* **READING COMPREHENSION**
* **Occupation:** Activist
* **Born:** June 27, 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama
* **Died:** June 1, 1968 in Arcan Ridge, Easton, Connecticut
* **Best known for:** Accomplishing much despite being both deaf and blind.

**Where did Helen Keller grow up?**

Helen Keller was born on June 27, 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama. She was a happy healthy baby. Her father, Arthur, worked for a newspaper while her mother, Kate, took care of the home and baby Helen. She grew up on her family's large farm called Ivy Green. She enjoyed the animals including the horses, dogs, and chickens.


*Helen Keller*
by Unknown

**Illness**

When Helen was around one and a half years old she became very sick. She had a high fever and a bad headache for several days. Although Helen survived, her parents soon realized that she had lost both her sight and her hearing.

**Frustration**

Helen tried to communicate with the people around her. She had special motions she would use to indicate that she wanted her mom or her dad. However, she would also get frustrated. She realized that she was different and it was extremely difficult to let others know what she needed. She would sometimes throw tantrums, kicking and hitting other people in anger.

**Annie Sullivan**

Soon Helen's parents realized that she needed some special help. They contacted the Perkins Institute for the Blind in Boston. The director suggested a former student named Annie Sullivan. Annie had been blind, but had her eyesight restored by surgery. Perhaps her unique experience would allow her to help Helen. Annie came to work with Helen on March 3, 1887 and would be her helper and companion for the next 50 years.

**Learning Words**

Annie began to teach Helen words. She would press the letters of words in to Helen's hand. For example, she would put a doll in one of Helen's hands and then press the letters of the word D-O-L-L into the other hand. She taught Helen a number of words. Helen would repeat the words into Annie's hand.


*Helen Keller with Anne Sullivan in July 1888*
from the New England Historic Genealogical Society

However, Helen still didn't understand that the hand signs had meaning. Then one day Annie put Helen's hand into water coming from a pump. Then she spelled out water into Helen's other hand. Something clicked. Helen finally understood what Annie was doing. An entire new world opened up for Helen. She learned a number of new words that day. In many ways it was one of the happiest days of her life.

**Learning to Read**

Next Annie taught Helen how to read. Helen must have been very bright and Annie an amazing teacher, because soon Helen could read entire books in Braille. Braille is a special reading system where the letters are made out of little bumps on a page.

Imagine trying to learn how to read if you couldn't see or hear. It's truly amazing what Helen and Annie were able to accomplish. At the age of ten Helen could read and use a typewriter. Now she wanted to learn how to talk.

**Learning to Talk**

Helen Keller learned how to talk from Sarah Fuller. Sarah was a teacher for the deaf. By resting her hand on Sarah's lips, Helen learned how to feel sound vibrations and how the lips moved to make sounds. She started off learning a few letters and sounds. Then she advanced to words and, finally, sentences. Helen was so happy that she could say words.

**School**

At sixteen years old Helen attended Radcliffe College for women in Massachusetts. Annie attended school with her and helped to sign the lectures into Helen's hand. Helen graduated from Radcliffe in 1904 with honors.

**Writing**

During college Helen began to write about her experiences being deaf and blind. She first wrote a number of articles for a magazine called the *Ladies' Home Journal*. These articles were later published together in a book called *The Story of My Life*. A few years later, in 1908, she published another book called *The World I Live In*.

**Working for Others**

As Helen grew older she wanted to help other people like herself. She wanted to inspire them and give them hope. She joined the American Foundation for the Blind and traveled the country giving speeches and raising money for the foundation. Later, during [World War II](https://www.ducksters.com/history/world_war_ii/), she visited with wounded army soldiers encouraging them not to give up. Helen spent much of her life working to raise money and awareness for people with disabilities, especially the deaf and the blind.

**Interesting Facts about Helen Keller**

* Annie Sullivan was often called the "Miracle Worker" for the way she was able to help Helen.
* Helen became very famous. She met with every President of the United States from [Grover Cleveland](https://www.ducksters.com/biography/uspresidents/grovercleveland.php) to [Lyndon Johnson](https://www.ducksters.com/biography/uspresidents/lyndonbjohnson.php). That's a lot of presidents!
* Helen starred in a movie about herself called *Deliverance*. Critics liked the movie, but not a lot of people went to see it.
* She loved dogs. They were a great source of joy to her.
* Helen became friends with famous people such as the inventor of the telephone [Alexander Graham Bell](https://www.ducksters.com/biography/alexander_graham_bell.php) and the author [Mark Twain](https://www.ducksters.com/biography/authors/mark_twain.php).
* She wrote a book titled *Teacher* about Annie Sullivan's life.
* Two films about Helen Keller won Academy Awards. One was a documentary called *The Unconquered* (1954) and the other was a drama called *The Miracle Worker* (1962) starring Anne Bancroft and Patty Duke.

**QUESTIONS**

1. Find the words in red in your dictionary **after** you read the text. Try to guess their meaning and see how many you got right. Then learn the meaning of the words.
2. What does “something clicked” mean?
3. Do you think Helen Keller was special? If yes, say why.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

DEADLINE: April 23d

Write your answers down. **Do not** send them, we will discuss them on WEBEX.

Study pages 47 and 52 in your STUDENT’s BOOK. They are on Simple Past and Past Continuous. If you have any questions, we will discuss them on WEBEX.

Do the exercises on pages 142 and 143 in your STUDENT’S BOOK. If you want to keep notes, so that it is easier for you to talk about what you read, do so, but the exercises on these pages are oral.