

2: Special Traits

Based on the Alabama quarter reverse



OBJECTIVES

Students will read an age-appropriate text to learn about the woman featured on Alabama's quarter reverse, Helen Keller. They will use graphic organizers to record what they have learned about this woman.



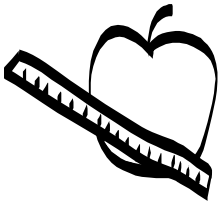
MATERIALS

- 1 overhead projector (optional)
- 1 overhead transparency (or photocopy) of the Alabama quarter reverse
- 1 class map of the United States of America
- 1 copy of an age-appropriate text that relates to the life of Helen Keller, such as:
 - *Helen Keller: Courage in the Dark* by Johanna Hurwitz
 - *Young Helen Keller: Woman of Courage* by Anne Benjamin
 - *A Picture Book of Helen Keller* by David A. Adler
 - *Helen Keller (On My Own Biographies)* by Jane Sucliffe
 - *Helen Keller* by Wendy Watson
 - *Helen Keller: Crusader for the Blind and Deaf* by Stewart and Polly Anne Graff
 - *Helen Keller & Annie Sullivan: Working Miracles Together* by Jon Zonderman
- Chart paper
- Copies of the “What’s in a Name?” worksheet
- Coat hangers
- String
- 5-by-8-inch index cards (4 per student)
- Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Pencils



PREPARATIONS

- Make an overhead transparency (or photocopy) of the Alabama quarter reverse.
- Locate a text that relates to the life of Helen Keller (see examples under “Materials”).
- Make copies of the “What’s in a Name?” worksheet (1 copy per student).



Learning about Character Traits



GROUPING

- Whole group
- Individual work



CLASS TIME

Two or three 30- to 45- minute sessions



CONNECTIONS

- Social Studies
- Language Arts
- Art
- Science



TERMS AND CONCEPTS

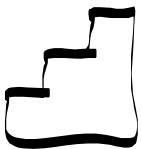
- Reverse (back)
- Deaf
- Courage
- Helen Keller
- Character traits
- Attributes/traits
- Blind
- Braille



BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Students should have a basic knowledge of:

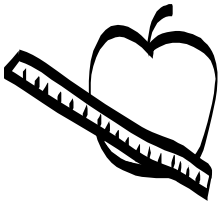
- Writing to inform
- The five senses



STEPS

Session 1

1. Describe the 50 State Quarters® Program for background information, if necessary, using the example of your own state, if available. Then display the transparency or photocopy of the Alabama quarter reverse. On a classroom map, have a pair of students locate Alabama. Note its position in relation to your school's location.
2. With the students, examine the design on this coin's reverse. Ask students to point out what they see on this coin, paying particular attention to the relief of Helen Keller, the braille writing, and the words "Spirit of Courage." Ask students if they know who the woman is on the coin.



Special Traits

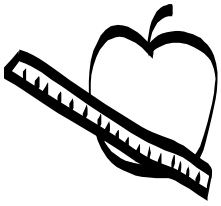
3. With the entire group, create a K-W-L chart to examine what students **Know** and **Want** to know about this courageous woman. Leave the **Learn** column empty for now.
4. Select an appropriate children’s text about the life of Helen Keller and, as a group, preview the text and its illustrations. Invite students to generate predictions about what is occurring at different points in the story.
5. Read this story as a group and attend to any unfamiliar vocabulary. Also, discuss what difficulties Helen had to face because she was not able to hear or see.
6. As a class, complete the **Learn** column of the K-W-L chart.

Session 2 (and 3 if necessary)

1. With the students, revisit the story about Helen Keller, referring to the K-W-L chart.
2. Reflect on the words “Spirit of Courage” and discuss why the students think the state selected these words to include with the image of Helen Keller.
3. Distribute the “What’s in a Name?” worksheet and discuss the difference between a physical trait and a character trait.
4. Invite your students to reflect independently on some of the other character attributes of Helen Keller that made her such a memorable member of society. On the “What’s in a Name” worksheet, your students should list four different character traits and support their choices with sentences describing events from the story which impacted Helen’s development.
5. Once students have completed this worksheet, explain that they will use this information to create a mobile which will graphically display the characteristics that they noted earlier.
6. Each student should think of a symbol that relates to the event where each trait was demonstrated. For example, if one of the traits is “smart,” and the student wrote about the first time Helen Keller understood Anne Sullivan’s hand signs, the symbol for this encounter could be the water pump where this understanding took place. The students should each draw a picture of that image on one side of an index card.
7. On the other side of the card, the students should copy the sentence that they wrote to describe that trait on their “What’s in a Name” worksheet. Model steps 4 to 7 for the students.
8. Students will repeat these steps for all four of their character traits.

Note: Once students have completed their work, punch a hole into the top of each card. Construct the mobiles, or have the students measure and cut string to assemble their own mobiles.

9. Once all work has been completed, revisit the Alabama quarter and look at the words that say, “Spirit of Courage.” Discuss whether or not this is a phrase which adequately describes Helen Keller.

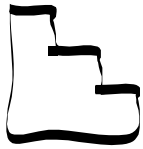


Special Traits



ENRICHMENT/EXTENSIONS

- Students could perform the same tasks based on another courageous person whom they've read about, including Helen Keller's teacher and friend, Anne Sullivan.
- Invite students to discuss times when they have difficulty understanding, and what strategies they use to help ideas become clearer to them.



