

Anne Sullivan Reading Comprehension

Name _____

Anne Sullivan is best known as Helen Keller's teacher. Her own story, however, is equally as inspirational. Anne overcame incredible obstacles in her life to impact history.

Anne Sullivan was born on April 14, 1866, in Massachusetts. At the age of five, Anne was stricken with a painful bacterial eye infection known as trachoma, which rendered her blind. Three years later her mother died of tuberculosis and her father, who was said to be abusive, abandoned her. Anne and her brother were sent to an overcrowded orphanage in Tewksbury, Massachusetts, where she'd live for four years. Anne's brother died shortly after arriving at the orphanage. In 1880, however, Anne was allowed to leave the orphanage and enroll in the Perkins School for the Blind. At Perkins, Anne was combative with both teachers and students. Nevertheless, her brilliance was obvious and she graduated at the age of 20 as the school's valedictorian, or, highest achiever.

Following her graduation, Anne left for Tusculumbia, Alabama, to work with Helen Keller, who was blind and deaf. Like Anne, Helen was combative and uncooperative with her former teachers. At first, Anne's fiery personality caused problems in the Keller household. According to legend, Anne argued with Mr. Keller about his status as a former slave owner. Anne and Helen, however, bonded immediately. Unlike Helen's teachers of the past, Anne adapted to Helen's personality and learning style. Anne taught Helen words by spelling them out in Helen's palm. In one famous example, Anne ran water over Helen's hands while spelling out "w-a-t-e-r" in her palm. Within six months, Anne had taught Helen hundreds of words, basic math, and even braille. Anne next accompanied Helen to the Perkins School, where Helen's progress drew the attention of the national media. Helen quickly became a celebrity and the public face of the Perkins School. Helen would be accepted to Radcliffe College. At Radcliffe, Sullivan continued to help Keller understand lectures by spelling words into Helen's palm. With Anne's help, Helen Keller became the first blind and deaf person to graduate from college.

Following Helen's graduation, the two toured the country giving speeches and lectures. Anne even starred in a movie about herself entitled *Deliverance* in 1919. Helen and Anne remained close friends and companions throughout the rest of Anne's life. By 1936, Anne's health was in decline and Helen was helping to take care of her. On October 15, 1936, Anne suffered a heart attack. With Helen holding her hand, Anne Sullivan died five days later, on October 20, 1936.

- 1. What is the author trying to communicate in the first paragraph?**
- A. That Anne Sullivan, not Helen Keller, should be the person remembered in history
 - B. That Anne Sullivan played an important role in Helen Keller's life
 - C. Although Anne Sullivan is usually associated with Helen Keller, she also overcame incredible obstacles to make a difference in the world.
 - D. That Anne Sullivan should be best known as Helen Keller's teacher

- 2. Which question is NOT answered in the second paragraph?**
- A. Why did Anne's father leave her?
 - B. What is trachoma?
 - C. When was Anne allowed to leave the orphanage?
 - D. How did Anne's mother die?

- 3. Circle all of the following that Anne and Helen had in common?**
- A. They were combative with people
 - B. They were blind and deaf
 - C. They were both from Alabama
 - D. They both suffered from vision problems

- 4. What is implied in the following sentence?**

Unlike Helen's teachers of the past, Anne adapted to Helen's personality and learning style.

- A. Helen's personality made it very difficult for Anne to teach her
- B. Anne personalized Helen's lessons - unlike her previous teachers
- C. Anne was similar to teachers that Helen had in the past
- D. Anne disciplined Helen for not following her rules

- 5. Which of the following best describes the relationship between Anne and Helen?**
- A. At first Helen was the student, but as time went on, Helen became the teacher and Anne became the student
 - B. At first Helen was simply Anne's student, but as time went on, they became business partners and very close friends
 - C. Helen was Anne's student and eventually they were able to become friends
 - D. While it's true that Helen and Anne spent a lot of time together, the story does not elaborate on their relationship enough to make an accurate description

6. Which of the following IS NOT answered in the passage?

- A. How did Anne help Helen while Helen was a student at Radcliffe?
- B. What was the name of the movie that Anne starred in?
- C. What happened in Anne's life in the years before she died?
- D. What did Anne and Helen do together after Helen graduated from Radcliffe?

7. What can be inferred from the third paragraph?

- A. Anne Sullivan also graduated from Radcliffe College
- B. Anne Sullivan was against slavery
- C. Helen Keller would be the only blind and deaf person to ever graduate from Radcliffe College
- D. Helen Keller also starred in *Deliverance*