

Statue of Liberty: A Famous Gift

By: Peter Winkler

On July 4, 1884 France gave the United States an amazing birthday gift: the Statue of Liberty! Without the base at the bottom, it is as tall as a 15-story building. She is a symbol of the United States. But the world-famous Statue of Liberty standing in New York Harbor was built in France. The statue was shown to the U.S., taken apart, shipped across the Atlantic Ocean in crates, and rebuilt in the U.S. It was France's gift to the American people.



It all started at dinner one night near Paris in 1865. A group of Frenchmen were talking about their dictator and the democratic government of the U.S. They wanted to build a monument to support American freedom. Maybe then, France would have a democracy in their own country. At that dinner was the sculptor Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi (bar-TOLE-dee). He imagined a statue of a woman holding a torch burning with the light of freedom. It took 21 years for this idea to become a reality. French supporters raised money to build the statue, and Americans paid for the base it would stand on. Finally, in 1886, the statue was dedicated.

Fun Facts

- * Engineer Gustave Eiffel, who would later design the Eiffel Tower in Paris, designed Liberty's "spine." Inside the statue four huge iron columns support a metal framework that holds the thin copper skin.
- * The statue - 151 feet, 1 inch tall - was the tallest structure in the U.S. at that time. Do you know what the tallest structure in the U.S. is today?
- * The arm holding the torch measures 46 feet; the index finger, 8 feet; the nose, nearly 5 feet. That is a big nose! (Be careful, if it gets cold she may sneeze!)
- * Visitors climb 354 steps (22 stories) to look out from 25 windows in the crown.
- * Seven rays in the crown represent the Earth's seven seas.

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Read the story. Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. Where is the Statue of Liberty located?
 - A. France
 - B. New York
 - C. New Jersey
 - D. Germany
2. How was the Statue of Liberty shipped over from France?
 - A. On an airplane
 - B. In crates
 - C. On a train
 - D. In trucks
3. Why did France want to build this monument?
 - A. America wanted to give France a birthday present
 - B. France wanted to give their dictator to America
 - C. America wanted to become a democracy
 - D. To support American freedom
4. Who sculpted the Statue of Liberty?
 - A. Gustave Eiffel
 - B. Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi
 - C. Bill Gates
 - D. Lady Liberty
5. What makes up the Statue of Liberty's "spine"?
 - A. Four iron columns
 - B. 206 Bones
 - C. Five copper wires
 - D. 40 pounds of stone

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ANSWER KEY

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