

MATERIALS

- Pictures, books and Web sites on the Statue of Liberty
- Windows or other light source
- Classified section of newspaper
- Spray bottle with green food coloring and water (the more food coloring, the darker the color)
- 9" x 12" manila paper
- 12" x 18" white paper
- Pencils, crayons and assorted markers
- Black permanent markers
- Scissors
- Glue
- Watercolor sets and paintbrushes

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Elementary students will ...

- better understand the historical background and symbolism of the Statue of Liberty.
- experiment and use different media and techniques in communicating their ideas.
- create a unique rendition of the Statue of Liberty.
- become more aware of the many different cultures that make up the United States of America.
- make a connection between visual arts and other subject areas.



Family photograph from 1905.



Johnathan T.

Give Me Liberty

by Debra B. Sweeney

A few years ago, I made my first trip to New York City. I was so inspired that, three years later, I am still thinking about the magnificence of this historical, multi-cultural, urban city.

One of my all-time favorite tours was of Ellis Island. My friend and I walked through the same buildings thousands of poor immigrants had walked through in search of a better life. I was able to look up some of my own ancestors who

arrived like so many other immigrants in the 1890s.

Since then, I have incorporated my experience into several meaningful cross-curricular art activities. One of the most enjoyable and successful was a collage project of “Lady Liberty.” This lesson can be used and adapted for any grade level, but in this instance I chose to introduce this lesson to my fourth-grade class.

I started the lesson with some old photographs of my

great-grandparents and their children, telling students the story of how my ancestors had come from Sicily to New York in search of a new life. The photos show a young family at the turn of the century. I pointed out that my grandmother was only 5 years old in the photo. The children were fascinated that she had been born in 1900.

Then I asked the students, "What did these immigrants see when they landed in New York?" Of course they all knew and shouted out, "The Statue of Liberty!"

That's how I introduced my PowerPoint presentation on the facts and history of Lady Liberty. We learned that she had been a gift from France. We talked about the sculptor, Frederic Bartholdi, the statue's enormous size and its journey to the United States. I read the poem by Emma Lazarus and we shared how this poem made us feel. I had several books, pictures and Web sites to share with the students.

After we discussed many interesting facts about the famous Lady Liberty, I introduced the collage project. Students were instructed to create their own portrait rendering of the Statue of Liberty on a 9" x 12" piece of manila paper. After they were satisfied with their sketches, they were then told to put their drawings aside and find a sheet from the classified section of newspaper.

By this point, they were wondering what was next. To their surprise, I asked the students to lightly spray their sheet of newspaper with a spray bottle containing water and green food coloring.

While we let the green newspaper dry, I showed them how to trace their original drawing onto the green newspaper. Finally, I demonstrated cutting the green portrait out and placed it on 12" x 18" white paper. My art room has lots of windows, so several students could hold their drawings to the glass to trace, while a few of the students used a light box.

After brainstorming ideas, students created backgrounds on the white paper. Some of them chose fireworks, others created urban skylines or sunsets, while a few students decided on a simple watercolor wash. The results were fabulous! Each child's project had a unique and different look.



Students drew portraits of Lady Liberty on 12" x 9" manila paper.



Alison T.

RELATED RESOURCES

BOOKS

- Gutman, Anne and Hallensleben, Georg, *Lisa in New York*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2002.
- Penner, Lucille Recht, *The Statue of Liberty*. Random House Books for Young Readers, 2003.
- Lewison, Wendy Cheyette, *L is for Liberty*. Grosset & Dunlap, 2003.
- Curlee, Lynn, *Liberty*. Aladdin, 2003.
- Nason, Thelma Campbell, *Our Statue of Liberty*. Follett Publishing Co., 1969.
- Drummond, Allan, *Liberty!* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002.
- Roitman, Tanya, *I'm Going to New York to Visit the Lions*. Sterling, 2005.

WEB SITES

- www.libertystatepark.com/emma.htm
- www.nationalgeographic.com/ngkids/9907/
- www.statueoflibertyclub.com/links.html

Our school has children from many different cultures. During this entire process, we discussed many present-day issues, such as immigration, democracy and the symbolism of liberty. We even learned a few new words in different languages. In the end, the students had created a unique project that conveyed their feelings and emotions about our great country. ■

Debra B. Sweeney teaches pre-K through fifth-grade art at Nottingham Country Elementary School in Katy, Texas.