

“The New Colossus”

by Emma Lazarus



ABOUT THE READING The poem below was part of an auction to raise money to build the pedestal, or foundation, for the Statue of Liberty. The sonnet was first displayed on a plaque in the inner walls of the Statue's pedestal in 1903. Visitors to New York City can still view the plaque at the Statue of Liberty exhibit.

VOCABULARY

brazen bold

exiles people forced from their native countries

beacon signal, inspiration

wretched miserable

teeming crowded



As you read the poem below, think about how the poem describes the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of freedom to all who see her.

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 lighting, 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!”

Source: “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus. National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, November 2, 1883.

Underline the words that describe the humanness of the Statue of Liberty.

These words have become well known in American culture.

Most immigrants came to America by boat. Strong winds, or tempests, often tossed them about during the long journey.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

1. What does the line, "From her beacon-hand grows world-wide welcome" mean?

2. What does the Statue of Liberty symbolize for Americans today?

ACTIVITY

Suppose you are an immigrant sailing to America to begin a new life. Describe your reaction as you first catch sight of the Statue of Liberty welcoming you into New York harbor.