

Woman of Courage

Helen Keller became blind and deaf soon after she was born, but she still managed to learn to read, write, and speak.

Helen was born in Alabama in the United States in 1880. At 19 months old she fell ill and lost her eyesight and hearing. Since she couldn't hear other people, she didn't learn to speak.

When Helen was 6 years old, she met Anne Sullivan, who was sent to stay with Helen as a governess. Sullivan was herself a remarkable woman. She was very patient and taught Helen that things had names. She taught Helen to finger spell the alphabet. By using finger spelling on Helen's palm, Sullivan helped Helen understand names for things that she could feel.

Helen was a hard worker and soon learned to read a form of the alphabet with her fingers. She started to read by feeling raised letters and words on cardboard. Later she learned Braille, a system of writing that many blind people use. Another teacher, Sarah Fuller, taught Helen to speak by having her feel people's lips and throats as they were talking.

Helen Keller died when she was 88 years old. She is remembered as a woman of great courage and intelligence. (203 words)

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