**Reading Guidelines**

**Estimated time for reading Helen Keller**

* Ten to twelve school days (depending on if poster is done)

**Vocabulary Words from this book (may leave off the suffixes)**

* Braille, dumb, vibrations, plunk, clench, droop, director, miracle, cum laude, blur

**Specific instructions concerning Helen Keller**

* This book contains very valuable lessons:
	+ Structure and obedience must be in place in order for learning to happen
	+ Both Annie and Helen demonstrate the fact that determination turned the wrong way is stubbornness, yet channeled aright is powerful impetus enabling one to conquer huge obstacles.
	+ The world is a place of wonder and delight
	+ Our five senses are tremendous gifts.
	+ We learn primarily through our five senses. Losing one or more of our senses greatly hinders the learning process
* When we begin reading continued stories, I ask students to not read ahead. This builds anticipation.
* If doing a poster, each day have students give and record one statement summarizing the chapter for that day. Save these for the end of the book poster's flow chart. Do the poster idea only twice in the year.

**Suggested schedule (amount of time spent daily)**

* Fifteen minutes with comprehension skills practice—usually a visual or hands on project
* Fifteen minutes reading silently or in pairs—this includes a 2-3 minute introduction of the story by the teacher
* Twenty-five to thirty minutes reading with teacher interspersed with discussion of story and looking at completed visuals
* Fluency can be practiced only when the words are familiar to children and reading not too difficult. For this reason as well as for comprehension practice, second graders should read each story twice—the first time either in pairs or silently and the second time aloud as a class to the teacher.

**Further guidelines**

* Teacher assigns reading groups of 2-3 each, assigns each group's specific reading spot, and spot to work on visual together. After teacher introduces the vocabulary word and the story/chapter for the day, these small groups read the story together and then often do the visual together too. Teacher may want to change the groups after each book (approximately every three weeks).
	+ Students need to be trained to use their time wisely when out of the sight of the teacher. At the beginning and periodically afterwards ask students to report back to the teacher (they come in their small groups) and give a thumbs up, sideways or down signal to indicate how trustworthy/responsible they were in their reading together time. No words needed—unless they didn't do well. When held accountable like this, students tend to be harder on themselves than the teacher.
* Each child needs a 1” three ring binder to store all their visuals. Students make dividers to separate the visual of each book.
* Reading class time is spent only on reading projects. Early finishers should simply read a library book or work on a challenge project. They are not to expect other free time things as options.
* Once a week evaluate each student's general reading. Use E, S+, S, S-, N as the grading scale. Think about general fluency, accuracy, expression. I prefer the once a week overall scale versus the “Today I will grade them on this one page” approach. It is less pressure for both me and them, and I think perhaps more accurate in grading overall performance.
* Vary the method of doing oral reading class: grasshopper jump, eagle eyes, round robin, read for 45 sec, teacher read, etc.
* On rare occasions (specifically on less interesting stories) the teacher may read some, making small reading mistakes while the students follow along and catch her. To involve everyone you could say on this page only the boys/girls may correct me or only those on this bench, etc. Teacher could read until they miss catching a mistake.
* Nearly always the complete lesson is read both in pairs and then as a class to the teacher. However, once in a great while it is OK to only read part of the story aloud if they complete some demanding comprehension check.
* Vary the method of doing the visuals: as a class (especially when introducing a new concept), most times in small groups of 2-3, and at times alone. Don't forget the alone part. Typically have students show their visuals to the class at class reading time.
* Put some visuals out on the wall for display.
* Plan only to do regular group visuals three-four times a week. While they love it, they will burn them out if used five days a week. Intersperse with other things.

**Reading foci:**

* + - Expression—primarily voice varying in pitch and intensity
		- Oral interpretation—includes not only voice varying in pitch and intensity, but also speed, complete with appropriate pauses and silence.
		- Accuracy—reading into and not only in, not skipping or substituting words
		- Fluency—reading smoothly, without jerky starts and stops; this requires the student to read material they know well
		- Pausing for punctuation—noticing the commas and periods and pausing appropriately.

