

## Maggie's Civics Corner

### Lesson #18 – Understanding National Symbols



#### Maggie says ...

*In these difficult times, as our nation and the world pull together, it is more important than ever to understand our role as a citizen.*

**Today's lesson is about UNDERSTANDING NATIONAL SYMBOLS.** National symbols are things that nations use to represent their national values, history, goals, and people.

The United States of America has many national symbols such as our flag, our nation's seal, and our national anthem, the Star-Spangled Banner. Monuments and statues can also be national symbols. The Statue of Liberty is an American national symbol that is located on Liberty Island in New York City's harbor.

**STATUE OF LIBERTY** – The Statue of Liberty was given as a gift in 1886 to the people of the United States from the people of France and depicts Libertas, the Roman goddess of liberty. She holds a torch above her head in her right hand and carries a stone tablet in her left hand inscribed with July 4, 1776, in roman numerals to commemorate the date on which the U.S. declared its **Independence**. She has a broken chain and shackles around her feet to signify the abolition of



slavery. The statue is made of copper and stands 151 feet high from its base to the top of its torch. The statue was originally a dull brown copper color, but because of oxidation over time, the copper has turned into the green color it is today.

The Statue of Liberty is an American national symbol that is recognized all over the world. Between 1892 and 1954, 12 million immigrants coming to the United States were greeted by the Statue of Liberty when they arrived at the immigration station on the neighboring Ellis Island. Since then, the statue has become a symbol of hope and opportunity for those seeking a better life in America.

As a national symbol, the Statue of Liberty represents many of our values as Americans such as liberty, freedom, and democracy. These are values that all Americans care about. National symbols such as the Statue of Liberty help us to demonstrate these principles and the pride we share in them.

**Activity:** Practice your artistic abilities! Look at a photo of the [Statue of Liberty](#) online. Find one that you really like. Now take a blank piece of paper and try to draw the Statue of Liberty on your own while looking at that photo. When you finish drawing, color your Statue of Liberty. You can color it green as it is today, or choose to color it a copper color to show how the statue looked back in 1886.

**Civics Resources:** Employees of the National Park Service have been caring for the Statue of Liberty since 1933. Visit the [NPS website](#) to learn more about this national treasure.