

Read a magazine article about Helen Keller.

Helen Keller: an incredible woman

Helen Keller was an American author and political activist who was born in 1880, in Alabama, USA. When she was only 19 months old, she got seriously ill and, as a result, she became blind and deaf.

Helen's parents didn't know how to deal with their daughter's problem, so they asked experts for help. This is how they found Anne Sullivan, a twenty-year-old teacher at the Perkins School for the Blind, in Massachusetts. In 1887, Anne went to Helen's home in Alabama and started working with her. Helen began to learn language by touching objects around her and connecting them with words. For example, Anne put a doll in one of Helen's hands and then pressed the letters of the word "doll" into her other hand. Next, Anne taught Helen how to read using Braille and, by the age of ten, she could read and even use a Braille writer.

In 1890, another teacher, Sarah Fuller, began to teach Helen how to speak. It was a really difficult process and took Helen many years of hard work. From 1894 to 1896, she attended a school for the deaf in New York, where she worked on improving her communication skills. After that, she entered the Cambridge School for Young Ladies, and went on to attend university at Radcliffe College, Harvard. In 1904, Helen got a degree in Arts. While she was in college, she also wrote a book, "The Story of My Life", in which she narrates her early life in detail.

Throughout her life, Helen gave help and hope to people like her. She joined an American charity organisation for the blind and travelled around the world giving speeches on the rights of the blind and deaf, supporting people with disabilities in general.

Helen Keller died in 1968, at the age of 87, but her remarkable life still encourages people never to give up.



1 Mark the sentences with T (True), F (False) or NG (Not Given).

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- 1 Helen Keller was born deaf and blind.
- 2 Helen attended a school in Massachusetts, where she met Anne Sullivan.
- 3 It was hard for Helen to learn how to speak.
- 4 Helen was the first deaf and blind person to enter university.
- 5 Helen did lots of charity work during her life.

2 Choose and circle a, b or c.

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- 1 What is true about Anne Sullivan?
 - She started to work with Helen when the girl was 5 years old.
 - She helped Helen learn words by using everyday things.
 - She was a teacher at a school in Alabama.
- 2 At which school did Helen learn how to communicate better?
 - a school for the deaf in New York
 - the Cambridge School for Young Ladies
 - Radcliffe College
- 3 When did Helen graduate from university?
 - in 1890
 - in 1896
 - in 1904
- 4 What kind of book did Helen write while she was in college?
 - a history book
 - a children's book
 - an autobiography
- 5 What is NOT true about Helen Keller?
 - She died at a very young age.
 - She made history with her achievements.
 - She tried to make other people's lives better.