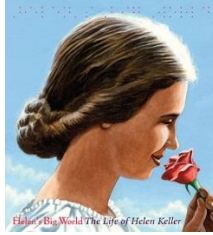


## ***Helen's Big World: The Life of Helen Keller***

by Doreen Rappaport



**Introduction:** Helen Keller (1880-1968) was born in Alabama. When she was nineteen months old, an illness left her deaf and blind. With the help of Annie Sullivan, her teacher for 49 years, she was able to learn how to communicate. Helen graduated with honors from Radcliffe College in 1904, where she learned how to read German, Greek, Latin, and French in Braille. An advocate for women rights and the disabled, she campaigned against war, child labor, and capital punishment.

### **Lesson**

#### **Spell-It Story Connections**

**Introduction:** When Annie Sullivan was struggling to teach Helen Keller that words meant things, she would repeatedly spell words into Helen's hand using sign language. The first word that Helen understood was W-A-T-E-R.

**Grade Level:** 1-3

**Time Allocation:** 20-25 minutes

#### **Materials:**

- A copy of *Helen's Big World: The Life of Helen Keller*
- Sets of letter boxes (best if run off on cardstock)
- Small envelopes for letter storage
- Copy of Visual 1 or Visual 2
- Copy of "Spell-It Book Review Activity Script"

#### **Objectives:**

- The student will listen to a story and be able to review its main concepts.
- The student will use selected letters to create words that answer questions and follow a specific pattern.
- The student will be introduced to the economic concepts in the book's text; examples include wants, productive resources, human capital, and earning and saving.

**Virginia Standards of Learning – History & Social Sciences**

K.9	The student will a) recognize that people make choices because they cannot have everything they want; b) explain that people work to earn money to buy the things they want.
1.8	The student will explain that people make choices because they cannot have everything they want.
1.10	The student will apply the trait of a good citizen by c) working hard in school
2.8	The student will describe natural resources (water, soil, wood, and coal), human resources (people at work), and capital resources (machines, tools, and buildings).
2.4	The student will describe how the contributions of selected individuals changed the lives of Americans, with emphasis on e) Helen Keller
3.7	The student will explain how producers ... use natural resources, human resources, and capital resources in the production of goods and services.
3.9	The student will identify examples of making an economic choice and will explain the idea of opportunity cost (what is given up when making a choice).

**ECONOMIC CONCEPTS:**

- **Choice** – selecting something over another thing
- **Wants**- desires that can be satisfied by consuming a good or a service. Because people cannot have everything they **want** they must choose some things and give up others.
- **Human Resources** – the quality and quantity of human effort directed toward producing goods and services
- **Human Capital** – labor resources that can be improved through investments in education, training, and health care
- **Goods** – material things that provide for wants. Examples include shoes, cookies, and books
- **Earned Income** - to provide labor for monetary payment
- **Invest** - to improve one's human capital through education and training
- **Productive Resources** – all natural resources, human resources, and capital resources used in the production of goods and services
- **Save** - to put money or other items aside for future use

**Procedure:**

1. Prepare and collect materials prior to class. Multiple copies of the letter sets may be copied, cut out, and stored in envelopes. It helps with keeping the letters organized if there are different color letter sets at each table.
2. Introduce the lesson by showing the students the cover of the book. Ask them if they have ever heard of Helen Keller. If not, share the lesson introduction with them.
3. Tell the students that this book is a biography, a non-fiction book that recounts someone's life.
4. Read the book to the class if time allows. This takes about five to six minutes. A YouTube reading can be located here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTfJtJkWNyO>

5. Explain that Helen Keller's parents realized that their daughter would need to have a special teacher if she was going to be able to meet her full potential. They were willing to hire Annie Sullivan, who had special training, to teach Helen to communicate with others. Because they were willing to invest in Helen's education, and she worked hard, she was able to become a global role model for people with disabilities.
6. Tell the students that they are now going to do an activity that reviews the contents of the book. They will be rearranging letters to form words, not unlike what Helen Keller did when she was learning to communicate.
7. Introduce the activity by either using Visual 1 and filling in the answers with input from the students, or using Visual 2 and reviewing the completed contents.
8. Distribute the envelopes containing the letters.
9. Instruct the students to remove the letter squares and check to see if they have seven squares. They should have an A, E, I, N, R, S, T, V, and W. Students may work independently or in pairs.
10. Explain that they are to use these letters to make words from the hints that you are going to read to them. Not all of the letters will be used to make each word. They are to listen for the hints, use the appropriate letters, and raise their hands when they think they have created the right word.
11. Read the seven statements to the students, allowing time for word creation, and ask for the word that best answers the statement. Note: You may not want to provide extra hints by telling them what letters to remove/add.
  - 1) When Helen Keller became deaf and blind when she was a baby, she did not understand what words were. Her teacher, Annie Sullivan, worked hard to show Helen that words meant things. Use five letters to spell the natural resource that was Helen's first word. **W-A-T-E-R**
  - 2) Remove the E and R and add an N and S the spell a word that means "Desires that can be satisfied by consuming or using a good or service." **W-A-N-T-S**
  - 3) Take away the W and A, return the E, and add an R to create a word that means strict. This word describes Annie, who had to be firm and serious when trying to teach Helen how to communicate. **S-T-E-R-N**
  - 4) Remove the S and T and add an A to create a word that means "to gain or get in return for one's labor or service". When Helen performed on stage she did so to \_\_\_\_\_ money. **E-A-R-N**
  - 5) Remove the R and N and add an S and V to create a word that means "to keep money for future use." **S-A-V-E**
  - 6) Take away the A and add an N, T, and I. This new six letter word describes what Helen did to empower her to provide for herself in the future. She knew she had to \_\_\_\_\_ in herself to improve her human capital. (She did this by getting a college education, learning language, and traveling around the world.) **I-N-V-E-S-T**
  - 7) Remove the N and add a R. This word describes what Helen needed to do her entire life in order to be a person who could communicate with the world around her. She had to work hard and \_\_\_\_\_ to be the best she could be. **S-T-R-I-V-E**

