

The New Colossus

Determining Author's Perspective

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Published by *K20 Center*

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Grade Level	7th – 8th Grade	**Time Frame**	1 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts, Social Studies	**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. Then, students will use their knowledge of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island to write a letter from the perspective of a newly-arrived immigrant. 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 students then work together in pairs 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

Students watch two videos about the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island and take notes to imagine themselves as newly arrived immigrants seeing the Statue of Liberty for the first time.

Evaluate

Students write a letter from the perspective of a newly arrived immigrant to the United States, focusing on their feelings and the sensory details they would have experienced.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

PPV402: Understand point of view in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards SOCIAL STUDIES (United States History)

USH.C.1.3.A: Summarize the reasons for immigration and the immigrant experiences of Southern Europeans, Eastern Europeans, and East Asians at processing centers such as Ellis Island and Angel Island.

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 8)

8.4.R.2: Students will use word parts (e.g., affixes, Greek and Latin roots, stems) to define and determine the meaning of increasingly complex words.

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 8)

8.1.S.2: Engage in collaborative discussions about what they are reading and writing, expressing their own ideas clearly while building on the ideas of others in pairs, diverse groups, and whole-class settings.
8.3.R.2: Evaluate perspectives (e.g., historical, cultural, ethnic, and global) and describe how they affect various literary and informational texts.

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
- Notepaper

15 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 to 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 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 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 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 may use their phones, Chromebooks, class dictionaries, or other resources to determine definitions of the words. Have them 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 familiar words for a clearer understanding of the poem. Next, call the class together and discuss or re-read the poem. As a group, have students substitute the unfamiliar words with a synonym that has more meaning for them. The purpose 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 to explain the purpose of the Colossus of Rhodes statue 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.

When students have analyzed the purpose of the statue of Colossus and discussed it thoroughly, ask them to comparison/contrast the Statue of Liberty to the Colossus of Rhodes.

Possible Student Responses:

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

Display **slide 7** and hand out the **T-Chart** to the same pairs or groups of three. Ask students to reread the poem again. This time have them look 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," or the word could be interpreted more positively as meaning “made of brass.” In line four, the phrase "a mighty woman" might be viewed positively. Ask groups to discuss each line of the poem looking for as many positive or negative words and phrases 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 these positive or negative phrases refer 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 summaries.

15 minutes

Extend

Have students get out a piece of notebook paper and something to write with. Turn off the classroom light and display **slide 9**. Explain to students that they will be given the task of imagining what newly arrived immigrants experienced when first arriving at Ellis Island. They will then write a letter back home from that perspective. To prepare, they will first watch several videos to give them more information.

Move to **slide 10**, inform students that they should take notes as the videos play. Their notes will include what they would touch, taste, hear, see, and smell when arriving in New York Harbor, as well as what they would be feeling. Then play the video, Immigrant at Ellis Island.

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=bDNKHWzQiz8

Once the video finishes, ask students to share what details they took notes on and have a brief discussion about what they noticed.

Next, move to **slide 11**, remind students to take notes again, and start the video Statue of Liberty 4k Drone. After the video, ask students to share what they took notes on again.

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=gLoT9OD_0cw

30 minutes

Evaluate

Move to **slide 12** and tell students that they will now create a letter using the following prompt:

Imagine that you are an immigrant that has newly arrived in America. In a letter to a friend from your home country, explain what you saw and what you felt as you saw the Statue of Liberty for the first time and arrived at Ellis Island.

Letters need to include the following:

- At least 300 words;
- At least 3 words from the Vocabulary Builder;
- At least 5 words that have a clear positive or negative connotation;
- At least 3 details from the videos;
- A greeting and a closing.

Give students 25 minutes to plan and write their letter.

Once students have finished writing, hand out highlighters, move to **slide 13**, and have students do the following:

- Circle the words used from the Vocabulary Builder.
- Highlight the words that have a clear positive or negative connotation and have them write in the margin which they are (positive or negative).
- Underline the details used from the video.

Have students submit their letters once they finish.

Resources

- Great Books Foundation. (n.d.). Shared inquiry lesson plan for the New Colossus by Emma Lazarus. https://www.greatbooks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/New_Colossus_Lesson_Plan.pdf
- Green, D. (2009, February 19). Statue of Liberty Poem. https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=E4wYFs5F76E
- K20 Center. (n.d.) Collective brain dump. Strategy. https://leWarn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/111
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- Lazarus, E. (1883). The new colossus. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_Colossus
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