

The Story of the Statue

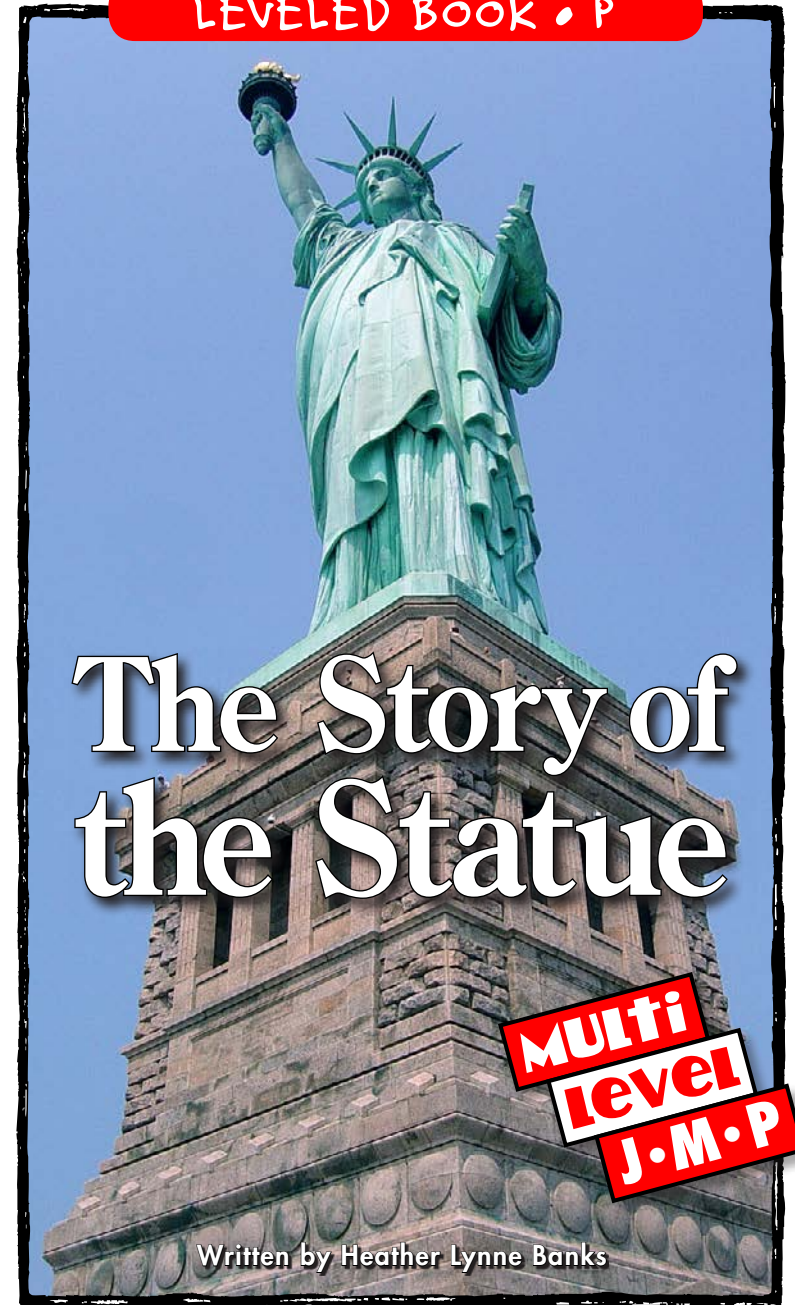
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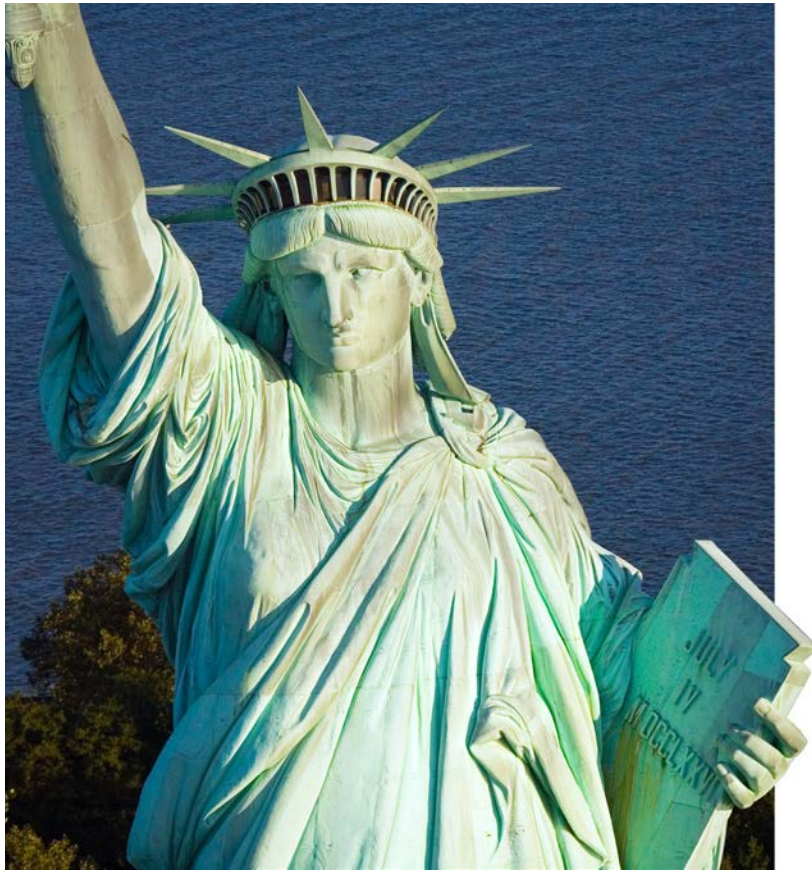
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**Multi
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Written by Heather Lynne Banks

