



## The Day Water Changed Everything: The Story of Helen Keller

Helen Keller was born in 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama. For the first year and a half of her life, she was just like any other baby. She laughed. She played. She even began saying a few words. But everything changed in 1882 when Helen got very sick. The illness came suddenly, and when it was over, she could no longer see or hear.

Helen was only 19 months old. She had no idea why the world had gone dark and quiet. Without words or sounds, she became frustrated. She often threw tantrums or acted out because she could not explain what she wanted. Her parents wanted to help but did not know how.

When Helen was six years old, her parents found a teacher named Anne Sullivan. Anne arrived in March 1887 and began working with Helen right away. Anne had once had trouble with her own eyesight and knew how important communication could be. She began spelling words into Helen's hand using a method called finger spelling. Helen learned how to copy the movements but had no idea what the finger shapes meant.

Then came the day everything changed. On April 5, 1887, Anne took Helen outside to the water pump. As water splashed over one hand, Anne spelled **W A T E R** into the other. Suddenly, Helen understood. That cool, wet liquid had a name. In that one moment, Helen connected the idea of words to the world around her. That day, she learned 30 new words.

From that point on, Helen was unstoppable. She learned to read Braille, a special system of raised dots used by people who are blind. In 1890, she began taking speech lessons and worked hard to learn how to speak.

In 1894, Helen attended the Wright-Humason School for the Deaf in New York City, where she worked on her speech and lip-reading skills.

She met many famous people, including inventor Alexander Graham Bell and author Mark Twain. Both were amazed by her progress and supported her dreams.

In 1900, Helen began college classes at Radcliffe College in Massachusetts. She had help from Anne, who sat beside her and spelled every lecture into her hand.



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In 1903, Helen published her first book, ***The Story of My Life***, which shared how she overcame the challenges of being deaf and blind.

In 1904, Helen graduated and became the first deafblind person in the United States to earn a college degree.

The following year, Helen gave her first public lecture. She spoke about her experiences and encouraged others to believe in what is possible.

In 1915, Helen helped start an organization that later became Helen Keller International, which still works today to fight blindness and hunger around the world.

In 1924, Helen began working with the American Foundation for the Blind. She spent over 40 years helping improve education and support for people who are blind.

Helen traveled to more than 35 countries, giving speeches and encouraging people with disabilities. She met presidents, kings, and students just like you. She wrote more books and helped change how people around the world thought about blindness and deafness.

Helen Keller died in 1968, just a few weeks before her 88th birthday. Her story still inspires people today because she showed that real vision is about more than just what we see with our eyes. As she once said, ***"The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision."*** Helen lived every day proving that true vision comes from what we believe, hope for, and work toward—even when we cannot see it.