



The New Colossus

Determining Author's Perspective



Susan McHale

Published by K20 Center

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Grade Level	7th – 8th Grade	Time Frame	1 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	Duration	50 minutes

Essential Question

How does the text inform us of the author's perspective? What is the poem's message about the Statue of Liberty?

Summary

Students will employ a variety of reading strategies to analyze the poem, "The New Colossus." Their analysis will determine the author's perspective. This lesson also offers technology options for teachers, who may choose to use a Kindle E-reader, Google Doc, or Google Expeditions. While this lesson is currently aligned only to 8th grade standards, it would be appropriate to teach in grades 7th through 8th, adjusting standards as needed.

Snapshot

Engage

Students collectively brainstorm all they know about the Statue of Liberty.

Explore

Students listen to a reading of the poem, "The New Colossus." They read the poem a second time and write down words or phrases that are unfamiliar. Students work with a partner to determine the meaning of the unfamiliar words in the context of the poem.

Explain

The teacher reads the poem aloud and asks partners to share their contextually derived definitions of words in the poem as each line is read. The student pairs then work together to highlight phrases they perceive as either positive or negative. They complete a T-Chart activity using the highlighted phrases and draw a conclusion about the author's perspective regarding the Statue of Liberty and immigration.

Extend

Several options are provided as an extension of the lesson. Students imagine themselves as newly arrived immigrants seeing the Statue of Liberty for the first time. Students may complete a Google Expeditions activity by virtually "touring" the Statue of Liberty.

Evaluate

The vocabulary graphic organizer, the T-Chart activity, and the extension choices all serve as assessments of this lesson.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 8)

8.1.R.3: Students will engage in collaborative discussions about appropriate topics and texts, expressing their own ideas clearly while building on the ideas of others in pairs, diverse groups, and whole class settings.

8.3.R.2: Students will evaluate points of view and perspectives and describe how this affects grade-level literary and/or informational text.

8.4.R.3: Students will use context clues to determine or clarify the meaning of words or distinguish among multiple-meaning words.

Attachments

- [I Notice, I Wonder—The New Colossus - Spanish.docx](#)
- [I Notice, I Wonder—The New Colossus - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [I Notice, I Wonder—The New Colossus.docx](#)
- [I Notice, I Wonder—The New Colossus.pdf](#)
- [Lesson Slides—The New Colossus .pptx](#)
- [T-Chart—The New Colossus - Spanish.docx](#)
- [T-Chart—The New Colossus - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [T-Chart—The New Colossus.docx](#)
- [T-Chart—The New Colossus.pdf](#)
- [The New Colossus Poem—The New Colossus - Spanish.docx](#)
- [The New Colossus Poem—The New Colossus - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [The New Colossus Poem—The New Colossus.docx](#)
- [The New Colossus Poem—The New Colossus.pdf](#)
- [Vocabulary Builder—The New Colossus - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Vocabulary Builder—The New Colossus - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Vocabulary Builder—The New Colossus.docx](#)
- [Vocabulary Builder—The New Colossus.pdf](#)

Materials

- Lesson slides
- "The New Colossus" poem by Emma Lazarus
- Vocabulary Builder handout
- T-Chart student handout
- I Notice, I Wonder handout (optional)
- Notepaper

30 minutes

Engage

Introduce the lesson, beginning with the title on **slide 2**. Tell students that today they will discuss how to determine an author's viewpoint in a poem. Ask students if anyone might know the word "Colossus" from the title slide? If not, ask for volunteers to raise their hand if they know what the word "colossal" means? If they do, and they say "large" or "giant," then explain that a colossus is a gigantic statue or a person with giant size or power. The "Colossus" in the title of today's poem refers to the Statue of Liberty. After this discussion, show the essential questions for the lesson on **slide 3**.

Assign students to pairs or groups of three. Each group should choose a member to serve as the recorder and write down the group's ideas. Display **slide 4** explaining the directions for the [Collective Brain Dump](#) strategy. Set the embedded online timer for five minutes. The student pairs or groups are to brainstorm all they know about the Statue of Liberty.

