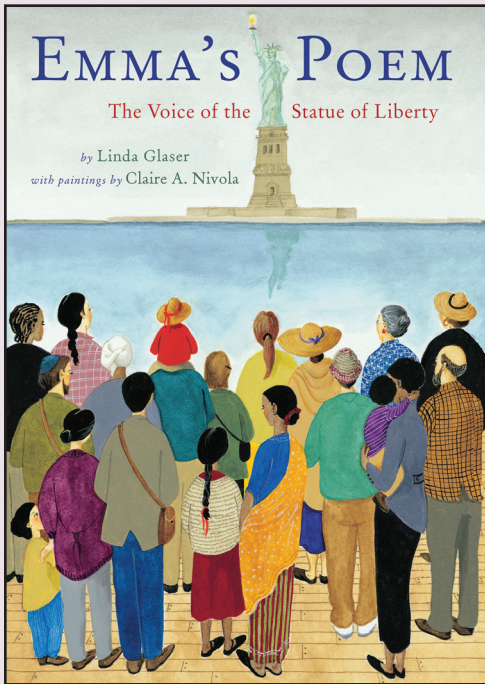


Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Children's Books DISCUSSION GUIDE

*Give me your tired, your poor
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free . . .*



978-0-547-17184-5 • \$17.00

EMMA'S POEM *The Voice of the Statue of Liberty*

by Linda Glaser
illustrated by Claire A. Nivola

About the book:

In 1883, Emma Lazarus, deeply moved by an influx of immigrants from eastern Europe, wrote a sonnet that was to give voice to the Statue of Liberty. Originally a gift from France to celebrate our shared national struggles for liberty, the statue, thanks to Emma's poem, slowly came to shape our hearts, defining us as a nation that welcomes and gives refuge to those who come to our shores.

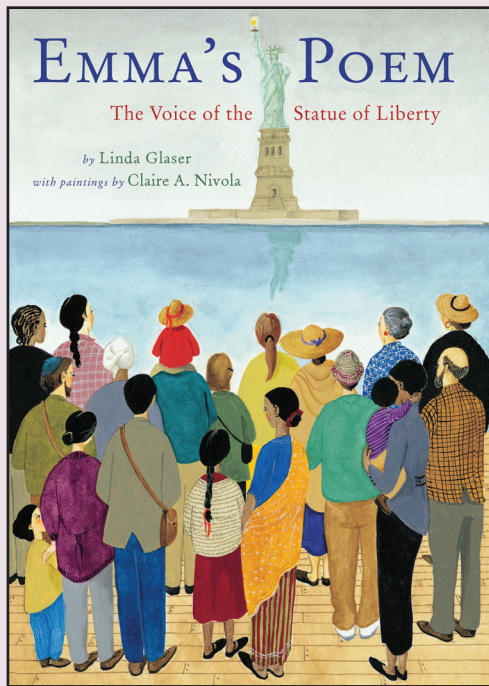
About the Author and Illustrator:

AUTHOR Linda Glaser's grandparents immigrated from eastern Europe in the late 1800s to New York City, where they saw the huge statue. Ms. Glaser is the author of many fine books for children, including the immigrant story *Bridge to America*. In a review, *School Library Journal* said, "Even reluctant readers will enjoy this riveting account and sensitive portrayal of what it means to be an immigrant." Ms. Glaser lives in Duluth, Minnesota. Visit her website at www.lindaglaserauthor.com.

ILLUSTRATOR Claire A. Nivola's parents and grandparents arrived by ship in New York Harbor in 1939—passing under the gaze of the Statue of Liberty—as part of the great European flight from anti-Semitism and fascism. Ms. Nivola is also the illustrator of many books for children, including *The Flag Maker* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti, and *The Silent Witness* by Robin Freidman. Ms. Nivola lives with her family in Newton, Massachusetts.



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Writing Exercises

1. Emma Lazarus could not possibly have known that her poem would have such a powerful impact on the country and even the world. But she wrote a poem she deeply believed in. If you *did* know that your poem would have a big impact on the country and the world, what would you write about? What would you want to say? What impact would you want to have on the world?
2. If you were asked to write a poem for the Statue of Liberty, what would you write?
3. If you could give the Statue of Liberty words to speak today, for the world to hear, what would you have the statue say?
4. Have you ever spoken out for something you believed in when it wasn't popular?
5. What other statues might you give a voice to? Try writing a poem about a different statue to give that statue a voice.
6. Imagine you have an interview with Emma Lazarus. You could ask her what she thinks about the impact of her poem today. What other questions do you want to ask? Write what you think her answers would be.
7. Imagine you are an immigrant and write a poem or letter to the Statue of Liberty.
8. Imagine you are an immigrant and write a letter to Emma Lazarus.
9. Write a letter to Emma Lazarus. Tell her what you think of her poem and the impact it has had in the world.
10. Write an article for the newspaper about something you feel strongly about like Emma Lazarus did. Send it to the newspaper. This is called a Letter to the Editor. (Or maybe the whole class can write a Letter to the Editor together.)

Class Discussion Questions

1. In *Emma's Poem*, Emma's heart hurt to see the poor immigrants. Have you ever met anyone who made your heart hurt because you wanted to help him or her? What did you do?
2. Emma Lazarus saw unfair treatment of immigrants and wanted to do something. She spoke out and wrote about it. Were students in your school ever treated unfairly? Did you stand up for them? If not, what might you have done? Is it hard to speak out when you see unfairness? What do you think the response might be?
If you saw something you felt was unfair or hurtful at school, would you speak out?



