



HELEN'S WORLD

AUTHOR: DOREEN RAPPAORT

ILLUSTRATOR: MATT TAVARES

See a video of the book read aloud here: [Helen's Big World](#)

**** REMEMBER: HAVE FUN AND THE KIDS WILL TOO! ****

OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE BOOK

This picture book biography is an excellent and accessible introduction for young readers to learn about one of the world's most influential luminaries. With her signature style of prose laced with stirring quotes, Doreen Rappaport brings to life Helen Keller's poignant narrative. Acclaimed illustrator Matt Tavares beautifully captures the dynamism and verve of Helen Keller's life and legacy, making *Helen's Big World* an unforgettable portrait of a woman whose vision for innovation and progress changed America-and the world-forever.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Doreen Rappaport Born in New York City, graduated from Brandeis University and became a junior high school music teacher. In 1965, she went to McComb, Mississippi to teach in a Freedom School and learned a part of American history she had not really understood. This journey transformed her consciousness and ignited her desire to write about people's struggles against oppression.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Matthew Manuel Tavares, born December 4, 1975 is an American author and illustrator of picture books for children. Matt Tavares was born in Boston, and grew up surrounded by books and reading .He graduated from Bates College.

THE READ ALOUD

BEFORE READING

Use these questions before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:

- Introduce author and illustrator
- Do you know what the raised red dots on cover represent?
- Have you ever heard of Helen Keller
- I wonder what this book is going to be about?
- Why type of non-fiction do you think this book will be?

DURING THE STORY

Use these questions while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content.

HELEN'S WORLD

TOPICS & THEMES:

- Disabilities
- Making a difference
- Quotations

Tips for every book!

POWER PHRASES:

I WONDER...

I NOTICE...

TELL ME MORE...

DIGGING DEEPER:

"Tell me more, why do you think that?"

"How do you know that?"

"Why do you think they feel like that?"

"Interesting, did you notice anything else?"

(Comprehension - connections to world/self - print referencing - open ended questions - phonological awareness)

- (page preceding title page) Why do you think it is important for the author to use Helen Keller's own words?
- (p.4) I noticed the illustrator used a black background on this page. Was this a good idea?
- (p.5) I wonder why Helen kicked the people she loved.
- (p.9) Did Annie really think learning table manners was important?
- (p.11) I wonder what Helen thought when she said her soul was awakened and free.
- (p.13) How can a person see with their fingers?
- (p.18) Why was Helen so excited to read?
- (p.20) Why are Helen and Annie smiling?
- (p.23) Why did reading lips help Helen learn to speak?
- (p.24) What is an autobiography?
- (p.27) Why do you think Helen wanted to help others?

AFTER READING

Use these questions while after reading the story to help students understand what they just read.

- What made this book a biography?
- What did the author want to teach you?
- How did Helen's life make a difference to many others?

BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

- What does it mean to have a disability?
- Some disabilities are not as major as Helen's. Do you think you could overcome a disability?
- Did you have a favorite page in the book? Why did you choose this page?
- How did you feel after reading the story?
- What does reading do for you? How does it benefit you?

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- Choose a partner and write a 5 letter or less word in each other's hand. See if he/she can guess what it is. What would have made it easier for your partner to identify the word? Have children report to the group.

SMALL-GROUP IDEAS

• DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

- What is a disability?
- Do you know anyone who has had to overcome a disability?
- Why was Helen able to accomplish what she did?
- If Helen can do what she did being blind and deaf, what can you accomplish having all your senses?
- Why do you think Helen's quotes made the book an important one?
- Should we give up on people or limit them because of their disabilities?
- What did you learn from this book?
- Helen used a typewriter. Is there something used today that might have made her life easier?
- Can you think of one word to describe Helen?
- Can you think of one word to describe Annie?

Suggested Optional Activity:

- Have each child write their name with their opposite hand. Discuss the problems that they faced.
- Have them close their eyes and write their names with opposite hand. Explain that this is not the exact disability Helen had, but point out the difficulties involved in having more than one handicap.

- **WRITING ACTIVITY**

- Write a note from Helen to Annie telling her about meeting someone new. Use quotation marks to say some of what the person said to her.

- **EXTENSION ACTIVITY**

- Alabama's quarter, minted in 2003, has an image of Helen Keller on it.
- Choose a famous person that you think should have a quarter named for them. Write why you think the person deserves this distinction.



COMMON CORE LINKS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 3.1,3.3,3.4,3.6,3.7