



Taking a Closer Look at *The New Colossus* Grades: 5-8 Pre-/Post- Visit Lesson Plan

Overview:

Famed poet Emma Lazarus helped bring another interpretation to the Statue of Liberty when she wrote *The New Colossus*. In this activity, students will explore Emma Lazarus's poem and look at how this written piece has added to our understanding of the Statue of Liberty.

Time Frame:

30 minutes

Materials:

- Sentence strips
- Pencils
- [Link to Emma Lazarus' biography](#)
- Text of *New Colossus*

Objectives:

Students will work in small groups to explicate the text of the *New Colossus*

Procedure:

1. Prior to the lesson, transcribe the text of *The New Colossus* onto individual sentence strips.
2. Invite students to look at the poem and read it to themselves silently.
3. Briefly introduce [Emma Lazarus](#) and explain that she wrote the poem, *The New Colossus*. Read the poem aloud and invite students to listen closely.
4. Discuss the first half of the poem and look for clues about its subject. Invite students to share any prior knowledge they might have about the poem. Who is the subject?
5. After students have finished their discussion, ask them do a dramatic reading of the text. You might have them read it one student at a time, or ask them to stand after they have read a line, or read it in

small groups where they can act out the text. Invite students to share any responses they might have to the dramatic reading.

6. Divide students into small groups. Explain that they will be working as a group to translate the poem.
7. Hand a pre-made sentence strip with text from the New Colossus to each group. Each group should receive a different one. Remember to hand students a new blank sentence strip for their translation as well.
8. Students work in groups to translate the poem into their own words. Once they have agreed upon the meaning of a sentence, they should transcribe their translation on to the new blank sentence strip.
9. Students bring the new sentence strips to the front of the classroom. Read the results aloud as a class. Ask groups if they would like to make any changes to their translations.
10. Ask students to write a response to the poem. What does the poem tell you about how immigrants might have viewed the Statue of Liberty? How might a poem written about immigration today differ from this poem?

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!"*