Once the timer stops, randomly call on representatives from each group to share something they know about the Statue of Liberty. Add these ideas to a Google Document that is projected on the screen or on the chalkboard. Ask groups to only contribute new ideas to the list, without repeating what another group has previously said. Continue in this manner until all ideas about the Statue of Liberty are listed.

20 minutes

Explore

Hand out the attached student copy of “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus.

Teacher's Note: Poem Formatting

You will notice that the lines of the poem on the student handout are numbered. These are for reference and will be helpful for pointing out particular words and phrases as you discuss the poem with the class or as they work together in pairs or groups to analyze particular words or phrases. Later in the lesson, you will be also prompted to analyze the poem line-by-line.

Tell students that they will learn more about the Statue of Liberty through reading the poem, “The New Colossus,” written in 1883 by Emma Lazarus. Slowly read the poem aloud or present a video reading of [The New Colossus](#). (The full URL is listed in the Resources at the end of the lesson.)

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=NaKUuk78L1A>

After listening to the poem, ask for any volunteers to interpret the author's viewpoint of the Statue of Liberty. Use this brief discussion to enable the students to anticipate the results of their upcoming analysis of the poem.

Hand out the **Vocabulary Builder** handout and display **slide 5**. Keep students in pairs or groups and ask students to identify at least seven words together in the poem with which they are totally unfamiliar. Ask them to write the words down on their individual vocabulary builder. Next, have students discuss with their partner or group how each word is used in the phrase of the poem. Based on the context of surrounding words, students should predict the meaning of the words and write their predictions in the second column. After they have defined the words contextually, students should use their phones, Chromebooks, class dictionaries, or other resources to discover sourced definitions of the words and record those to complete their Vocabulary Builder handout.

Teacher's Note: Using Kindle E-Reader

If students have Kindle E-readers and can access the poem, they can use the dictionary feature to look up words directly on the Kindle.

After completing the Vocabulary Builder activity, have students reread the poem together, substituting unfamiliar words with their meanings for a greater understanding of the poem. Next, call the class together and discuss or re-read the poem, substituting the unfamiliar words with a synonym that has more meaning for students. The intent of this activity is for the students to understand unfamiliar words better by using context clues and to apply word substitution skills to derive meaning.

20 minutes

Explain

After the Vocabulary Builder activity and discussion, ask students to read or listen to the first two lines of the poem again. Remind students that earlier the class had discussed the word **Colossus** as meaning, "a gigantic statue or person." Show **slide 6** and explain the significance of the Colossus of Rhodes. Ask students, *What purpose did the Colossus of Rhodes serve in ancient Greece?*

Possible Student Responses:

"So that foreign trade ships would recognize the strength or power of Rhodes since they had to pass through the Colossus' feet" or "The Colossus celebrated a military victory and the military power of Rhodes," among others.

Now ask students, *How is the author of the poem, Emma Lazarus, comparing (or contrasting) the Statue of Liberty to the Colossus of Rhodes?*

Possible Student Responses:

"That the Statue of Liberty is a different type of Colossus," or "That this is not the same as what happened in Rhodes," or "The Statue of Liberty has a different purpose," among others.

Hand out the **T-Chart** handout to the same pairs or groups of three. Ask students again to reread the poem, this time looking for words or phrases in the poem that have a positive or negative connotation or meaning. You may wish to model this activity to get them started. For example, in line one, the phrase "brazen giant" might be seen as having a negative connotation because of the word "brazen," while in line four, the phrase "a mighty woman" might be viewed more positively. Ask groups to discuss each line of the poem looking for as many positive or negative words and phrases as they can find.

Teacher's Note: Using Kindle E-Reader

Kindle E-readers have a note section, and students can highlight words or phrases and then note them as positive or negative directly on the Kindle E-reader.

