

Thank You, Anne Sullivan: Helen Keller’s Teacher



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Anne teaches Helen the sign for “doll”

Helen Keller was born in 1880. She was born healthy. When she was two, she got very sick. She became blind and deaf.

Life became harder as Helen grew older. It was not just hard for Helen. It was hard for her family, too. She couldn't understand them. They couldn't understand her. She had a lot of temper tantrums.

Helen's parents found a teacher for Helen. Her name was Anne Sullivan. Anne lived in Massachusetts. She learned how to teach blind children there. She was also partly blind herself.

Thank You, Anne Sullivan

Anne moved to Alabama to live with Helen's family. She became Helen's teacher. She gave Helen a doll. She spelled the word "doll" into Helen's hand using sign language. Helen didn't understand. Anne had Helen touch something. Then she spelled the word into Helen's hand. Helen still didn't understand. But Anne was patient. She did not give up.

Then one day everything changed. Anne brought Helen to a waterspout. She poured water over one of Helen's hands. She spelled the word "w-a-t-e-r" into Helen's other hand. Helen finally understood what the signs meant! She was so happy. She wanted to learn more and more.

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Anne teaches Helen how to read lips

Anne stayed with Helen for the rest of her life. She taught Helen how to read and write using Braille. Braille is writing for people who can't see. Braille is made of raised dots on a page. You read Braille with your fingertips. Anne taught Helen how to speak. She taught her how to read lips. To do this, Helen touched people's lips as they spoke.

Thank You, Anne Sullivan

Now Helen could understand people and they could understand her.

Helen became an excellent student. She went to college. Anne stayed with her during her classes. She signed everything the teacher said into Helen's hand. Helen graduated college with honors.

Helen wrote books, starred in plays, and met presidents. She showed the world that a person with disabilities can live an amazing, full life. She helped blind and deaf people all over the world. She showed them how much they can do if they have the right teacher. Thank you, Anne Sullivan!