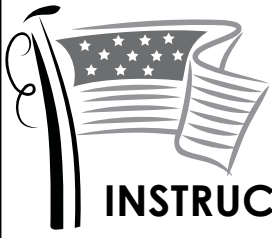
DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING OPTIONS

- Print and enlarge clip art shapes of the students' choice rather than having the student draw a symbol of their own. They can color and paste it to the first side of the drawing paper.
- Have students work in pairs to determine character traits that best describe Helen Keller.



HPC CONNECTIONS

To learn about other great women who have appeared on Mint products, visit Inspector Collector's display of Women's History Medals. They are in the "Medal Mania" workshop of "Camp Coin." (<http://www.usmint.gov/kids/index.cfm?fileContents=/kids/campcoin/medalMania/WomensHistory.cfm>)



NAME _____

What's in a Name?



INSTRUCTIONS

In the "trait" spaces, write four traits that describe Helen Keller's personality. Support each trait with an event from Helen's life where it was demonstrated.

EVENT

CHARACTER TRAIT

EVENT

CHARACTER TRAIT

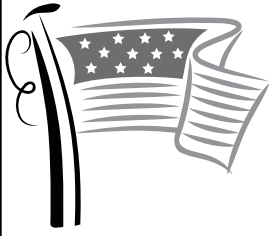
**HELEN
KELLER**

CHARACTER TRAIT

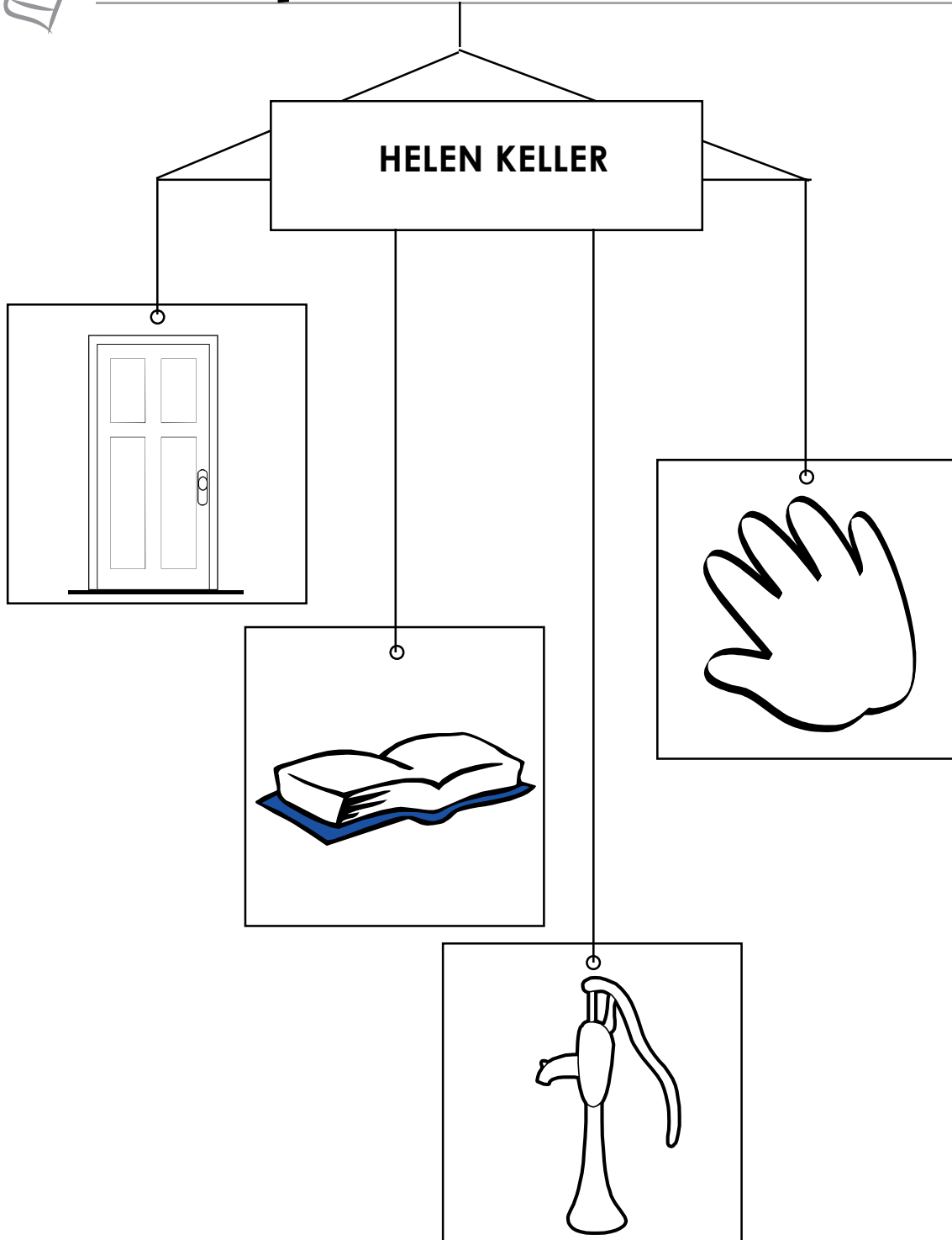
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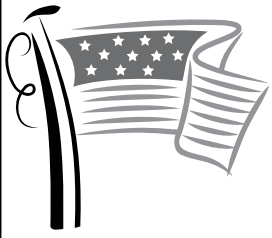
CHARACTER TRAIT

EVENT



Sample Helen Keller Mobile





Alabama Quarter Reverse