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*Note: Vocabulary definitions are given according to how they are used in the story.*

| **Lesson One** **Book Title:*** *Helen Keller*
	+ Author: Margaret Davidson
* *A Strange Fever p. 7-10*

**Goal/Objective:*** Introduce new book; learn about the setting
* Introduce Helen Keller

**Vocabulary Word:*** Braille (back cover)*--a system of writing for the blind that uses characters made up of raised dots*

**Introduction:*** Give new books and talk about all they can know about the story by looking and reading only the front and back covers
* Introduce vocabulary word
	+ Note the braille alphabet on the back
* Fill out a book overview visual
* Setting: 1880s, Tuscumbia, Alabama, on a small farm
* Look at the Table of Contents—read chapter titles; predict what the story/chapters may contain
* Look at pictures in the back p. 92-95

**Materials:*** Poster of alphabet in sign language
* Book overview visual

**Comprehension Project:*** Book overview
* Learn to spell their name using the sign language alphabet
 | **Class Reading Time*** May want to give five minutes to students to silently read this first chapter—will not have time to read it in pairs beforehand.
* Introduce characters of first chapter:
* Helen—eighteen months old
	+ Helen's mother
* Explain scarlet fever.
	+ It occurs in young children, usually between two and eight years of age, and is contagious.
	+ Scarlet fever may be mild or severe, but (today) it is rarely fatal if treated. Typical symptoms are sore throat, headache, high fever, flushed face with a ring of pallor about the mouth. *Note: remember Mary Ingalls had scarlet fever and it left her blind.*
* Follow penciled in discussion points in the book.
* Give time to learn to spell name using sign language alphabet
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| **Lesson Two****Chapter Title:*** *The Dark Silence p. 11-19*

**Goal/Objective:*** Understand the terrible helplessness of humans without hearing and sight

**Vocabulary Word:*** Dumb p.12—unable to speak

**Introduction/Leading question:*** Introduce vocabulary word
* Also talk about insane asylums and what they were like at that time
* Nearly everything we learn comes through the use of our eyes, ears, nose, touch, and taste. Which do we use the most? What was it like for Helen to lose two of these?
* Talk about the frustration of not being able to communicate with words
	+ Babies communicate quite fluently with grunts, squeals, yells, and other expressive sounds—but if they never hear sounds, they stop doing even that.
* Helen Keller invented some of her own sign language to communicate – p. 13 says pull and push

**Materials:*** Construction paper for the divider

**Comprehension Project:*** Make divider for binder. Must include:
	+ Title: *Helen Keller*
	+ Author: Margaret Davidson
	+ Optional: copy of p. 93 or a hand doing sign language

**Class Reading Time*** Look at completed dividers
* Follow penciled in discussion points in the book.

**Challenge Project:** * Learn the whole alphabet in sign language
* Do a project with the five senses or draw six pictures of main events
 | **Lesson Three****Chapter Title:*** *The Stranger Comes p. 20-29*

**Goal/Objective:*** Practice the skill of writing good questions
* Understand how self-control and learning must go together

**Vocabulary Word:*** Vibrations p. 21—*rhythmic movement in opposite directions—(demonstrate how you feel vibrations)*

**Introduction/Leading question:*** Introduce vocabulary word
* Teach the students the Spanish (or other language) word for doll, but do not tell them the meaning (this helps prepare them to understand Annie's comment bottom of p. 26—but students DO know that words have meaning and Helen did not even know that)
* Introduce Annie Sullivan—see copy from encyclopedia

**Materials:*** Annie Sullivan article
* A doll
* Notebook paper

**Comprehension Project Ideas:*** Main idea visuals on evidence of Helen being badly spoiled
* Write five questions about these pages for classmates. The questions must be ones they could only answer after reading the story and may not include nonsense questions
* Remind them to use the Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How starters.

**Class Reading Time*** Before reading in class allow each children to ask 1-2 of these questions to the rest of the class.
* Talk about how self-control and learning must go together.
* Without order in and obedience in the classroom or home, no one learns much. Helen Keller knows nothing about obedience so she spends all her energy on fighting Annie and cannot learn/receive from her. No need to preach here, just talk about how it was with Helen. Children will know/understand without moralizing.
* Follow penciled in discussion points in the book.
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| **Lesson Four****Chapter Title:*** *The Worst Fight of All p. 30-38*

**Goal/Objective:*** Practice finding evidence for a main idea

**Vocabulary Word:*** Plunk p. 36*--to set down suddenly*

**Introduction/Leading question:*** Introduce vocabulary word
* When one of the five senses is gone or compromised others will be sharper. Look to see which of Helen's other senses was really sharp

**Comprehension Project:*** Main Idea: Helen was a determined child *Tell students to find things Helen DID that showed her stubbornness/determination*
	+ She threw the spoon as hard as she could
	+ She ran and hid
	+ She locked Annie into her room, wouldn't show her mother the key
	+ She rolled and raged on the floor
	+ She always fought back
	+ She pinched Annie again and again
	+ She kicked and screamed
	+ She kept trying to take the sausage

