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 **Prestwick House**
Activity Pack
Literature Made Fun!



The Miracle Worker
BY WILLIAM GIBSON



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Table of Contents

Pre-Reading

What do you Know?	4
Purpose for Reading	6
Book Review Evaluation	8

As You Read

Theme	10
Symbolism	14

Act 1

Perspective	16
Perspective	18
Advertisement	20
Characterization	22
Caricature	24
Resume Writing	26
Character Influences	28
Interviewing Skills	30
American Sign Language	32
Character Casting	34
Realistic Representation of Life	36

Act 2

Characterization	38
Newspaper Writing	40
"I am" Poem	44
Historical Significance	46
Point of View	48
Letter of Recommendation	50
Letter Writing	52
Discrimination	54
Gender Bias	58
Set Design	62
Perspective	64
Thematic Concepts	66
Perspective	68
Prediction	70

Act 3

Interviewing Skills.....	72
Using Your Senses.....	74
Teaching Others.....	76
Character Comparison	78
Personal Conflict	84
Character Influences.....	86
Comprehension	88
Quotations.....	90
Symbolism	92

Wrap-Up

What Did You Learn?	94
Book Review	96
Book Jacket.....	98
Relating Literature to Life.....	100
Writing an Epilogue	104

Appendix

Terms and Definitions	106
Small Group Learning	107
Newspaper	112
Writing Poems	114
Directions for Interviews.....	116

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**What Do You Know?****Objective:** Developing a knowledge base prior to reading nonfiction**Activity**

Biographies tell a true story about another person's life. Even though it is the story of one person's life, the book may broaden your knowledge about a specific era in history. Complete the chart below with as much information as you can about Helen Keller, Annie Sullivan, and life in post-Civil War United States.

What do you know?	What do you want to know?	What did you learn?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act 1**Advertisement****Objective:** Learning to write an employment advertisement**Activity**

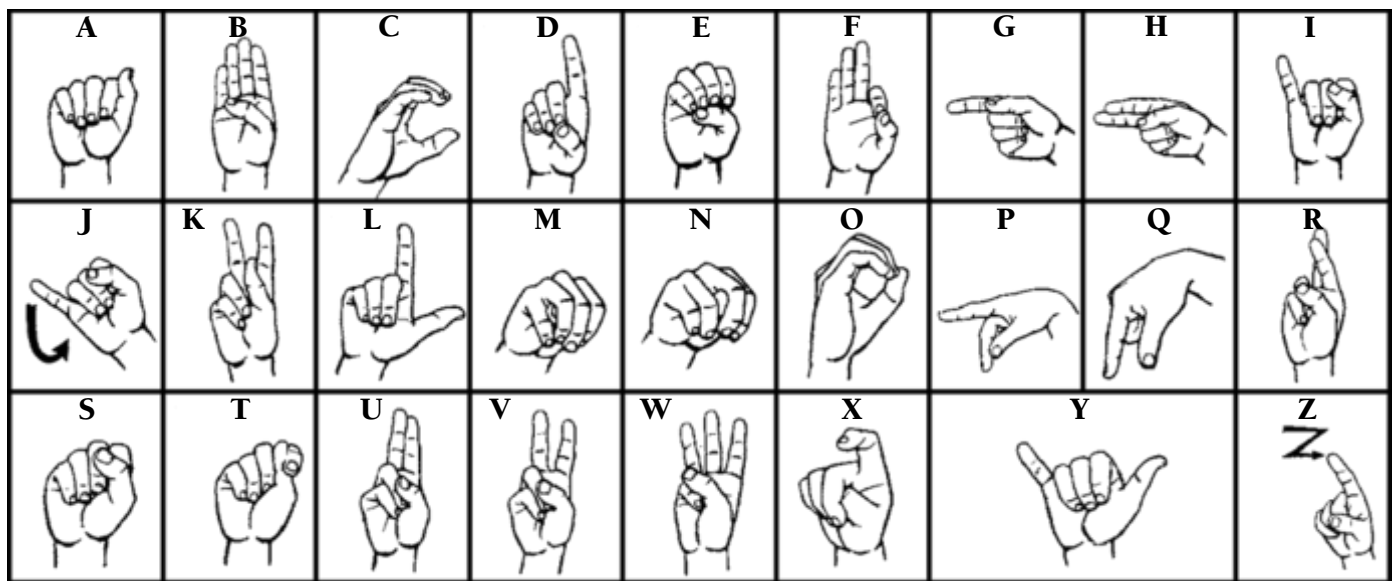
After Helen dumps Mildred out of the cradle, Captain Keller finally agrees to try to hire someone to help teach and take care of Helen. Since he runs a newspaper, he is quite familiar with writing advertisements. Pretend that you are Captain Keller and need to write an advertisement for the governess position. Be sure to include all the requirements you expect of the person you will hire, both from an employment and personal standpoint, as well as the benefits you offer.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act 1**American Sign Language****Objective:** Understanding the difficulties of not being able to hear**Activity**

In your group, practice the manual hand language for the alphabet until you are familiar with each letter. Starting with the first words that Annie Sullivan signs in Helen's hand ("doll" and "cake"), prepare five sentences that you can present to the class in sign language. Practice the sentences as a group, with all of you signing each sentence, and see if your classmates can understand what you are saying.

American Manual Alphabet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act 2

Discrimination

Objective: Understanding the legal rights of physically challenged people

Activity 1

When Annie Sullivan and her brother lived in Tewksbury Almshouse, they played with rats, lived in a ward with dying women, and were surrounded by babies with sores all over them. She tells Captain and Mrs. Keller about the living conditions in the almshouse so they will not consider sending Helen to live in an institution. Facilities for physically challenged people have changed significantly since Annie's life, mostly due to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), passed by the United States Congress.

In your group, research the ADA guidelines, and read the personal stories on the United States government's website <http://www.ada.gov/adafaces.htm> Select one of the stories at this site, and complete the following chart.

Who is the story about?	
In what city does the story take place?	
How is the person physically challenged?	
What was the person trying to do?	
What problem did the person encounter?	
What changes were made to accommodate the physically challenged person?	
What was the response of the community, if any?	

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act 3**Interviewing Skills****Objective:** Interviewing main characters**Activity**

Pretend that you are the host of a television talk show, and you are well-known for exploring unusual family events. You have heard about the Kellers' experiment with Helen and Annie living in the garden house for two weeks, and they have agreed to be interviewed.

Work with your group members to develop a list of questions that would interest your listeners. Remember that it's okay to ask questions that may make your guests uncomfortable; after all, your listeners are very outspoken, and they are divided on the issue of institutionalizing physically challenged people. The first question is done for you.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-up

Relating Literature to Life

Objective: Relating the effect a person has on another person's life
Relating literature to life

Activity 1

Read the following statements Helen Keller made describing Annie Sullivan.

“We walked down the path to the well-house, attracted by the fragrance of the honey-suckle with which it was covered. Someone was drawing water and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. As the cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word water, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten, a thrill of returning thought, and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me.”—Helen Keller

“The most important day I remember in all my life is the one on which my teacher, Anne Mansfield Sullivan, came to me.”—Helen Keller

“By nature she was a conceiver, a trail-blazer, a pilgrim of life's wholeness. So day by day, month after month, year in and year out, she labored to provide me with a diction and a voice sufficient for my service to the blind.”—Helen Keller

Work with your partner to write a thank-you letter from Helen to Annie describing how much Annie has contributed to her life. If necessary, use the library or the Internet to research additional quotations from Helen Keller that support what you say in your letter.