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The Statue of Liberty as seen today

Introduction

The Statue of **Liberty** is a famous **monument** in the United States. It is a great work of art that is important to our country's past, present, and future.

Super-Sized Statue

The Statue of Liberty looks like a giant green woman! It weighs about 450,000 pounds, or as much as 115 cars. From the ground to the tip of its torch, it is 305½ feet—as tall as a 30-story building. From head to toe, it is 111½ feet tall—taller than three school buses stacked end to end.



Workers fix the torch in 1985.

The statue is located on an island near New York. As the tallest statue in the United States, Lady Liberty can be seen from miles away. Where did this famous monument come from?



People in New York City can see the Statue of Liberty across the water.



Edouard de Laboulaye

An Idea Is Born

Edouard de Laboulaye, a French historian, admired the United States. In 1865, he gave a dinner party. One of the guests was the sculptor Auguste Bartholdi. Mr. Laboulaye told Mr. Bartholdi that he wanted to give a gift of friendship to the United States. The gift was the Statue of Liberty.

Mr. Bartholdi began planning the statue in 1871. First, he suggested that they build it on Bedloe's Island, in New York Harbor. The Americans thought about it and agreed. Then, Mr. Bartholdi made a clay model of the statue. The model was finished in 1875.



One of the original bronze models of the statue in Paris, France

The statue needed to last through wind and bad weather. So the French **engineer** Gustave Eiffel agreed to help. He created a strong iron skeleton for the statue. He also had the idea to cover the outside with 300 sheets of thin copper.

Made in France, Moved to America

The statue was expensive. France agreed to build and pay for the statue. The United States agreed to build and pay for its pedestal. Both countries asked people to donate money for the cause. Even children gave their spare coins and dollars. In 1876, the United States borrowed the statue's arm and torch. It was put on display to help raise money. People saw part of the statue and wanted to give even more money.



The arm and torch were shown in Philadelphia in 1876.

In 1878, the statue's head was finished and displayed in Paris. The statue's arm and torch were returned to France in 1882. Finally, in 1884, the entire statue was put together. Then the French took the statue apart! The pieces were packed into 214 crates and put on a ship to the United States. The ship arrived in 1885.



The finished statue in Paris, France, in 1884



A painting of the celebration in 1886

The Statue of Liberty was placed on its pedestal in 1886—ten years late! It was supposed to be given to the United States in 1876. This date was 100 years after the United States declared its **independence**. People were still happy, though. They held a celebration with music and a parade. President Grover Cleveland even gave a speech.



Children wave hello to their new home in the United States.

Symbolism of the Statue

The statue is more than a work of art. It is a **symbol** of friendship between two countries. It also stands for the **freedom** and hope of people who have moved to the United States. A poem on display inside the pedestal includes the famous lines, “Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”

Certain parts of the statue have special meaning as well. The crown has seven spikes, which stand for the seven seas and continents of the world. The torch in the statue's right hand is a symbol of freedom. The tablet in the statue's left hand has the date *July 4, 1776*, written on it. This is the date when the Declaration of Independence was signed.



The date *July 4, 1776*, is written on the tablet in Roman numerals.



The Statue of Liberty at night

Liberty for All

The Statue of Liberty has stood the test of time, though it has needed some repairs. American workers have made the iron skeleton stronger and have added many lights. The statue started out the color of a shiny, new copper penny. The air slowly made it change color. By the 1920s, it had turned green!

Millions of people from all over the world visit the Statue of Liberty each year. They take a ferry to the island, which is now called Liberty Island. They were once able to climb to the torch. Today, however, visitors are only allowed inside the pedestal and crown. People will continue to visit the statue for many years to see this symbol of freedom.



A girl being lifted to see out of a window in the statue's crown

Glossary

- engineer** (*n.*) a person who designs, builds, or repairs machines, buildings, bridges, or other structures (p. 8)
- freedom** (*n.*) the state of being free, or having the right and power to act and think as one wishes (p. 12)
- independence** (*n.*) freedom from the control, influence, support, or help of others (p. 11)
- liberty** (*n.*) the right to believe and act independently of other people (p. 4)
- monument** (*n.*) a building, statue, or other structure built as a memorial to a person or event (p. 4)
- symbol** (*n.*) an object, picture, or sign that represents an idea, letter, or word (p. 12)