**Class Reading Time*** Follow penciled in discussion points in the book.
* Look at completed visuals
 | **Lesson Five****Chapter Title:*** *W-A-T-E-R p. 39-45*

**Goal/Objective:*** Practice the skill of summarizing the story

**Vocabulary Word:*** Clench p. 42—*to hold fast or close tightly*

**Introduction/Leading question:*** Introduce vocabulary word
* Think about how many words a normal six year old understands (around 5,000 word families). These are mostly words they understand, but cannot spell.
* Helen knew none before Annie came. Then for two weeks six year old Helen kept learning new words—and learned nearly 30 in that time, but did not know they had any meaning. She was starting to get tired of it. Remember Helen is learning to spell words at the same time as she learns their meaning.
* Today's lesson is an exciting one, for Helen now learns the word game has meaning!

**Materials:*** Six point summarizing visual

**Comprehension Project:*** Six point sequence/summary—*start with # 1 and 6*
* Color the ugly/lovely face picture

**Class Reading Time*** Follow penciled in discussion points in the book.
* Look at completed visuals
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| **Lesson Six** **Story Title:*** *So Much to Learn p. 46-55*

**Goal/Objective:*** Practice compare/contrast skills

**Vocabulary Word:*** Droop p. 46—*to hang down*

**Introduction/Leading question:*** Introduce vocabulary word
* How did you learn to laugh? We learn by hearing and seeing others laugh. In today's lesson Helen learns to laugh and to read!
* Remember Helen's fierce determination and how because of that she fought and kicked and screamed . . . Now that same determination is turned toward learning. Helen learned 30 more new words the day she learned to spell water! Two months later she understood and could spell 400!
* Something very scary happens to Helen in today's story.
* Look for evidence of “determination's lovely face”

**Materials:*** Foam/magnetic letters to show how Helen first learned to read
* Double bubble visual

**Comprehension Project:*** Compare/contrast the old Helen and the new Helen (two day project)
* Draw things Helen was learning

**Class Reading Time*** Look at completed visuals
* Follow penciled in discussion points in the book.
* Think about the terrible loss if this very intelligent child would have been sent to an insane asylum
 | **Lesson Seven****Chapter Title:*** *A Time to Move On p. 56-64*

**Goal/Objective:*** Practice compare/contrast skills
* Enjoy reading

**Vocabulary Word:*** Director p. 62—*person in charge*

**Introduction/Leading question:*** Introduce vocabulary word
* Remember Annie had studied at Perkins Institute (school for the blind). In today's lesson Annie gets a letter from the director of that school. He knows Annie and is asking her something.

**Comprehension Project:*** Add to double bubble from last lesson or complete any unfinished visuals

**Class Reading Time*** Look at completed visuals
* Follow penciled in discussion points in the book.

Note: could use three days to do these two lessons (six and seven) |

Ideas for double bubble:

Old Helen

* Fought the stranger and everyone else
* Got her own way
* Couldn't laugh
* Was very angry and frustrated
* Was not happy
* Was very afraid
* Felt jealous of her little sister
* Had terrible manners

New Helen

* Wanted to learn everything she could
* Loved/obeyed/trusted Annie
* Learned to read
* Could talk with her fingers
* Was not afraid
* Went to the circus
* Well mannered

Both

* Very determined
* Blind and deaf

| **Lesson Eight****Chapter Title:*** *“I Am Not Dumb Now!” p. 65-73 LONG LESSON*

**Goal/Objective:*** Learn more about setting of story
* See how Helen's fierce stubbornness now channeled well enables her to do the “impossible”

**Vocabulary Word:*** Miracle p. 73—*an extremely unusual event*

**Introduction/Leading question:*** Do students remember Annie had been blind as a child? Do they remember where Annie lived before coming to Alabama? Point out Alabama and Massachusetts on the map. In today's story, Helen goes to Perkin's Institute (a school for the blind) with Annie for the summer.
* Also today they will read about a goal Helen made for herself. Everyone thought it was impossible. Now again we will see how her determination, now channeled well, served Helen well and helped her to do the “impossible”.
* Introduce vocabulary word

**Materials:*** Individual U.S. Maps

**Comprehension Project:*** U.S. Map highlighting Alabama and Massachusetts

**Class Reading Time*** Look at completed visuals
* Follow penciled in discussion points in the book.
 | **Lesson Nine****Chapter Title:*** *College p. 74-81*

