

Teacher's Guide for APPLESEEDS: *Helen Keller*

April 2007

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Extended Response: Comprehension & Critical Thinking

The questions below can be used as written, simply answered in complete sentences, or easily transformed into longer essay (ELA) style questions, or even research topics. In any case, have the students support their answers with details from the text or use critical thinking skills to create a thorough and interesting answer. Consider the level of your students when deciding how to use the questions. The questions for each lesson can be found under the article's title below, and the answers for the short response questions are on the last page of the guide.

“Deaf and Blind, not Dumb!” p. 2-4

Read the article and answer the questions below.

1. Helen was born healthy. When and how did Helen become blind and deaf?
2. How did Helen figure out how to tell her mother and father what she wanted and how to understand them?
3. Why do you think Helen became so difficult as she grew older, smashing things, screaming and having temper tantrums?
4. Who was Anne Sullivan and what was her significance in Helen's life?

Essay #1: Anne exhibited incredible patience and persistence. Write about a time that you were patient and persistent. How did it help you accomplish your goal?

Essay #2: Choose one of Helen's amazing accomplishments and explain why it was so inspiring.

“Let Your Fingers Do the Reading” p. 5-7

1. What system did Louis Braille simply to create his own Braille alphabet?
2. List the three ways in which Braille can be written.

“Turning the Key” p. 8-11

Essay: Anne Sullivan was above all, a great teacher. Write about a teacher or authority other authority figure that has made a difference in your life.

1. Explain why it was important for Helen to be removed from the classroom setting for learning.
2. How do you think Anne's difficult upbringing played a part in her becoming the type of teacher/person she was?

“Not Your Average Schools” p. 12-13

Read the article and fill the answers below.

1. Two hundred years ago, many people believe that children who were deaf or blind had no _____.
2. Dr. John _____ decided to open the first school for the blind.
3. By _____, the Perkins School for the Blind opened its doors to its first students.
4. People were astonished when Perkins' first deaf/blind pupil, _____, finished her education with many skills.
5. Today the Perkins School helps children who are deaf/blind in over _____ countries.
6. Helen Keller and other students like her have taught us that physical challenges do not limit a person's ability to _____.

“Helen Goes to College” p. 14-15

Math: Read the article and fill in the correct numbers.

1. Helen spent _____ years at Perkins.
2. In 1900, Helen entered Radcliffe College with the freshmen class of _____ young women.
3. What year was Helen's sophomore year?
4. How many years did it take Helen to graduate?
5. How many years later did Harvard grant Helen the first honorary degree to a woman?

“A Guide By Your Side” p. 17-19

Essay: Read about the important role of guide dogs in the life of a disabled person. Imagine that the law did not permit service dogs in public places. Write a letter to your government, using a persuasive argument, stating why guide dogs must be able to accompany their owners at all times.

“Helen Keller Gets Active” p. 20-21

1. How did having privileges, such as wealth help Helen to succeed?
2. What is the Socialist party and why do you think Helen joined it?
3. Why did Helen's choice of public speaking issues make her unpopular for a certain time period?

4. What honor did Helen receive when she was 84 years old?

“Braille Without Borders” p. 22-24

Activity: Sabriye Tenberken lost her eyesight when she was 2 years old. She learned to write in the dark. Think of a simple Nursery Rhyme and try to write it in the dark.

1. In Sabriye’s school, becoming self-independent and self-confident is just as important as accomplishing academics. Why do you think this is? Do you agree?

“The Incredible Smeller of Helen Keller” p. 25

Activity: Helen Keller became very tuned into her sense of smell. She could distinguish between different types of mushrooms and roses, and even detect a storm coming. Set up an experiment with different food objects and see if you can distinguish the different items. Be sure to be blindfolded and only use your sense of smell!