



ELLIS ISLAND: DREAM OF AMERICA

Language Arts Lesson, Pre-Performance Activities
Grade Level: 4-5
Developed by Barbara Bartlett, WOWW Representative

OBJECTIVES

In preparation for the Amarillo Symphony's production of *Ellis Island: The Dream of America*, students will develop necessary vocabulary and understand the literary meaning of the classic poem "The New Colossus" recognized with the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island.

MATERIALS

Vocabulary list (page 2)
"The New Colossus" poem by Emma Lazarus (page 3)
Poem interpretation (page 4)
Information on Statue of Liberty (page 5)

PREPARATION

Introduce the poem, vocabulary and definitions. Have the interpretation ready for presentation. Present information on Statue of Liberty. Explain the poem will be used in the symphony's production.

PROCEDURE

Have students actively involved with the poem's terms and word meanings. Model by reading aloud the poem. Have students read aloud several times to enjoy the flow and impression the poem offers. Discuss the poem's interpretation and how the poem relates to the flowery speech of the time and period of history when it was written. (The poem is presented in the closing lines of the symphony's program.)

TEKS

Reading 4-5	4.1. ABC; B 1. ABC; B 3.ABC; B 7. DEF; B 8. ABC; B 9. AB; B 12. CDHJ
Social Studies 4	B 22. ABCDE
Social Studies 5	B4. G; B5.B; B25. ABCDE; B26. ABCDE

ELLIS ISLAND: THE DREAM OF AMERICA

Vocabulary

1. brazen – boldness
2. limbs – arms and legs of person
3. astride – to stand with legs stretched wide apart
4. imprisoned – to confine, to put in or as if in prison
5. beacon – source of light, inspiration or guidance
6. exiles – to leave or forced to leave one's country
7. ancient – old, existence of many years
8. huddled – closely packed group
9. refuse – useless or worthless part of something
10. masses – to assemble in large groups
11. pomp – splendor, a show of magnificence
12. yearning- to have yearning or compassion for
13. teeming – filled to overflowing, large quantity
14. tempest – tossed



THE NEW COLOSSUS

By Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand.

A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

“Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

EMMA LAZARUS, “THE NEW COLOSSUS” (1883)

Interpretation

Emma Lazarus' famous words, “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free” may now be indelibly engraved into the collective American memory, but they did not achieve immortality overnight. In fact, Lazarus' sonnet to the Statue of Liberty was hardly noticed until after her death, when a patron of the New York arts found it tucked into a small portfolio of poems written in 1883 to raise money for the construction of the Statue of Liberty's pedestal. The patron, Georgina Schuyler, was struck by the poem and arranged to have its last five lines become a permanent part of the statue itself. More than twenty years later, children's textbooks began to include the sonnet and Irving Berlin wrote it into a Broadway musical. By 1945, the engraved poem was relocated, including all fourteen lines, to be placed over the Statue of Liberty's main entrance.

Today the words themselves may be remembered a great degree more than the poet herself, but in Lazarus' time just the opposite was true. As a member of New York's social elite, Emma Lazarus enjoyed a privileged childhood nurtured by her family to become a respected poet recognized throughout the country for verses about their Jewish heritage. A reader and a dreamer, Lazarus had the good fortune to claim Ralph Waldo Emerson as a pen-pal and mentor. Before her death at age 37 Lazarus grew from a sheltered girl writing flowery prose about Classical Antiquity to a sophisticated New York aristocrat troubled by the violent injustices suffered by Jews in Eastern Europe.

In “The New Colossus” Lazarus contrasts the soon-to-be installed symbol of the United States with what many consider the perfect symbol of the Greek and Roman era, the Colossus of Rhodes. Her comparison proved appropriate, for Bartholdi himself created the Statue of Liberty with the well-known Colossus in mind. What Bartholdi did not intend, however, was for the Statue of Liberty to become a symbol of welcome for thousands of European immigrants. As political propaganda for France, the Statue of Liberty was first intended to be a path of enlightenment for the countries of Europe still battling tyranny and oppressions. Lazarus' words, however, turned that idea on its head: the Statue of Liberty would forever on be considered a beacon of welcome for immigrants *leaving* their mother countries.

Just as Lazarus' poem gave new meaning to the statue, the statue emitted a new ideal for the United States. Liberty did not only mean freedom from the aristocracy of Britain that led the American colonists to the Revolutionary War. Liberty also meant freedom to come to the United States and create a new life without religious and ethnic persecution. Through Lazarus' poem, the Statue of Liberty gained a new name: She would now become the “Mother of Exiles” torch in hand to lead her new children to American success and happiness.

STATUE OF LIBERTY

The Statue of Liberty is a huge sculpture that is located on Liberty Island in New York harbor. This monument was a gift to the USA from the people of France in recognition of the French-American alliance during the American Revolution.

The formal name of the statue is “Liberty Enlightening the World.” It pictures a woman who has escaped the chains of tyranny (the broken chains lie at her feet). Liberty’s right hand holds a torch that is a symbol of liberty.

Liberty was designed by the French sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartholdi. The hollow copper statue was built in France – it was finished in July, 1884. It was brought to the USA in 350 pieces on a French ship called the “Isere” (in June, 1885). The statue was re-assembled in the USA and was completed on October 28, 1886.

There are 354 steps inside the statue and its pedestal. There are 25 viewing windows in the crown. The seven rays of Liberty’s crown symbolize the seven seas and seven continents of the world. Liberty holds a tablet in her left hand that reads “July 4, 1776” (in Roman numerals), our Independence Day.

The statue is 305 feet 1 inch (93 meters) tall from the ground to the tip of the torch. The nose alone is 4 feet 6 inches (1.37 m) long.

STATUE OF LIBERTY QUIZ

1. The Statue of Liberty was a gift from what country? _____
2. In what year did the statue arrive in the USA? _____
3. Who designed the statue? _____
4. Where in the statue are 25 viewing windows located? _____
5. The torch is a symbol of what? _____
6. How tall is the statue? _____
7. What would you read on the tablet in her left hand? _____
8. What mineral was used to make the statue? _____
9. Where is the state located? What Island? _____
10. The seven rays of Liberty's crown symbolize what? _____