

JUNÍPERO SERRA



BIOGRAPHY

JUNÍPERO SERRA

Junípero Serra was born on the Spanish island of Majorca in 1713. He became a Franciscan Catholic monk in 1730, and then spent ten years as a priest and intellectual.

In 1749, Serra traveled to Mexico to work as a missionary in Mexico City. Serra was then put in charge of missions in California. His aim was to spread the Christian message to the Native Americans living in the area, and to keep the land in Spanish hands rather than allow it to be colonized by rival European settlers.

Serra mostly traveled on foot or on horseback through California, and endured much physical hardship in the name of his religious beliefs. He helped found San Diego in 1769, and was part of an expedition to locate San Francisco Bay.

Serra pushed for the Franciscans to have more control in California. He persuaded leaders in Mexico to secure an overland route from Mexico into California, so that later colonists could build on his efforts and exploration. As a result, Spanish missionaries did indeed manage to settle San Francisco in 1776 and Los Angeles in 1781.

Throughout his lifetime, Serra helped found nine missionary settlements in California, and had a great influence on the Native Americans around him. He worked tirelessly to convert them, even using force when he thought it was necessary.

In the years before his death, Serra traveled around the missions in California to confirm the Native Americans who had already been baptized. He died at Mission San Carlos Borromeo on August 28, 1784.

Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'rival'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'rival' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'rival'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'rival'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'rival' means.

Try this for other words, too. 2

Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: endured	suffered

Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

As part of his work, Serra tried to convert as many Native Americans as he could.

First, Serra was a priest and intellectual in Spain.

But then Serra traveled to Mexico in 1749 to work as a missionary.

In 1784, Serra died at Mission San Carlos Borromeo.

Serra helped establish nine missions, including San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Junípero Serra was born on Majorca in 1713.

Serra was in charge of missions in California.

Get to the facts

1 Where was Serra born?

2 When did Serra travel to Mexico?

3 How did Serra travel around California?

4 Which settlement did Serra found in 1769?

5 How many missions did Serra found?

Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

Overland route

Imagine you are Junípero Serra. Write a letter to the Mexican leaders persuading them to secure an overland route between Mexico and California.

Below is a plain text version for printing:

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For example:

Key word – endured

Synonym – suffered

Sequencing:

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

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