Name_____

Helen Keller

Helen Keller's life is one of the most inspirational stories ever told. Born in 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama, Keller became sick when she was near the age of two. Her illness left her blind, deaf, and mute. Her vocal chords were not impaired from the illness, but because she could not hear how words were pronounced, she could not learn to say them. With no way to communicate, there seemed to be little hope of her being able to learn, even though she had already begun to say words at just six months old.

Experts are unsure exactly what illness Helen Keller had. Regardless, the high fever produced from the illness caused the loss of her sight and hearing. As a child, she found ways to communicate with her family. Just as one might hug someone to show affection or place a finger over a person's mouth to advise them to be quiet, she developed methods to let others know what she wanted or needed; however, her behavior was unpredictable, and she would often have uncontrollable tantrums.

Searching for help, the Keller family was introduced to Anne Sullivan from the Perkins Institute for the Blind. Sullivan moved to Alabama to work with her new student. Miraculously, Sullivan made a breakthrough with her pupil. One day, as she spelled the word *water* into Helen's hand and ran water from a pump onto Helen's hand, everything seemed to come together for Helen. She understood that the symbols stood for the words.

Helen Keller went on to graduate from Radcliffe College at the age of twenty-four. She and Anne Sullivan would remain friends and work together for the remainder of Anne Sullivan's life. Keller died in 1968 and was only a few weeks short of her eighty-eighth birthday.

Text Questions

1. Which information from the text is an opinion?
   a. Helen Keller's life is one of the most inspirational stories ever told.
   b. Helen Keller was born in 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama.
   c. Anne Sullivan moved to Alabama to work with Helen Keller.
   d. Helen Keller graduated from Radcliffe College.
2. What is the first word Anne Sullivan was able to get Helen to truly understand?
   a. Alabama
   b. teacher
   c. mother
   d. water
3. What does the word *mute* mean as it is used in the first paragraph?
   a. unable to see
   b. unable to talk
   c. unable to hear
   d. unable to communicate
4. Summarize the text in two or three complete sentences.

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. What was the author's purpose in writing this text?
   a. to persuade
   b. to explain
   c. to inform
   d. to entertain

LIVEWORKSHEETS