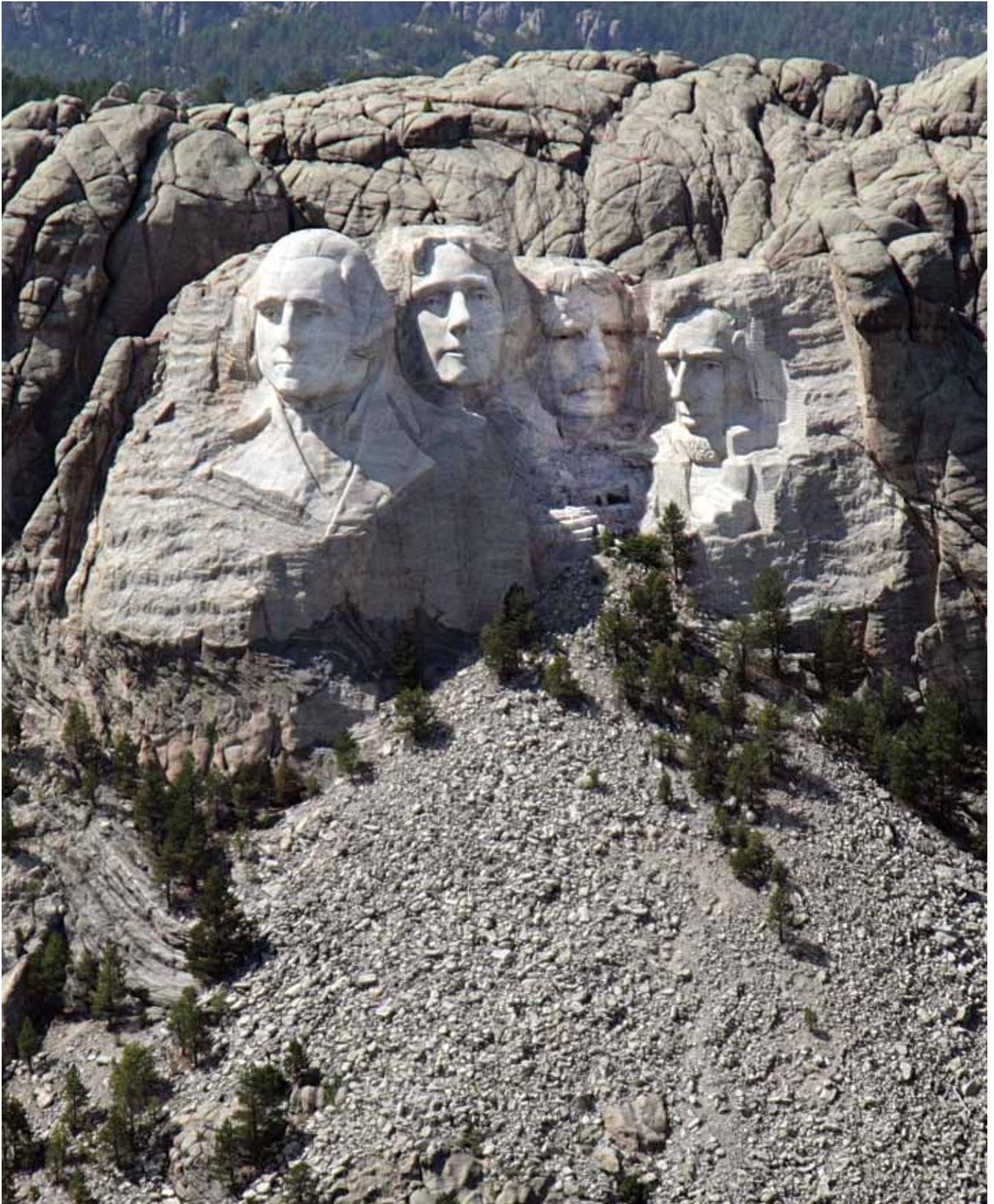
Bald Eagle



Liberty Bell



Mount Rushmore



*Mount Rushmore, South Dakota.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-DIG-highsm-04801.*