The Statue of Liberty

Pre-reading

Questions: What do you know about the subject of this reading?

Definitions: Oppression – the act of being ruled by cruel or unfair authority
Enlighten – to give information or knowledge to
Promenade – a public place for walking

Reading

The Statue of Liberty celebrated her 100th birthday on October 28, 1986. The people of France gave the Statue to the people of the United States. This gift was given in honor of the countries’ friendship that was established during the American Revolution.

The Statue became a joint effort between the two countries. It was agreed upon that the American people would build the pedestal. The French people were responsible for the Statue and its assembly in the U.S. The goal was to have it completed by 1876, in honor of the centennial of the Declaration of Independence.

Many symbolic features are found within the Statue. There are twenty five windows in the crown. These windows represent gemstones found on the earth and the heaven’s rays shining over the world.

The seven rays of the Statue’s crown represent the seven seas and seven continents of the world.

The tablet that the Statue holds in her left hand reads (in Roman numerals) “July 4th, 1776,” the date of American Independence. Wrapped around the Statue’s feet is a broken chain. She has broken the chain of oppression and is free to move into the world. Her torch shines to enlighten the world.

The Statue was completed in France in July, 1884. It arrived in New York Harbor in June of 1885. In transit, the Statue was reduced to 350 individual pieces and packed in 214 crates. The granite pedestal, built inside the star shaped walls of Fort Wood, was completed in 1886. Once the pedestal was complete, it took four months to reassemble the Statue.

The Statue is a well built structure. The copper used in creating the Statue weighs 62,000 pounds. The total weight of steel in it is 250,000 pounds. The concrete foundation weighs 54 million pounds.

The copper sheeting of the Statue is 3/32 of an inch thick which is the thickness of two pennies put together. Winds of 50 miles per hour cause it to sway 3 inches; the torch sways 5 inches.

Annually, over 5 million people visit the Statue and Liberty Island, the area on which it stands. The tragedy of September 11, 2001 resulted in the closure of Liberty Island for 100 days. The Statue remained closed until August 3, 2004.

Visitors presently have access to the Statue’s pedestal observation deck, promenade, museum, and areas of Fort Wood. Access to the crown of the Statue of Liberty and the copper structure itself remain closed.

Source: National Park Service – U.S. Department of the Interior

Level 7.5
Understanding

1. What countries deserve credit for the Statue of Liberty? How did they work together? ____________
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   ______________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

2. What does the word *centennial* mean? _________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

3. Why was the Statue built? ______________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

4. How did the Statue get to the U.S.? ________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

5. How does wind affect the Statue? _________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

6. What was the goal date for completion? Why that date? _______________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

7. What are two symbolic features of the Statue? What are their meanings? ______________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________
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Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: If you’ve ever visited the Statue of Liberty, write about your time with her.

Option C: What does the Statue of Liberty mean to you?

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The Statue of Liberty – Level 7.5