

COMING TO AMERICA: THE STORY OF THE STATUE OF LIBERTY AND ELLIS ISLAND



Characters

Narrator

Francis

Captain

Mama

Sophia

Captain's Son

Setting

This reader's theater takes place in 1906 aboard a transport ferry, which is taking immigrants from a large ship to Ellis Island. This story is based on actual events.



Francis



Captain's
Son



Sophia



Mama

Act 1

Narrator: A ferry sails through New York Harbor. The Statue of Liberty can be seen briefly through gaps in the morning fog.

Captain: Look closely now. There! Did you see her?

Narrator: Mama and Sophia gasp.

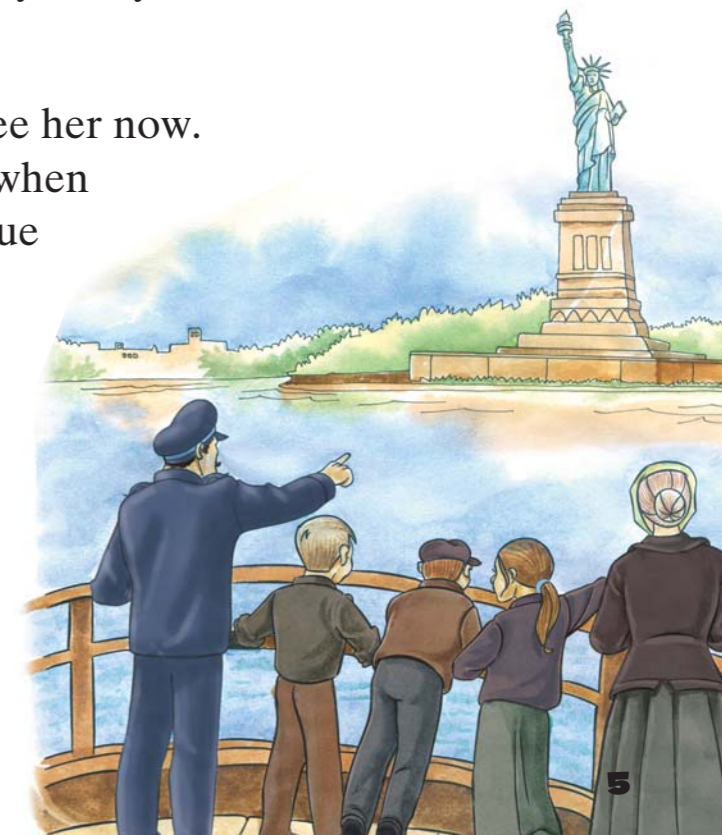
Sophia: Oh, Mama. She's beautiful—a princess! Did you see her crown?

Francis: I didn't see anything. What am I looking for?

Narrator: Mama doesn't turn to look at her son. She keeps her eyes looking forward. Her hands cover her mouth.

Captain: Hope. That's what you're looking for. And that's what your Mama sees. Now don't take your eyes off . . . There! Do you see?

Francis: Wow! Yes, I see her now. Papa said that when we see the Statue of Liberty, we've made it to America.



Narrator: Mama pulls her children close. They giggle with joy.

Mama: That's true. It won't be long before we see Papa, too.

Sophia: I miss Papa. It's been so long. I want to be a whole family again—instead of in pieces.

Captain: The statue knows how that feels. Lady Liberty also came to America in pieces. She was packed up in wooden crates.

Captain's Son: Two hundred fourteen crates to be exact. She was brought here on a ship called the *Iseré*. My father saw it with his own eyes.

Act 2

Mama: Miss Liberty is a work of art. They say she was a gift from France.

Captain: That is true. I was but a young lad myself back in 1886. I was one of thousands who gathered to see the statue arrive aboard a grand white ship. French and American flags were waving from every hand.

Captain's Son: It took almost a year for America to build her pedestal. People donated money to help build it. Some of that money was tossed into the mortar when the pedestal was built. The coins can still be seen in it today!

Captain: Yes, she was a great effort by two countries. Nearly 600,000 rivets hold her copper sheeting together. It was the sweat of hundreds and money of thousands that placed her in New York Harbor.

Sophia: Francis and I read all about the Statue of Liberty on posters while we waited to board the ship in France.

Francis: There wasn't much else to do while we waited in the long lines. Everything about the statue means something. She's dressed in ancient Greek robes because Greece was the birthplace of democracy long ago.