Once groups have finished this part of the [T-Chart](#), ask them to take turns sharing different words or phrases and explain how they interpreted them as either positive or negative. Be sure groups explain their reasoning as they share out and discuss who or what are these positive or negative phrases are referring to. Because groups may have chosen similar phrases, you may want to allow all groups who have chosen a particular phrase to share out their reasoning before moving on to the next word or phrase. The poem handout is numbered so you also may wish to go line-by-line.

After this discussion, display **slide 8**. Ask groups to write a summary of how the author perceives the Statue of Liberty and the statue's role in immigration. Space is provided on the T-Chart handout for the students to write their summary.

Extend

Turn off the lights of the classroom, and display **slide 9**. Ask students to imagine themselves for a moment as new immigrants coming by boat from a foreign land to New York harbor. Begin [The Statue of Liberty Poem](#).

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=E4wYFs5F76E>

You may wish to mute the sound. As they watch the video, have students jot down their thoughts and feelings as if they are a new immigrant entering the harbor as the Statue of Liberty comes into view.

Teacher's Note: Using EdWordle

[EdWordle](#) is a word cloud generator that allows students to process words or phrases visually related to one theme. While students are watching the video, access edwordle.net and click the "Create Now" button to start a new word cloud. Type the phrase, "Statue of Liberty" numerous times. In a word cloud, the more times a word is used, the larger it stands out. For this activity, typing Statue of Liberty four or five times will make it very large in the word cloud.

Without discussion, ask students to turn in the notepaper with their thoughts and feelings. Access your Statue of Liberty Wordle and type in all of the descriptive words (including repeated words) that the students jotted down during the video, and then click the "Go" button. The site will create a word cloud that represents how students expressed their thoughts and feelings for this activity, graphically highlighting by size the words used most frequently.

Teacher's Note: Technology Option (Google Expeditions)

If you have access to Google Expeditions, students may take a "virtual field trip" to Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty instead of using the Wordle activity. Students will need a Google Expeditions headset and/or viewer. You can access a lesson containing a link to the virtual tour [here](#). (The full URL is listed in the Resources at the end of the lesson.)

OPTIONAL: After the Wordle activity or the Google Expedition, you may wish to have students write a short first-person essay as a new immigrant, as described on **slide 10**. Prompt the essay with the following question: *What are the sights, smells, sounds, and feelings one might experience as a new immigrant to U.S. shores?*

OPTIONAL: If you choose to use the Google Expeditions technology option, you may also ask students to fill out an [I Notice, I Wonder](#) strategy handout (see attachments) as they tour Ellis Island. Ask students to write in the "I Notice" column at least five interesting things they observe on their tour. In the "I Wonder" column, ask students to write at least three questions that they still have about Ellis Island, the Statue of Liberty, or the author Emma Lazarus.

Evaluate

The Vocabulary Builder handout, the T-Chart handout, the optional immigrant essay, and the optional I Notice, I Wonder handout can all be used as assessments of this lesson.

Resources

- EncounterEdu. (n.d.). Poetry analysis #GoogleExpeditions Lesson. <https://www.tes.com/en-us/teaching-resource/poetry-analysis-googleexpeditions-lesson-11385078>
- Green, D. (2009, February 19). Statue of Liberty Poem. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=E4wYFs5F76E>
- Welcome to the land of freedom. (1187). Image. WikiMedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Welcome_to_the_land_of_freedom.png
- K20 Center. (n.d.) Collective brain dump. Strategy. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/111>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). EdWordle. Tech Tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/693>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). I notice, I wonder. Strategy. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/180>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). T-Chart. Strategy. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/86>
- Lazarus, E. (1883). The new colossus. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_Colossus
- Shared inquiry lesson plan for the new colossus by Emma Lazarus (n.d.) Great books foundation. https://www.greatbooks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/New_Colossus_Lesson_Plan.pdf
- File: Statue-of-liberty.jpg. (n.d.). In WikiMedia Commons. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Statue-Of-Liberty.jpg>
- TED-Ed. (2019, July 02). "New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NaKUuk78L1A>