

## The New Colossus

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Emma Lazarus was an American poet. She is most famous for her sonnet "*The New Colossus*" which was inscribed at the base of the Statue of Liberty in 1903. She wrote the sonnet to raise money for construction of the statue's pedestal. Many believe it was "The New Colossus" that turned the Statue of Liberty into an international symbol of hope and opportunity, rather than the statue itself. Read the poem and answer the questions.

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  
Glows 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!"

## Questions

1. Which lines do you think represent hope to would-be immigrants? Explain.
2. "*The New Colossus*" is full of symbolism. Draw three images from the poem and describe what each refers to.


3. Think of the Statue of Liberty. What might Lazarus be referring to with "Imprisoned Lightning?"
4. The poem is called the "*New Colossus*" and refers to the Colossus of Rhodes, a huge statue honoring the Greek sun-god Helios. How does Lazarus claim the Statue of Liberty is different from the Colossus of Rhodes?

## Possible Answers

### Questions

1. Which lines do you think represent hope to would-be immigrants? Explain.

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!

Here, Lazarus is beckoning those who have been lost or forgotten to come to America. She is welcoming all of those who wish for freedom or opportunity.

2. “*The New Colossus*” is full of symbolism. Draw three images from the poem and describe what each refers to.

Answers vary. Students will draw different scenes.

3. Think of the Statue of Liberty. What might Lazarus be referring to with “Imprisoned Lightning?”

She is referring to the electric torch, which was a technological marvel for its time.

4. The poem is called the “*New Colossus*” and refers to the Colossus of Rhodes, a huge statue honoring the Greek sun-god Helios. How does Lazarus claim the Statue of Liberty is different from the Colossus of Rhodes?

In the first two lines of the sonnet, Lazarus claims that the Statue of Liberty is welcoming and perhaps humble (rather than brazen) and interested in freedom rather than conquest.