
TIME FOR KIDS
Helen Keller
A NEW VISION
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For teachers' inspection ONLY

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Chapter 1

A Hopeful Heart

Imagine silence. Imagine darkness. Imagine a world without colors or laughter. This silent darkness was the only world Helen Keller knew. It was the 1800s. People didn't know much about **disabilities**. Many **deaf** and **blind** people were seen as burdens. Often, they were sent to live away from their families.

For much of her life, Keller struggled against what other people thought of her. She struggled with what she thought of herself. But in time, Keller learned to believe in herself. Even in dark and lonely moments she tried to connect with the world. Most importantly, she learned to never lose hope and to keep dreaming.



- What can we learn from Helen Keller's life?
- How would you react if you were Keller?
- How do you think Keller's life would have been different if she had been born today?

Imagine silence.

Imagine Darkness.

Imagine
a world without
Colors or laughter.

This silent darkness
was the only world
Helen Keller knew.



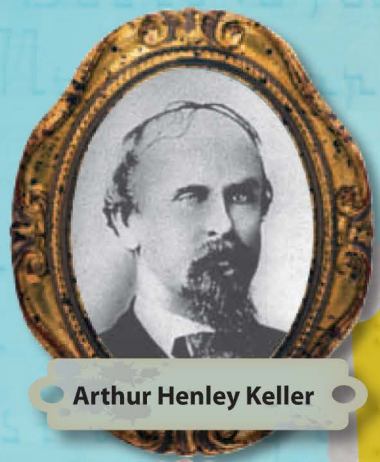
Silence Descends

Helen Keller was born on June 27, 1880, in Tuscumbia, Alabama. Her time as a baby was fun and filled with play. But when she was 19 months old, she got very ill. She had a high fever. It took away her ability to see and hear. Her parents didn't know what to do for her. They took her to several doctors. But the doctors didn't know how to help. Keller's world became silent and dark. Babies learn to talk by watching and listening to the people around them. Now, Keller could do neither.

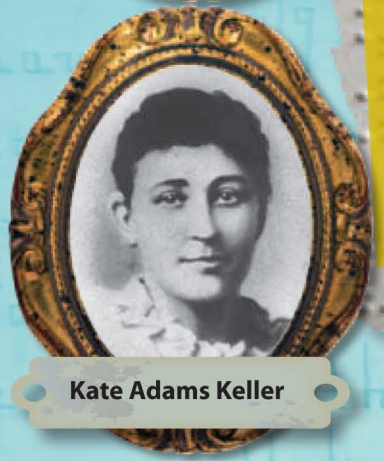


Keller as a young girl

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Arthur Henley Keller



Kate Adams Keller

Silent Words

People use words to tell others about their hopes, dreams, and everyday wants and needs. Keller tried to move her body to help her parents understand what she wanted. For example, if she wanted ice cream, she made two motions. First she moved her hand in a circle as though cranking an ice cream maker. Then, she shivered.

The Wild Girl

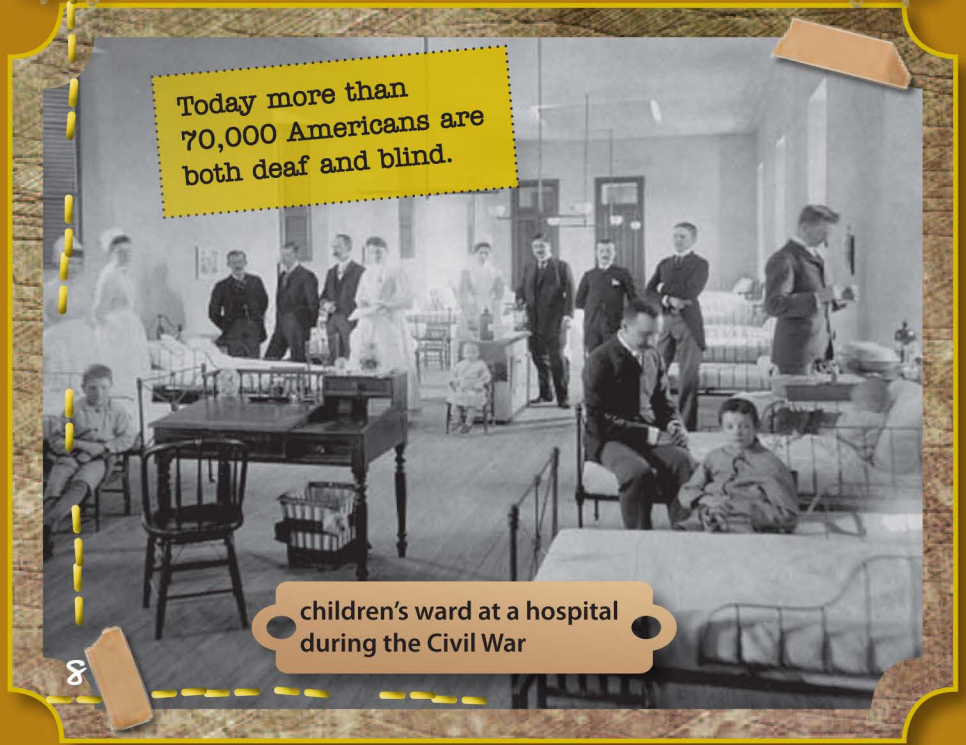
Many people in Keller's family called her a wild child. Because Keller could not say what she needed, she threw tantrums. She would often lie on the floor and kick her legs. She wouldn't let people hug or try to comfort her. She didn't trust that people wanted to help her. Keller once wrote that when she was little, she felt like she was living in a "no world."

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DIG DEEPER!

Medical Mystery

Today, we use medicine to keep germs away and treat illness, but in the 1800s, people often became **impaired** after being sick. There weren't many medicines to help people. Sometimes, people needed to have an **amputation**. Other times, they might become deaf or blind. Hundreds of years ago, these impairments meant people could not work or care for themselves. Today, these difficulties do not stop people from living amazing lives.



Today more than 70,000 Americans are both deaf and blind.

children's ward at a hospital during the Civil War

Brain Fever

Keller's doctors called her illness *brain fever*. Today, doctors think she may have had **scarlet fever** or **meningitis** (men-in-JAHY-tis). For many days, her doctor and her parents thought she might die. When the fever broke, her parents were happy because they thought she was cured. But later, it was clear something was very wrong.





No Response

At first, Mrs. Keller didn't know her daughter had lost her ability to see and hear. Because Keller was a baby, she could not tell anyone there was a problem. Soon after her sickness, Keller's mother was ringing the bell for dinner, but Keller didn't turn her head to look. That's when Mrs. Keller knew something was wrong.