MINERVA TEICHERT, IMMIGRANTS TO NEW YORK CITY (JEWISH REFUGEES) (1938)

ARTIST BIO
Born in Utah and raised on a ranch in Idaho, Minerva Teichert was a 20th-century American artist best known for her paintings of the American West and her depiction of the Latter-day Saint experience. Minerva Teichert used perspective to depict a three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface. On the base of the statue of the famous poem "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus, the most well-known portion of the poem reads: “Give me your tired, your poor/You huddled masses yearning to breathe free/The wretched refuse of your teeming shore/Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me/I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

In the painting, the Statue of Liberty welcomes those weary travelers to America. Inscribed on the base of the statue is the famous poem “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus. The most well-known portion of the poem reads: “Give me your tired, your poor/You huddled masses yearning to breathe free/The wretched refuse of your teeming shore/Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me/I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

CONTINUE THE STORY
In 1938, the same year Teichert painted this work, Adolf Hitler had been in power for five years as the Chancellor of Germany. Hitler persecuted Jews and other minorities across Europe as he invaded many European countries. Tens of thousands sought refuge in the United States. Many left their homes quickly, taking only what they could carry to embark on a journey halfway around the world.

In the painting, the Statue of Liberty welcomes those weary travelers to America. Inscribed on the base of the statue is the famous poem “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus. The most well-known portion of the poem reads: “Give me your tired, your poor/You huddled masses yearning to breathe free/The wretched refuse of your teeming shore/Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me/I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

In real life, the Statue of Liberty actually faces the New York City skyline. Why do you think Teichert changed the positions of the Statue of Liberty to face the viewer?

ACTIVITY #1: A LETTER HOME
Materials: Writing paper, pencil
Subject Areas: English Language Arts, U.S. History, Visual Arts
Duration: 30 minutes
Imagine you are one of the people in this painting, fleeing your home. Write a letter to your friends who are back home, describing your journey thus far and your thoughts as you arrive at the New York Harbor. Based on this painting, include any relevant information that may benefit your friend, such as how you prepared for the long journey, challenges you faced along the way, specific circumstances, emotions, and general experiences.

MINNESOTA VISUAL ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS
Lesson plans may easily be adapted for each grade level. Please use the plans as a guide and source for ideas, but feel free to adjust the activity based on the needs of your class.
Strand: Represent (VR)
Students will understand, evaluate, and articulate how works of art convey meaning for the observer as well as the creator.
Strand: Connect (VCD)
Students will relate artistic skills, ideas, and work with personal meaning and external context.

ACTIVITY #2: ONE-POINT PERSPECTIVE
Materials: Paper, pencil, ruler
Subject Areas: Visual Arts
Duration: 30 minutes
Minerva Teichert uses perspective to depict a three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface. By using a vanishing point, a horizon line, and a series of straight lines, you too can create a realistic rendering of your environment.

UTAH STATE VISUAL ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS
Lesson plans may easily be adapted for each grade level. Please use the plans as a guide and source for ideas, but feel free to adjust the activity based on the needs of your class.
Strand: Create (VCR)
Students will generate artistic work by conceptualizing, organizing, and completing their artistic ideas. They will refine original work through persistence, reflection, and evaluation.
Strand: Connect (VCD)
Students will relate artistic skills, ideas, and work with personal meaning and external context.

ASSESSMENT
Assessment of students during this lesson may include participation in group discussion and written interpretive answers. The creative activity “One-Point Perspective” can be included to evaluate student craftsmanship, neatness, and ability to accurately render one-point perspective. Quality and participation of the creative writing activity “A Letter Home” can be used to assess student writing level, ability to create thought-provoking ideas in response to Immigrants to New York City (Jewish Refugees), as well as grammar and spelling.