

*Kids & Schools Tools*

## *The Colossus of Rhodes*

The Colossus of Rhodes was one of the Ancient 7 Wonders of the World, chosen by Philon of Byzantium in 200 B.C.

A gigantic bronze statue that once stood 32 meters (110 feet) high on a marble block, the Colossus of Rhodes was built by its citizens to revere the sun god Helios, who was believed to have helped Rhodes ward off the attacking Demetrius of Macedonia. Constructed by the engineer Chares, a native of Rhodes, the Colossus was completed in 280 B.C., after 12 years of careful work. The great challenge was to build the statue so that the legs could sustain the enormous weight. In order to pay for the construction of the Colossus, the Rhodians sold all of the siege equipment that Demetrius had left behind in front of their city when he retreated. Ancient accounts describe the statue as being built around several stone columns on the interior, standing on a 15-meter-high (50 feet) white marble pedestal near the harbor entrance. Iron beams were driven into the stone towers and bronze plates attached to the bars to create the exterior. Much of the material was melted down from the various weapons Demetrius' army had left behind. The upper portions of the statue were built with the help of a large dirt ramp.

Unfortunately, around 224 B.C., an earthquake caused the Colossus to crack at the knee and it collapsed into pieces. Even so, the statue was so admired that it was left lying in huge fragments for around 900 years. Even broken on the ground, the pieces were so impressive that many people came to see them. Pliny the Elder remarked that few people could wrap their arms around the fallen thumb, and that each of its fingers was larger than most statues. In AD 654, an Arab force under Muawiyah I captured Rhodes, and, according to the chronicler Theophanes, the remains were sold to a traveling salesman. The purchaser had the statue broken down and transported the bronze scrap on the backs of 900 camels to Syria.



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