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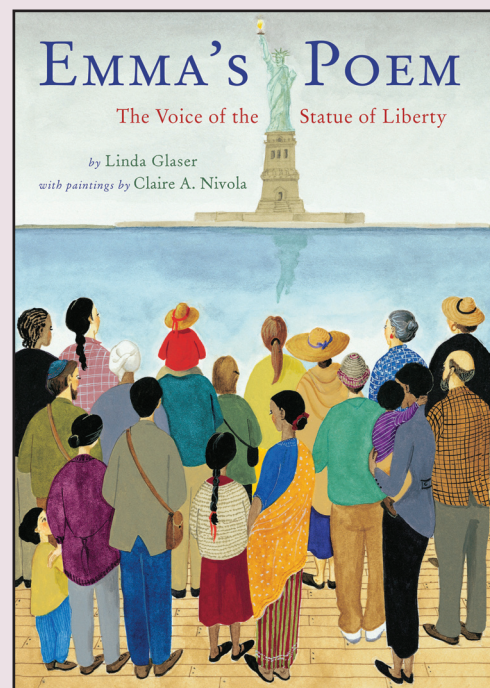
3. Are there groups of people today who some people say bad things about? What do they say? Does that seem fair?
4. Do you know anyone in your town, school, or neighborhood who does important work because he or she believes in it? Share what you know about this person with the class. Perhaps invite the person to come speak to the class.
5. If you were an immigrant, how might you feel if you saw the Statue of Liberty?
6. Discuss why people didn't want immigrants to come. Does that still happen today?
7. Imagine being an immigrant today who wants to come to the United States for freedom and opportunity. How would it be to feel welcome? How would it feel to be unwelcome?
8. Think about people you see but don't know. Do you judge them by how they are dressed and how rich or educated they are, without even knowing them? What can you do to get to know them better?
9. Have you ever felt that as one person, you don't have any power to change the world? Does seeing what Emma Lazarus did with one small poem make you think you could change the world too?
10. Emma Lazarus didn't know that her poem became as famous as it did. Are there things you do that might have a huge effect you'll never know about? What are they and why do you do them?

Websites

To learn more about Emma Lazarus, visit jwa.org/exhibits/wov/lazarus.

Check out this website for children singing "Give Me Your Tired . . .": kids.niehs.nih.gov/lyrics/liberty.htm.

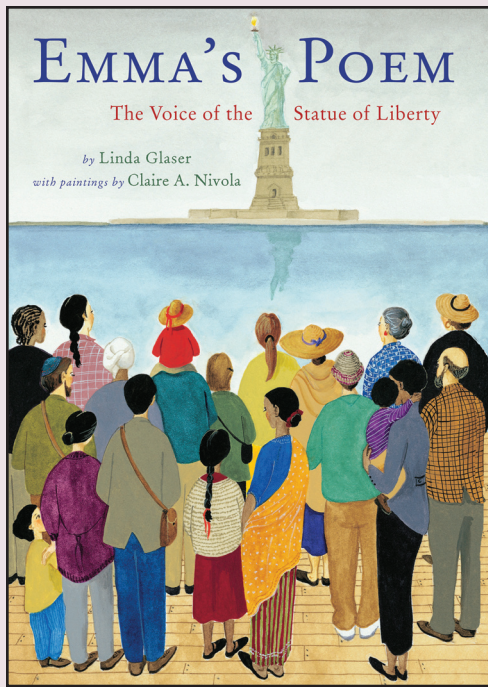
To learn more about the Statue of Liberty, visit www.nps.gov/archive/stli/prod02.htm.



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Classroom Activity

1. Visit an ethnic store or restaurant where you can meet some immigrants and learn about their culture.
2. At the courthouse, attend a swearing-in ceremony of immigrants who are becoming citizens of the United States. Hear some of their stories.
3. Memorize the last five lines of the poem. Imagine you are the Statue of Liberty saying those lines.
4. Immigrants who come to our country have made our country stronger. (Teacher should provide examples.) Learn about what different words, foods, and customs we have gotten from immigrants from a country of your choosing.
5. Does anyone in the class have an immigrant relative? Is anyone in class an immigrant? Learn more about why they came to the United States.
6. Visit an English as a Second Language (ESL) class. Meet some immigrants. Hear their stories. Why did they want to come to the United States? What can you do to make some immigrants feel welcome?

History Activities

1. Research the Statue of Liberty: Why was it built? Who gave it to the United States and why?
2. What else was going on during the 1850s in U.S. history? In world history?
3. Research women during the 1850s through 1880s. Did they have the right to vote? What was women's place at that time? Did they speak out publicly? What were women expected to do at that time?
4. Read the immigrant historical novel *Bridge to America: Based on a True Story*—also by Linda Glaser.
5. In the first lines of the poem, Emma Lazarus mentions “Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame, With conquering limbs astride from land to land.” She’s referring to the Colossus of Rhodes. Look at an image of that statue. Do you see what Emma Lazarus is talking about? The Colossus of Rhodes is not like the Statue of Liberty. That’s why she called the poem “The New Colossus.” What makes it different? Research the Colossus of Rhodes to learn what it stood for and why Emma Lazarus chose to contrast it with the Statue of Liberty.
6. Research Ward’s Island. What was it like in the 1880s?
7. Find out about your own heritage. Were your ancestors born in the United States? If not, where were they from and why did they come to the United States?