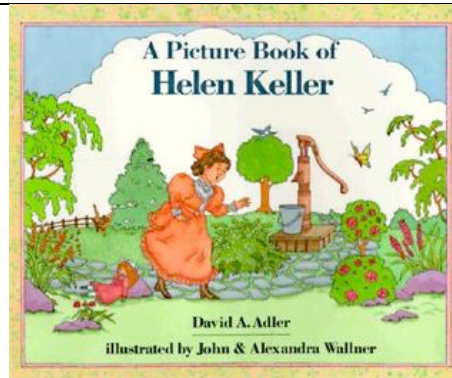


LESSON PLAN: A PICTURE BOOK OF HELEN KELLER

Written by David A. Adler / Illustrated by John & Alexandra Wallner



Objectives:

- Students will be able to highlight at least three important achievements Helen Keller made in her life.
- Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of Braille and sign language as ways of communication.

New York State Learning Standards:

Kindergarten: 1-7, 10, 11

First Grade: 1-7, 10, 11

Second Grade: 1-3, 5-7, 11

Materials:

A Picture Book of Helen Keller, K-W-L chart, Famous Person Graphic Organizer, Museum of disABILITY History website: <http://museumofdisability.org>

Vocabulary:

companion	lectured	Braille	Radcliffe College
injured	mischievous	Anne Sullivan	Alexander Graham Bell
deaf	Lyndon Johnson		American Foundation for the Blind

Before Reading:

- Discuss the pictures and details of the cover and title. Talk about how this book is called a biography because it is the true story of Helen Keller's life. Provide background information about Helen Keller as students make observations about the illustrations.

Discuss the author and illustrator and how their contributions to the book help us understand more about Helen Keller.

- Create a poster size K-W-L chart (see sample) and record students responses for each of the following sections:
 - K (Know): What students already know or have heard about Helen Keller
 - W (Want to Know): Questions students have about Helen Keller before reading
 - L (Learned): This section is filled in after students have read the book and discussed the information they learned about Helen Keller.

Reading:

Read *A Picture Book of Helen Keller* aloud to the class.

Discussion Questions:

Ask students the following questions so they can reflect and think critically about the story.

Pages 1-2:

When was Helen Keller born? What happened to her when she was about six months old?

Page 4:

Why did Helen turn away from bright lights and was unable to hear people talking to her?

Page 6:

How did Helen communicate with her parents to let them know what she wanted?

Pages 8-10:

Why did Helen start to misbehave when she could not communicate the way she wanted to? What did she do? How do you think her parents felt when Helen did these things? What does mischievous mean?

Page 12:

Where did Helen's parents take her to get her help? Who did she meet?

Pages 14-17:

Who was Alexander Graham Bell? Who did he find to help Helen? When did Helen say was her "soul's birthday"? What did Anne Sullivan try to teach her? What was the result? How did Anne teach Helen to understand how to communicate with the word *water*? Why do you think that Helen later said that learning her first word gave her soul light, hope, and joy? What did it mean to her to be able to communicate?

Page 18:

What happened next? Why did some people call Helen the “wonder girl”? When did she learn to speak?

Page 20:

How was Helen able to go to college? What did Helen do when she was in college? When did she graduate? Why do you think it may have been difficult for Helen to graduate from college and write a book?

Page 23:

What were some of Helen’s major accomplishments in her life? How did Helen continue her work for those with disabilities after Anne Sullivan died? Who helped her? Why was the American Foundation for the Blind important to her?

Page 24:

How did Helen help soldiers who were injured during World War II?

Pages 26-28:

Why did so many people want to meet Helen Keller? What award did she receive? When did Helen die? What were some of the things Helen learned to do? What do you think was the most important thing that Helen accomplished? How did Helen bring hope and love to millions of people?

Guided Practice:

- Make a simple figure/person with a head, middle, left arm, right arm, left leg, right leg, and feet. The figure can either be drawn on the chalkboard or handouts (sample attached) could be provided for students to fill in as the following information is discussed in class: For example: Head: Helen Keller; Middle Section: Helen Keller’s Major Accomplishment(s); Left Arm/ Special Dates: A special date related to the major accomplishment in Helen’s Life; Right Arm/Where: Where the event took place; Left Leg/Personal Information about Helen; Right Leg/Interesting Information about her. Guide students with including one or more facts in the correct sections of the body pertaining to each heading.
- Discuss what students thought were the most important accomplishments and facts about Helen Keller.

Bonus Activity:

Discuss how Helen learned how to read using Braille. Show examples on the following interactive web sites below. Guide students with learning the different patterns of the Braille alphabet. Have them make their own Braille cards and spell their names and words with them.

Web Sites for Teaching Students about Braille:

- Helen Keller Kids Museum Online: <http://braillebug.afb.org/hkmuseum.asp>
- Braille alphabet charts and worksheets: <http://braillealphabet.org/>
- Arthur: You've Got Braille: <http://pbskids.org/arthur/print/braille>

Discuss how Helen used sign language to communicate. Provide opportunities for students to become familiar with sign language using the web sites below. Guide them with learning to sign the letters in their names and simple words.

Web Sites for Teaching Students about Sign Language:

- Arthur: Sign Design: <http://pbskids.org/arthur/print/signdesign/index.html>
- The American Sign Language Alphabet (chart):
<http://pbskids.org/mayaandmiguel/english/print/aslalphabet.html>

Bibliography:

Adler, David A. *A Picture Book of Helen Keller*. New York: Holiday House, 1990.