

Name: _____

“PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND UNTO ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF. LEV XXV 10”

These words are inscribed on the Liberty Bell. In 1751, the Pennsylvania Assembly ordered this bell to mark the 50th anniversary of the state’s constitution. William Penn’s 1701 *Charter of Privileges*¹ favored individual rights and freedoms. Officials selected a Bible quote (the title of this lesson) to reflect those values. Over time, the State House Bell, as it was first known, became an important symbol for the young nation.

The bell was to be installed above the Pennsylvania State House, but the first time it was rung, the bell cracked. Two Philadelphia metalsmiths melted it down and recast the bell. They added the date, 1753, and their own names, Pass & Stow, in the process. They cast the bell twice, each time attempting to make it less brittle and its ring more pleasing.

These were heady times in the colonies, particularly in Philadelphia. The Founding Fathers were busy preparing documents. They were writing the US Constitution, which would lay out our system of government. The State House bell ringers were busy alerting assemblymen and Philadelphians alike.



According to a booklet by the National Park System, this drawing appeared on the cover of *The Liberty Bell*, an antislavery pamphlet that led to the official renaming of the Pennsylvania State House Bell.

The tolling of the Liberty Bell undoubtedly marked many momentous occasions. The bell continued to fracture, and the tower in which it hung began to decay. Local officials feared the tower might topple. So, they remounted the bell and for the first time, visitors could easily read the quote.

Americans have differing ideas about when the bell was first called the Liberty Bell. Some believe it always had that name, citing its inscription as evidence. Others say it was named when colonists gathered on July 8th to hear the first reading of the Declaration of Independence. Still others claim its name is linked to America’s victory in the war for independence from Britain.

However, it was not until 1839 that a group of citizens working to end slavery first dubbed it the Liberty Bell. These abolitionists used the bell as a symbol of freedom on a pamphlet they titled, *The Liberty Bell*. They distributed their antislavery material far and wide. Before long, the State House Bell had acquired a new name and significance.

Damaged beyond repair after 90 years of ringing, the bell was finally silenced. Nonetheless, the Liberty Bell stands. And, it rings loudly in the hearts and minds of Americans as a symbol of freedom for all.

¹ document that created a government for the people of the Pennsylvania colony

1. Match each word with its clue.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| _____ <i>Charter of Privileges</i> | A) individuals who remade the cracked bell |
| _____ State House Bell | B) anti-slavery pamphlet |
| _____ Pass & Stow | C) one of the works of the Founding Fathers |
| _____ US Constitution | D) Pennsylvania's first constitution |
| _____ <i>The Liberty Bell</i> | E) wrote a booklet on the history of the Liberty Bell |
| _____ National Park Service | F) original name of the Liberty Bell |

2. Officials who ordered the Pennsylvania State House Bell selected a partial quote from the Bible. (Leviticus, chapter 25, verse 10). They had the quote inscribed on the bell. According to the text, why did they choose this quote?

3. Paragraph three begins, "These were heady times..." You can infer from the paragraph that *heady* means _____.

calm exciting superstitious unimportant

4. In paragraph five, the word *citing* means _____.

demanding the bell be recast	complaining about the wording
rewriting it to suit themselves	noting or pointing to

5. In paragraph six, the phrase "dubbed it" means _____.

gave it an unofficial name	painted over the original lettering
bathed it with water	took it for their own use only

6. In 1839, a group adopted the bell as its symbol. What was the group's reason for doing this?
- A) They were politicians who felt they would get more votes by using the bell as a symbol.
 - B) They were abolitionists, and the bell's inscription reflected their goal and values.
 - C) They were historians who wanted to advertise an important landmark in Pennsylvania.
 - D) They were the metalsmiths who had cast the bell, and they wanted to showcase it.
7. The passage identifies three assumptions some Americans have regarding the naming of the Liberty bell. What are these assumptions? Underline your answer in the text.
8. In this text, the author's purpose is to _____.

entertain persuade inform none of these

9. Match each word with its clue.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| _____ inscription | A) person who works to end slavery |
| _____ favored | B) words written or engraved as on a monument |
| _____ symbol | C) approved or preferred |
| _____ momentous | D) break or split |
| _____ fracture | E) having significant or lasting importance |
| _____ abolitionist | F) something that stands for something else |

Name: ANSWER KEY

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A) individuals who remade the cracked bell

 F State House Bell

B) anti-slavery pamphlet

 A Pass & Stow

C) one of the works of the Founding Fathers

 C US Constitution

D) Pennsylvania's first constitution

 B *The Liberty Bell*

E) wrote a booklet on the history of the Liberty Bell

 E National Park Service

F) original name of the Liberty Bell

2. Officials who ordered the Pennsylvania State House Bell selected a partial quote from the Bible. (Leviticus, chapter 25, verse 10). They had the quote inscribed on the bell. According to the text, why did they choose this quote?

(Answers will vary.) Examples: The bell was ordered to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Pennsylvania's

Constitution; the quote from Leviticus reflected liberty, a strong value of Penn's. William Penn strongly

favored individual rights and freedoms and included this in Pennsylvania's *Charter of Privileges*.

The officials chose the quote to reflect those values.

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