

National Geographic Kids Readers: Helen Keller

Notes for teachers: using this book in the classroom

Reading objectives: discuss the sequence of events in books and how items of information are related; draw on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher; make inferences on the basis of what is being said and done; answer and ask questions

Spoken language objectives: use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas

Curriculum links: History: significant individuals; Writing – composition

Interest words: disabled, inspired, courage, confusing, frustrated, determined, success, vibrations, practising, miracle worker, equal treatment, suffragette

Resources: internet, paper, pencils

Children who are reading at Purple and Gold book bands should be able to read longer and more complex sentences and tackle more challenging and less familiar vocabulary with increasing independence. They may still need support from adults to help maintain fluency and to develop understanding as ideas become more complex, and more inference and deduction is required. Guided and Independent reading opportunities can be used to develop these skills.

Language

- The language used in the main text should be familiar to children reading at this level and may be read independently, but children may need help with the following:
 - reading longer words with multiple syllables and different endings that describe Helen and her life, e.g. *disabled, inspired, courage, confusing, frustrated, determined, success, vibrations, practising*.
 - the less familiar words and phrases, e.g. *miracle worker, equal treatment, suffragette*.
 - reading the place names in some of the captions.
- Children may need help to connect the information from the images and captions to the text to make full meaning.
- Children may notice that the book is organised in the order of Helen Keller's life, as a biography.
- Children may need help using the organisational devices, e.g. the contents list to find information; the picture glossary to learn the meaning of new words: *disabled, finger spell, braille, suffragette*.
- Children will enjoy reading about the events in Helen's life and might be able to see that her circumstances and personality contributed to her success as a communicator, despite her disabilities.
- Children will enjoy noticing the adjectives that describe Helen, and may like to look for adjectives that apply to their experiences too, e.g. when they have been determined.

Collins

Images

- Look at the braille book and the image of braille being read on pp18–19. Discuss how braille works, and what sense you need to use to read it.
- Look closely at the image of Helen Keller’s statue on p28. Discuss what Helen is doing, and why this has been chosen for her statue (using a water pump).
- Children will enjoy looking at the images from Helen’s life, and comparing them to their own experiences.

Activities

- Turn to p30. Challenge children to work with a partner to take the quiz. Model how to use the contents list to locate the answers efficiently.
- Look at the glossary together and notice the picture of braille. Challenge children to write their names, and simple messages in braille.

Questions

- What does ‘disabled’ mean?
- How old was Helen when she lost her hearing and sight?
- How did doctors know that Helen couldn’t see or hear when she was a baby?
- What was life like for school children in the 1880s?
- What is a suffragette?