



The “Face on Mars” Debate

In 1976, two Viking space probes arrived in orbit around Mars. Soon a picture came back of a mile long rectangular hill in the region of Mars known as Cydonia. The hill was unusual because in the late afternoon light, the shadows made it



New Hampshire's
Old Man of the
Mountains

resemble a human face. The scientists knew it for what it is, a rocky hill that just happens to have weathered in a manner to resemble a face, similar to New Hampshire's former *Old Man of the Mountain*¹.

Soon some people were saying it was evidence of a lost civilization on Mars. Nearby a series of small mountains were noticed that resembled pyramids. Yet another Viking picture showed a crater that resembles a Smiley Face. To *some people* this was proof that Mars once had real Martians!



Cydonian
Pyramids?

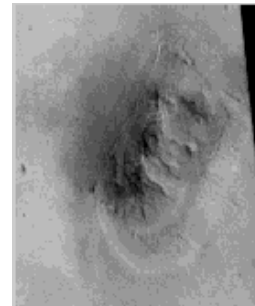
Questions

1. Do you think these pictures prove that an ancient civilization once flourished on Mars?
2. Where do we often see human forms appear in nature that just appear that way by random, like New Hampshire's “Old Man of the Mountains”?
3. How could we prove or disprove this Martian question once and for all?

The mystery is now unraveling. In 1998 scientists had *Mars Global Surveyor* pointed the probe's high-resolution cameras at the enigmatic *Face on Mars* that can be seen in the photo below. Compare the newer picture below with the earlier *Viking* image above. Higher resolution and different lighting make the landform appear quite differently.



A Smiley Face?



¹ The rock formation of *Old Man of the Mountain* collapsed in 2003.