

# Glossary

Here are the meanings of some words it is useful to know when learning about rocks and minerals.

**Alloy** a metal that is made from combining two or more metals.

**Basalt** one of the most common forms of igneous rock.

**Coal** a rock made from plants that have been buried and squeezed over millions of years.

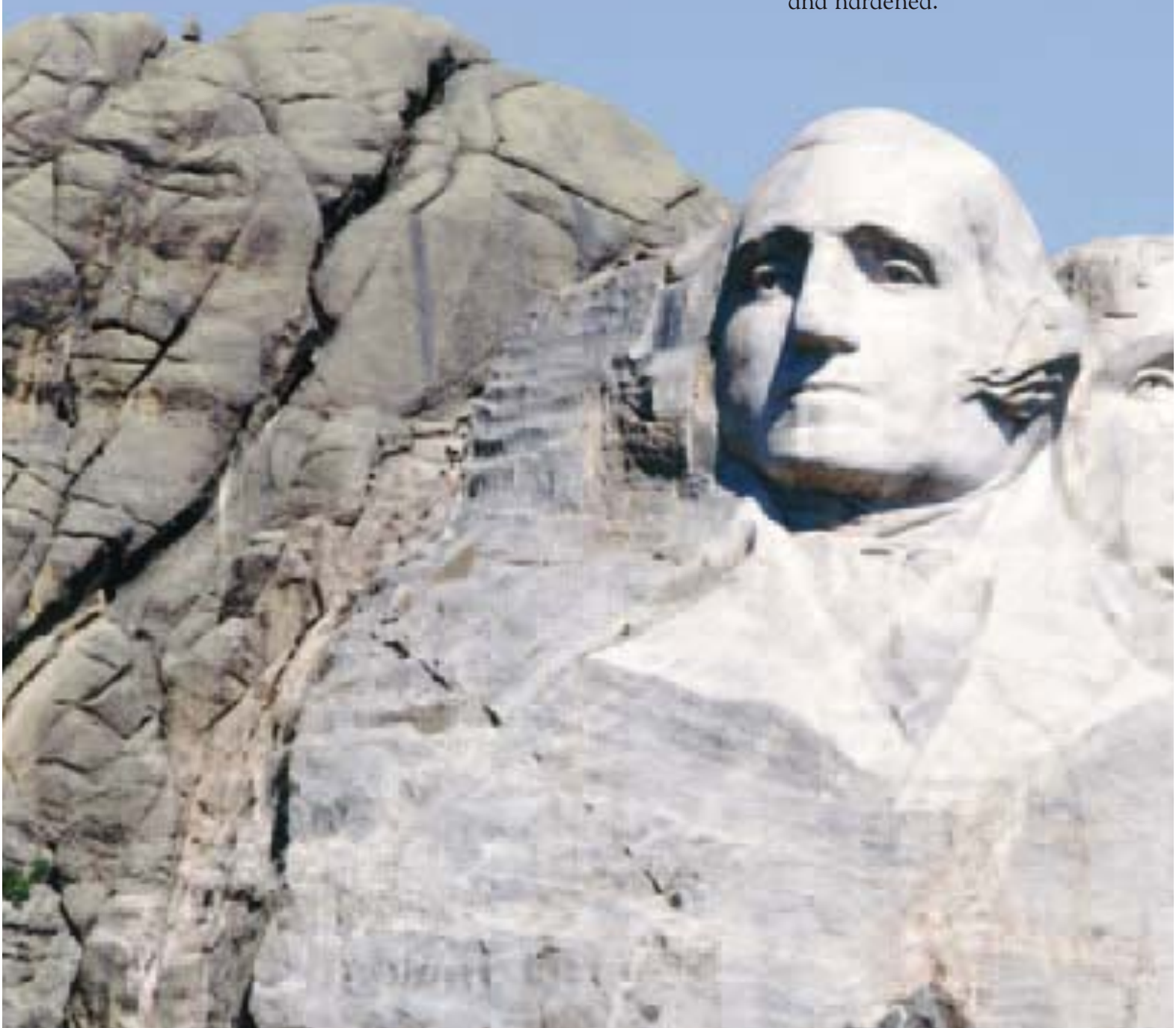
**Crystal** a naturally occurring substance with a specific make up which forms particular types of mineral.

**Erosion** the wearing away of a landscape.

**Fossil** the preserved remains of ancient life or evidence of their activity.

**Glacier** a mass of ice or snow which flows under its own weight.

**Igneous rock** rock made from molten rock that has cooled and hardened.



**Hoodoo** a column of soft rock with a harder lid, which protects it from erosion.

**Lava** the molten rock (magma) that has erupted from a volcano.

**Lignite** a woody kind of rock made from plants before they become coal.

**Magma** molten rock found deep inside the Earth.

**Mantle** the part of the Earth's interior that lies between the crust and the core.

**Metamorphic rock** rock melted by heat and pressure that cools and recrystallizes in a different form.

**Meteor** a lump of rock or metal from outer space that burns up as it enters the Earth's atmosphere.

**Meteorite** a meteor that has fallen to Earth.

**Mineral** a naturally occurring substance with very specific characteristics, such as hardness.

**Nugget** a small piece of something valuable, like gold.

**Open-cast mine** a mine with an open top, instead of tunnels under the Earth's surface.

**Ore** a rock that holds minerals.

**Quarry** a place where stone is dug up.

**Sediment** pieces of rock, and plant and animal material, that are carried by water, wind, or ice and usually deposited some way from their origin.

**Sedimentary rock** rock that is 'formed' when small pieces of rock or plant and animal remains become stuck together.

**Weathering** the breakdown of rock by the weather.