12. Conclude the activity by telling the students that by using just a few letters they were able to create words that reviewed the challenges faced by a person who overcame her physical disabilities. Helen Keller's teacher taught her what words were by having her understand that **water** meant W-A-T-E-R. Once Helen could communicate, her **wants** were known. Annie had to be **stern** with Helen because she knew Helen would have to **earn** her own way in life. Helen did learn and was able to **earn** money and **save** for her future. Because both Annie and Helen **invested** in their own human capital, they were able to **strive** to be contributing members of society and help others.

**Extension Activities:**

- If time allows, encourage students to use the letters to create other words. Possible words include: art, star, raise, train, vale, wait and nest.
- Discuss the meaning of the words human capital, earn, save, invest, and wants. Have the students make up sentences using these words in a way that might apply to their own lives.
- Create a class chart listing all of Helen Keller's skills and accomplishments. Explain how some of these skills enabled her to earn income when she was older.

Visual 1-

### *Helen Keller*

Helen Keller could not see letters or hear the sounds they represented, yet she learned to read and write. Use the letters below and follow the directions to create some words that describe some of Helen Keller's skills.

A	E	D	I	R	T	W
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1. When Helen Keller was nineteen months old, an illness caused her to become deaf and blind. Because she could not see, her parents thought she would never be able to \_\_\_\_\_ books. [Select four of the letters and make a word that means "to decode language".]

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2. Before Helen could use words, she had to know what they were. Her teacher, Annie Sullivan, was able to make Helen understand that letters represented words, and those words stood for specific things. Remove the D and add a W and T to create the first word Helen learned.

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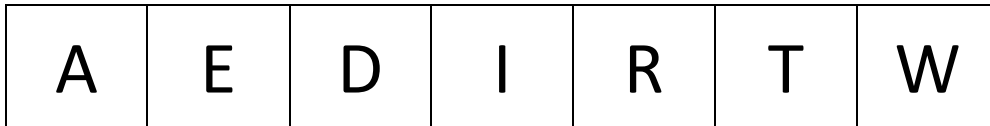
3. Remove the A and replace it with an I. Rearrange the letters to create a word that completes this sentence: Helen and Annie worked hard to invest in her human capital. By the time Helen was eight years old she understood language and could read and \_\_\_\_\_.

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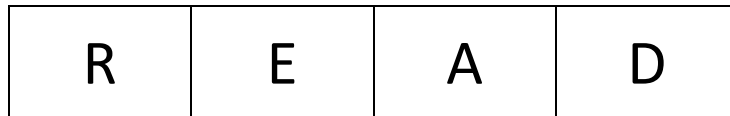
Visual #2

### *Helen Keller*

Helen Keller could not see letters or hear the sounds they represented, yet she learned to read and write. Use the letters below and follow the directions to create some words that describe some of Helen Keller's skills.



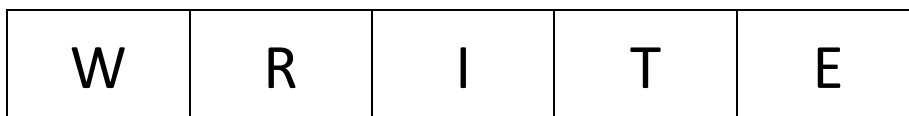
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2. Before Helen could use words, she had to know what they were. Her teacher, Annie Sullivan, was able to make Helen understand that letters represented words, and those words stood for specific things. Remove the D and add a W and T to create the first word Helen learned.



3. Remove the A and replace it with an I. Rearrange the letters to create a word that completes this sentence: Helen and Annie worked hard to invest in her human capital. By the time Helen was eight years old she understood language and could read and \_\_\_\_\_.



Activity-

## Helen Keller

### Spell-It Script

A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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3. Take away the W and A, return the E, and add an R to create a word that means strict. This word describes Annie, who had to be firm and serious when trying to teach Helen to communicate.
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5. Remove the R and N and add an S and V to create a word that means, "To keep money for future use."
6. Take away the A and add a T, N, and I. This new six letter word describes what Helen did to empower her to provide for herself in the future. She knew she had to \_\_\_\_\_ in herself to improve her human capital. (She did this by getting an education, learning languages, and traveling around the world.)
7. Remove the N and add a R. This word describes what Helen needed to do her entire life in order to be a person who could communicate with the world around her. She had to work hard and \_\_\_\_\_ to be the best she could be.

Letter Sets Pattern Page

A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W
A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W
A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W
A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W
A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W
A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W
A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W
A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W
A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W
A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W
A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W
A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W
A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W
A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W
A	E	I	N	R	S	T	V	W