

This is a true story about a girl's life. This kind of story is called a **biography**. Read the story and find out how the girl learned to communicate with other people.

## The Life of Helen Keller

**a** Helen Keller was born on 27 June 1880 in Tuscumbia, a small town in the USA. She was a normal, healthy baby, but when Helen was only nineteen months old, she became very ill. Helen's mother and father thought she was going to die. Fortunately, she didn't die and her parents thought she was well again. Sadly, soon after her illness, Helen's mother discovered that her daughter couldn't see or hear. She was now deaf and blind.



**b** By the time Helen was six, her family didn't know what to do with her. Helen and her family visited a doctor who had helped another deaf and blind child. The doctor told Helen's parents that she would never see or hear again. But they were told not to give up hope - the doctor believed Helen could be taught. He suggested that they should visit a local expert on the problems of deaf children. This expert was Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone.

**c** Alexander Graham Bell suggested that Helen's parents should write to the Perkins School for the Blind and ask for a teacher for Helen. Annie Sullivan, who went to the same school when she was a child, became Helen's teacher. In March 1887, Annie arrived in Tuscumbia to live with the Kellers as Helen's teacher. Annie immediately began to use finger spelling in Helen's hand to name objects. Helen quickly learned the finger spelling patterns, but thought it was a game and did not understand that they were the names for objects.





**d** One day, Annie took Helen to the water pump. As she pumped the water over Helen's hand, Annie spelled out the word w-a-t-e-r in the girl's free hand. Suddenly, Helen realised that the liquid coming from the pump had a name - water. Now she understood that there were names for everything. She was very excited and wanted to learn the name of everything she touched. She also asked for Annie's name. Annie spelled the name 'teacher' on Helen's hand. Helen learned thirty words by the end of that day and she never stopped learning. Helen's progress was amazing. Very soon, Annie was teaching Helen to read with Braille and to write with both ordinary and Braille typewriters.

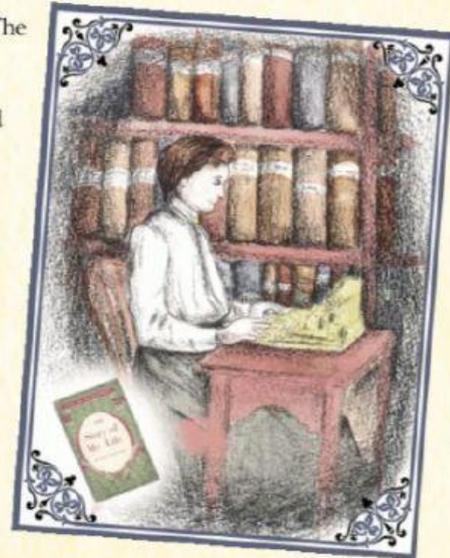


**e** When Helen was 8 years old, she left her home with Annie to go to the Perkins School for the Blind in Boston. She learned quickly and had an excellent memory for details. Because of her ability to learn and remember so quickly, she was called the 'miracle child' by some people.



**f** At the end of school, Helen decided she wanted to go to college. She was quite famous and many colleges wanted her to attend. She chose the one college in America that did not want her - Radcliffe College. They thought she couldn't compete with students who could see and hear. This made Helen determined to go to Radcliffe College. She passed her entry exams and then, with Annie Sullivan as a translator, attended regular classes. She successfully completed her studies and graduated in 1904.

**g** While Helen was at college, she wrote a book called 'The Story of My Life'. Later on, she wrote two more books about her life. Helen became very famous and spent much of her life travelling the world giving lectures and telling people how they could help the blind and deaf.



**h** As she got older, Helen stopped travelling and spent more time in the USA helping to raise money for deaf and blind people. She was often seen walking in the garden talking to herself with her fingers. She died on 1 June 1968.

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**Read and answer.**

Look at pages 18 and 19 of your Classbook. Read the story about Helen Keller's life again and answer these questions.

1. Which part of the story tells us about Helen writing books?
2. Which part of the story tells us about when Helen became deaf and blind?
3. Which part of the story tells us about Helen going to college?
4. Which part of the story tells us about how her parents were given help by a doctor?
5. Which part of the story tells us about Helen understanding that the words she learned to spell named objects?
6. Which part of the story tells us about when Annie Sullivan started to teach Helen?
7. Which part of the story tells us about when Helen died?
8. Which part of the story tells us about how quick Helen was to learn and remember?



## 1 Read and think.

Look at the story of Helen Keller's life again.

How many parts are there in the story?



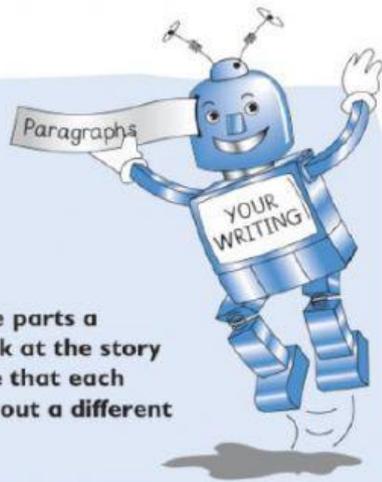
We call each of these parts a **paragraph**. If you look at the story carefully, you can see that each paragraph tells us about a **different topic**.

**The first paragraph** tells us about how Helen became deaf and blind.

**The next paragraph** tells us about Helen's parents finding help from a doctor.

What does **the last paragraph** tell us about? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## 2 Read and complete.

New paragraphs are usually about new ideas.

Each paragraph usually has its own topic.

If writing is not broken into paragraphs, it is very difficult to read and understand.

Now complete the rule:



When we write long pieces of writing, we organise it into different parts to make it easier to read.

These different parts are

called \_\_\_\_\_

