Helen Keller

Helen Keller was born in 1880 in Escumbria, Alabama. She learned to talk at an early age of 6 months. She walked when she was 1 year old. However, when she was 19 months old, after a severe **fever**, her mother noticed that she could neither hear or see. She was blind and deaf for the rest of her life.

When she was young, she and a playmate made up a **sign language** of about 60 signs so that they could 'talk' to each other. During the early years, Helen became very wild. She could not hear or see and was angry all the time. Some friends or family thought she couldn't live at home anymore and should be put in a special home.

Helen's mother wanted to help her so she did some reading and found that a girl with the same problems as Helen had been able to learn to read and write. Mrs. Keller took Helen to a doctor. He suggested that they go to see the famous inventor **Alexander Graham Bell** who had been working with the deaf. Mr. Bell sent them to see the director of the **Perkins Institute for the Blind** in Boston. The director, Mr. Anagonos, wanted Helen to begin studying with **Anne Sullivan**. Anne had graduated from The Perkins school. She was almost totally blind.

In 1887, Anne moved to Alabama and began teaching Helen. At first, Helen was not kind to her teacher and didn't seem to want or to be able to learn the letters she was trying to teach her. Ms. Sullivan would spell out letters in Helen's hand. She started with the word 'doll.' She held a doll to show Helen what she was spelling.

When Helen still didn't start to learn, Ms. Sullivan asked the family if she and Helen could move to a little cottage further away so that no one would bother them. After that move, Helen learned 30 words in one day.

Helen spent the next six years attending schools for the deaf in Boston, Massachusetts and New York City. After that she wanted to go to college. A famous writer, **Mark Twain**, arranged for Helen to receive enough money to attend Radcliffe College in Massachusetts. Anne Sullivan went with her.

After she graduated from college, she became very famous as she went around the country and talked to people. She asked for more help for blind people and others with **disabilities or handicaps**.

Anne Sullivan died in 1932, so Polly Thomson became Helen's companion. When Helen was 75, she took a trip all over Asia talking about what people with problems like hers could do and encouraging them not to give up.

Helen Keller wrote an autobiography called ***The Story of My Life***. The book was made into a movie and helped many people realize that they could still learn even if they had physical problems.

Helen Keller died in 1968. She had received many awards for her hard work for those people who were blind or deaf or had other handicaps. She showed by her own life that no matter what problem a person has, she can overcome it with lots of hard work.

- Multiple Choice - Choose the right answer

1) Which of the following is the reason Helen Keller became deaf and blind?

A: She fell from a wagon when she was 2 years old.

B: She was born deaf and became blind from an accident.

C: She had a high fever when she was 19 months old.

D: She fell down a flight of stairs at her house when she was 3 years old.

2) Which of the following is the state where Helen Keller was born?

A: Alabama

B: Maryland

C: Massachusetts

D: New York

3) Which of the following is the first word Helen Keller learned to spell?

A: Mother

B: Doll

C: Father

D: Smile

4) In which of the following cities was the Perkins School for the Blind located?

A: Atlanta

B: New York

C: Chicago

D: Boston

5) In which of the following ways did Helen and a young friend learn to communicate?

A: They drew pictures in the sand.

B: They made up a sign language to use with their hands.

C: They made sounds of different kinds.

D: They arranged paper letters on a table.

6) Which of the following famous inventors helped Helen Keller?

A: Benjamin Franklin

B: Alexander Graham Bell

C: Thomas Edison

D: Samuel Morse