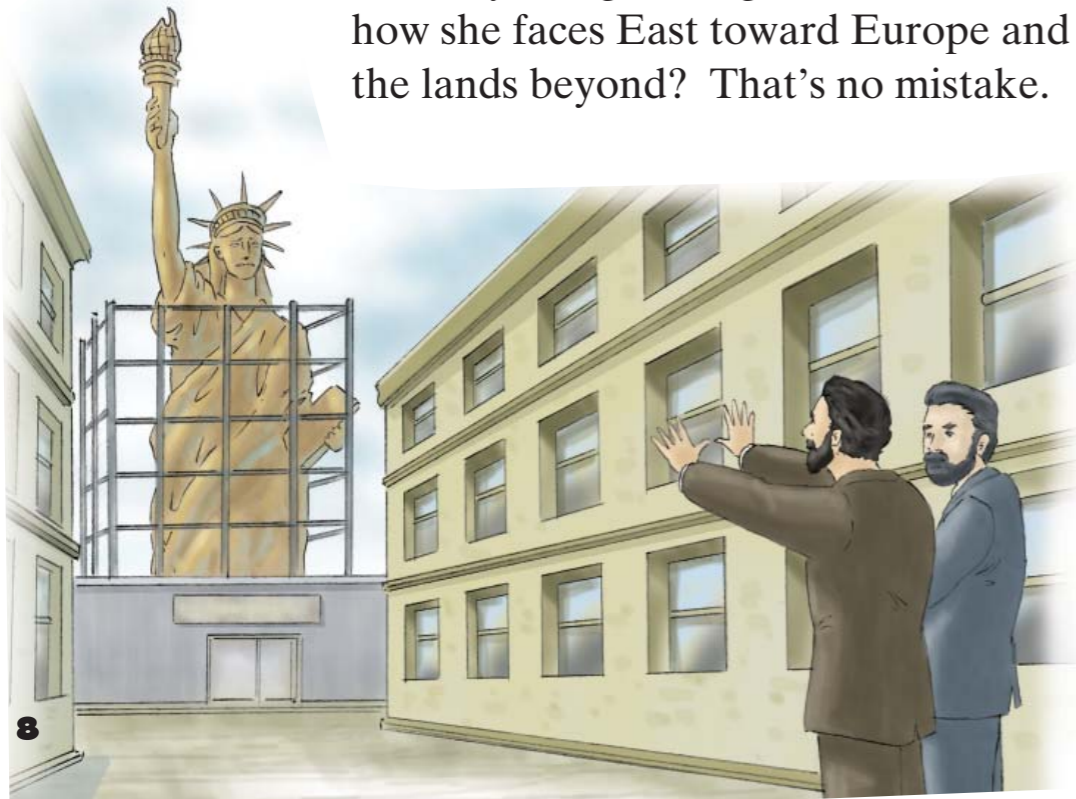
Sophia: The seven points on her crown stand for the seven continents and seven seas.

Francis: They say there's a length of broken chain at her feet showing that oppression won't be allowed in America.

Sophia: In America, there are no kings or czars—just people like Francis, Mama, and me. We don't have to be afraid anymore. We can do what we want, say what we want, and pray how we wish.

Act 3

Captain: Look at our Lady Liberty. Her real name is "Liberty Enlightening the World." Notice how she faces East toward Europe and all the lands beyond? That's no mistake.



Francis: So her hope is that countries all around this world will someday enjoy freedom—like America?

Captain: Right you are, son. The French admired America's democracy, so they hired a French sculptor. His name was Auguste Bartholdi. They asked him to create a statue as a gift to America for her 100th birthday. It took ten years to complete the statue, but she was worth the wait.

Captain's Son: Father, don't forget Gustave Eiffel. He designed the iron framework inside the statue so that she would stand strong for a long, long time. I want to be just like Mr. Eiffel when I grow up.

Captain: You will, Son. Each of our dreams can be different in America. My dream is to sail this ferry each day.

Captain's Son: My dream is to build an iron bridge across this harbor. Father, I will build it tall enough so that you will be able to ferry under it.



Song: America Is Going To Be My Home

Coming to America

Statue of Liberty Lesson Plan

Objectives

- **Fluency:** Students will read passages fluently after practicing and monitoring fluency with repeated readings.
- **Content Area:** Students will learn about the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, as well as what both symbolize for those coming to the United States. They will also learn about the problems and challenges that the immigrants encountered after arriving in America.

Summary

Coming to America is the story of a family of immigrants who are eager to come to America. After traveling from their homeland and arriving in America, they find that they cannot keep their eyes off the Statue of Liberty with its promises and hopes for the future. Certain that they will have a better life in America, the family finds the Statue of Liberty to be a symbol of their dreams.



