



## 1776 THE LIBERTY BELL

The Liberty Bell rang on July 8, 1776, to summon the citizens of Philadelphia to the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence. In 1996 the bell was once again a cause for rebellion throughout the land. Read on to find out why.

**Reading Parts** Narrator, Carlos, Louise, Jenny, Mrs. Evans

**NARRATOR** The scene is a sixth grade classroom. The date is April 1, 1996.

**LOUISE** It is a disgrace! We ought to write the President.

**CARLOS** Well, somebody should do something. That bell belongs to all the people. How could it be sold? It's a national treasure, even if it did get a crack in it when it was rung in 1776.

**JENNY** Maybe it was sold by an Act of Congress. Lots of things happen that way. And Carlos, the crack didn't happen in 1776.

**WRITER ONE** Tell when the bell was first hung in Independence Hall steeple. What happened to it the first time it was rung?

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**JENNY** Didn't they ever try to fix the crack?



**LOUISE** I looked it up. It says here that two foundry workers names Pass and Stow melted down the cracked bell and recast it. But when it was rehung in the steeple it rang with a clunk instead of a bong. People covered their ears.

**CARLOS** Crack or no crack, it still should belong to all the people. The Declaration of Independence says the people have all the power.

**WRITER TWO** What is The Declaration of Independence? Who was the man who read it aloud for the first time on July 8, 1776?

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**LOUISE** That's right. And a year later when the British entered Philadelphia it was taken down and hidden so they wouldn't melt it down and use it for cannon.

**JENNY** Wow, I don't see how they could hide something that big.

**WRITER THREE** How much did the Liberty Bell weigh when it was cast?

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**LOUISE** They hid it in the floorboards in a church in Allentown. That kept the British from getting their hands on it.

**CARLOS** But somebody else has their hands on it now, and it's not right that one company should own it!

**MRS. EVANS** What are you children talking about?

**LOUISE** See, it's right here in the *New York Times*. (Reading from the paper) April 1, 1996. Taco Bell® Buys the Liberty Bell. "In an effort to help the national debt, Taco Bell® is pleased to announce that we have agreed to purchase the Liberty Bell, one of our country's most historic treasures. It will now be called the 'Taco Liberty Bell' and will still be accessible to the American public for viewing. While some may find this controversial, we hope our move will prompt other corporations to take similar action to do their part to reduce the country's debt."

**JENNY** If it's in the paper it must be true.

**MRS. EVANS** It is true that newspapers try to be accurate in their stories. What you have overlooked is the most important part of the paper.

**NARRATOR** What did the students miss? Do you know?

### SUPER RESEARCH CHALLENGE

**WRITER FOUR** Find out more about the Taco Liberty Bell. How would anyone reading the full page ad by Taco Bell® know that it was a hoax? Did the hoax increase Taco Bell's® sales?

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