

## The Statue of Liberty

Have you ever seen the Statue of Liberty? It is a lighthouse shaped like a woman holding a torch. It stands in New York Harbor and welcomes ships to the United States.

The statue stands 151 feet high and weighs 225 tons. The arm that holds the torch is 42 feet long. The index finger alone is eight feet long. Liberty's crown contains seven points, which represent the seven seas and the seven continents. The statue appears green because its exterior is copper that has oxidized due to exposure to the elements.

The statue was a gift from France to celebrate the two nations' commitment to liberty. It was conceived, designed, and constructed by Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, who began work on the statue in France in November of 1875. It was not finished until April of 1886. After Bartholdi finished the statue, it was decided that it would be shipped to America in pieces. It filled 214 crates. When all the crates arrived in America, the statue was reassembled on a pedestal on an island in New York Harbor.

The real name of the statue is *Liberty Enlightening the World*. Bartholdi's wife was the model for the statue's shape, and his mother was the model for the face. He got the idea for the statue after he saw enemy soldiers shoot a French girl carrying a torch during a war.

The statue soon became a symbol of American freedom, especially for those coming to this country to make a new home. Located near Ellis Island, the arrival point for European immigrants, the statue was one of their first American sights. The statue has been an inspiration to millions of immigrants who have come to this country.