Materials

- *Coming to America: The Story of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island* script booklets
- *Statue of Liberty Character Masks* (pages 38–43 or Teacher Resource CD), copied on cardstock
- copies of *Take-Home Script: Coming to America: The Story of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island* (Teacher Resource CD)
- PowerPoint® slide show (Teacher Resource CD)
- overhead transparencies of the poem and song (Teacher Resource CD)
- Performance CD and CD player or computer with a CD drive and speakers

Introduce the Literature

Read aloud *The Story of the Statue of Liberty* by Betsy Maestro. Explain what sequential or chronological order means. Tell students that it took several steps to create the Statue of Liberty. Give each student a piece of white paper. Tell students to draw five squares on their papers and then label the squares one through five. Tell them that they should now pick out the five most important steps in creating the Statue of Liberty. Have them use the ideas from the book to draw pictures of the steps, as well as write one to two sentences under each picture. Allow them to share their pictures in small groups or with the class.



ELL Support

Give ELL students five sentences about building the Statue of Liberty. Tell them to put those five sentences in chronological order and to draw pictures to go with each sentence.

Involving All the Students

This script has only six roles, but there are many ways to involve all students. For this reader's theater experience, assign the main roles to six students. Ask the other students to read the song or the poem. Allow them to practice reading the song and poem together as a group several times, while the other students practice their roles. You might also divide the remaining students in half and assign the poem to one group and the song to the other.

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Reading the Script



1. Before reading the script, show the students pictures of the Statue of Liberty. Ask them what the statue means to them. What do they know about the statue? Write down their thoughts on the board. Ask if anyone has ever moved to a new area or a new school. How did they feel? Were they excited? Scared? Allow them to share their feelings with the class.
2. Provide each student with a copy of the script. Give the script booklets to small groups or print copies of the *Take-Home Script: Statue of Liberty*. Explain that the students will read a script about a family that moves to America to fulfill their hopes and dreams. The first thing they see as they arrive in America is the Statue of Liberty. What might the immigrants feel when seeing the statue for the first time? What might their thoughts be? Allow students to make predictions before reading the script.
3. Tell the students to pretend to be immigrants coming to America for the first time. What are their thoughts and feelings? Have them write diary entries to their families back home, explaining their feelings as they see the Statue of Liberty for the first time. Ask them to use at least three of the new glossary words in their diary entries and then share their entries with the class.
4. Play the recording of the script as students follow along. Call on students to help read the script. Read the whole script using different students every few pages.
5. Make a list on the board of the six characters from the script. Tell each student to choose a character from the script. Have them use note cards to make identification cards of the characters they chose. Their identification cards should include the following: the character's picture, name, gender, age, reason for coming to America, and two interesting facts about that character. Students can use information from the script, as well as their own imaginations, to create the identification cards.
6. Assign students parts in the script. Allow them to read their parts silently to become familiar with the parts before the practice readings and the actual performance. Explain that they should do repeated readings to improve their fluency.



ELL Support

Some ELL students may have interesting stories about their first trips to America. Allow them to share these stories of coming to the United States for the first time, or stories about when their families arrived for the first time. How did they feel? Were they questioned? Were they tested? Were they excited or scared?



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Assigning Roles

Assign roles to students based on their reading proficiency. It is important to remember that when students practice fluency, they should read materials at or below their reading level. This helps them to focus on their accuracy, expression, and reading rate. If a student is reading text that is too difficult, his or her attention will focus on sounding out words and comprehension rather than on fluency. These are approximate reading levels for the roles in this script:

- ❖ Sophia: high 1st grade
- ❖ Narrator: low 2nd grade
- ❖ Francis: high 2nd grade
- ❖ Mama: high 1st grade
- ❖ Captain's Son: low 2nd grade
- ❖ Captain: high 2nd grade

Meeting the Fluency Objective

1. The fluency objective for this script focuses on the use of repeated readings to increase reading fluency. Explain that to make the script fun and enjoyable for the audience, it is important for students to practice reading the lines over and over again to ensure smooth reading.
2. Divide the class into groups of six. Assign a speaking part to each student in the group. If a group has less than six students, select one or more students to assume two speaking parts.
3. Have each group review the script and determine where to place emphasis on words or add expression. If using copies of the script, have the students write reminder notes or draw pictures of faces that show the types of expressions to use as they read the script.
4. Offer helpful suggestions to students to improve their fluency and expression. Remind them to slow down as they read and to read unknown words several times so that they do not stumble over them during the performance.
5. Allow the students to do several repeated readings in their small groups for practice. You might also ask them to practice reading along with the professional recording of the script. Remind the class to practice the song and poem as well.
6. After students have practiced repeated readings of the script, song, and poem, allow them to perform the script for other classes. All of the groups can perform, one group per classroom can perform, or the assigned readers can perform with the rest of the class performing the song and poem.