**Goal/Objective:*** Practice writing an acrostic with specific information

**Vocabulary Word:*** cum laude p. 81
	+ *[koom LOU day] probably from Latin roots; means with distinction and honor*

**Introduction/Leading question:*** How do you think Helen could learn to swim safely and alone? How could she row a boat alone? How could she tell where she was on the river?
* Helen dreams another impossible dream!
* Introduce vocabulary word

**Materials:*** Paper with acrostic word: HELEN KELLER

**Comprehension Project:*** Acrostic on Helen Keller

**Class Reading Time*** Look at completed visuals—may fill in incomplete lines with the ideas of others
* Follow penciled in discussion points in the book.
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| **Lesson Ten****Chapter Title:*** *The Busy Years p. 82-91 LONG LESSON*

**Goal/Objective:*** Practice summarizing a chapter alone

**Vocabulary Word:*** Blur p. 83—*cloudy or confused*

**Introduction/Leading question:*** Introduce vocabulary word
* Explain the meaning of “feeling blue”, “being green”, and “seeing red”
* Introduce the quote by Helen Keller given in the second column

**Materials:*** Notebook paper

**Comprehension Project:*** Write about favorite chapter; a 2-3 sentence summary of the chapter and tell why this was a favorite—working alone

**Class Reading Time*** Follow penciled in discussion points in the book.
* Allow students to read completed summaries.
* Note the word “gee” on p. 88. Could cross out the word, but do not scribble it out.
 | **Poster****“The best and most beautiful things in the world can not be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.” --Helen Keller*** Consider making a poster similar to the ones described for Squanto, The Courage of Sarah Noble, and No Longer a Nobody.
* Do not weary the students by requiring too much. The goal is not so much to see how much they can do as to build a foundation of enjoyment in reading (which of course also requires comprehension skills).
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The story of Anne Sullivan as a child and as a young woman before her life was joined with Helen Keller has its own special interest.

* **Birth**--Anne Sullivan was born in April, 1866 in Feeding Hills, Massachusetts, a small village near Springfield, Massachusetts, to Irish immigrants who were very poor. This was a troubled family, because her father drank excessively and worked inconsistently, and her mother suffered from tuberculosis.
* **Trachoma**--Anne contracted trachoma, a disease of the eyes, when she was about 5. This disorder is not unusual where there is poor hygiene, and Anne's situation was not good. She was physically strong, but the disease was left untreated and she gradually lost her vision, although she was never totally blind.
* **Shaping her character**--The first 14 years of Anne Sullivan's life was the story of a young girl with a dream to escape an indescribable childhood of abandonment and loss. Her mother died while she was still a child. Because her father could not maintain a family, she lived with a series of relatives, and finally, just before her tenth birthday, she and her brother Jimmy were sent to the state "poorhouse" in Tewksbury, Massachusetts. This was a home for charity cases, and Anne roomed and boarded with the mentally ill, with prostitutes, and with people who could not maintain functioning lives in the society of that day. She fought for Jimmy and herself to be together, and they had beds next to each other, but Jimmy had a tubercular hip from birth and he died at Tewksbury, leaving her with no caring family. Despite these problems, Anne held to the dream that she would go to school. She had heard of schools for the blind.
* **The committee**--Her chance to go to school came when an investigating committee visited Tewksbury to inspect the institution. Heading the group was Mr. Frank B. Sanborn, Head of the Board of Charities. Anne followed them, and near the end of the tour, she threw herself at the mercy of Mr. Sanborn. She pleaded to be sent to a school for the blind. Soon thereafter, Anne learned she was to be sent to Perkins Institute for the Blind in Boston, unable to read, unable to see clearly, with a scarred childhood, but with her ambition to succeed.
* **Perkins School**--Perkins was a world-renowned institution for the blind. Anne's stay there was a process of softening--some would say taming--a highly intelligent young woman with a sharp questioning mind, but with an exceptionally strong will, a narrow point of view, and formative training from the school of hard and bitter experience. She started at the age of 14 at an elementary school level, but graduated at the age of 20 as class valedictorian. At first, she was mocked by her classmates for her lack of social skills, but over time she gained their respect through her perseverance and the strength of her personality.
* **Rebellion**--Anne was insecure about her background and excessively defensive toward ridicule, which she covered with rebelliousness. There were teachers who could not tolerate her quick mouth and ready challenge of authority, but a number of key teachers saw her potential and nourished her and shaped her.

NOTE ANNIE'S OWN DETERMINATION AND HOW THAT PREPARED HER TO CHANNEL HELEN KELLER'S DETERMINATION.