Helen Keller

- **Occupation:** Activist
- **Born:** June 27, 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama
- **Died:** June 1, 1968 in Arcan Ridge, Easton, Connecticut
- **Best known for:** Accomplishing much despite being both deaf and blind.

**Biography:**

**Where did Helen Keller grow up?**

Helen Keller was born on June 27, 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama. She was a happy healthy baby. Her father, Arthur, worked for a newspaper while her mother, Kate, took care of the home and baby Helen. She grew up on her family's large farm called Ivy Green. She enjoyed the animals including the horses, dogs, and chickens.

**Illness**

When Helen was around one and a half years old she became very sick. She had a high fever and a bad headache for several days. Although Helen survived, her parents soon realized that she had lost both her sight and her hearing.

**Frustration**
Next Annie taught Helen how to read. Helen must have been very bright and Annie an amazing teacher, because soon Helen could read entire books in Braille. Braille is a special reading system where the letters are made out of little bumps on a page.

Imagine trying to learn how to read if you couldn’t see or hear. It’s truly amazing what Helen and Annie were able to accomplish. At the age of ten Helen could read and use a typewriter. Now she wanted to learn how to talk.

Learning to Talk

Helen Keller learned how to talk from Sarah Fuller. Sarah was a teacher for the deaf. By resting her hand on Sarah’s lips, Helen learned how to feel sound vibrations and how the lips moved to make sounds. She started off learning a few letters and sounds. Then she advanced to words and, finally, sentences. Helen was so happy that she could say words.

School

At sixteen years old Helen attended Radcliffe College for women in Massachusetts. Annie attended school with her and helped to sign the lectures into Helen’s hand. Helen graduated from Radcliffe in 1904 with honors.

Writing

During college Helen began to write about her experiences being deaf and blind. She first wrote a number of articles for a magazine called the Ladies’ Home Journal. These articles were later published together in a book called The Story of My Life. A few years later, in 1908, she published another book called The World I Live In.

Working for Others

As Helen grew older she wanted to help other people like herself. She wanted to inspire them and give them hope. She joined the American Foundation for the Blind and traveled the country giving speeches and raising money for the foundation. Later, during World War II, she visited with wounded army soldiers encouraging them not to give up. Helen spent much of her life working to raise money and awareness for people with disabilities, especially the deaf and the blind.

Interesting Facts about Helen Keller

- Annie Sullivan was often called the "Miracle Worker" for the way she was able to help Helen.
- Helen became very famous. She met with every President of the United States from Grover Cleveland to Lyndon Johnson. That’s a lot of presidents!
- Helen starred in a movie about herself called Deliverance. Critics liked the movie, but not a lot of people went to see it.
- She loved dogs. They were a great source of joy to her.
- Helen became friends with famous people such as the inventor of the telephone Alexander Graham Bell and the author Mark Twain.
- She wrote a book titled Teacher about Annie Sullivan’s life.
- Two films about Helen Keller won Academy Awards. One was a documentary called The Unconquered (1954) and the other was a drama
Abraham Lincoln was the 16th President of the United States.

**Served as President:** 1861-1865  
**Vice President:** Hannibal Hamlin, Andrew Johnson  
**Party:** Republican  
**Age at inauguration:** 52

**Born:** February 12, 1809, in Hodgenville, Hardin County, Kentucky  
**Died:** April 15, 1865. Lincoln died the morning after being shot at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C

**Married:** Mary Todd Lincoln  
**Children:** Robert, Edward, William, Thomas  
**Nickname:** Honest Abe
In 1860, Lincoln ran for President of the United States. He was a member of the fairly new Republican party which strongly opposed allowing any of the southern states to secede (leave the country). The republicans were also against slavery. They said they would allow for slavery to continue in the southern states, but that it would not be allowed to spread to new U.S. states or territories.

Abraham Lincoln Presidency

Lincoln won the 1860 election and was inaugurated as president in March of 1861. The southern states did not want Lincoln to be president. They did not agree with his policies. Before he was officially in office, they began to secede (leave the country). The first state to leave was South Carolina, but soon six more states followed and together they formed a new country called the Confederacy. This all happened after Lincoln won the election, but before he took the oath of office.

The Civil War

The Civil War began on April 12, 1861 at Fort Sumter in South Carolina just a month after Lincoln took office. Lincoln was determined to maintain the "Union" of the states. He called for an army from the northern states to defeat the south. What followed was a bloody war that lasted four years and cost the lives of 600,000 Americans. Lincoln faced all sorts of opposition during the war, but managed to hold the country together.

The Emancipation Proclamation

On January 1, 1863 Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. This was an order that freed the slaves in the Confederate States. Although not all the slaves were immediately set free, it paved the way for the 13th Amendment which would free all slaves in the United States a few years later.

Gettysburg Address

Today, Lincoln is often remembered for a short speech he gave at Gettysburg on November 1, 1863. It's called the Gettysburg Address. It was only a few minutes long, but is considered one of the great speeches in American history.

The Civil War Ends

The Civil War finally ended on April 9, 1865 when General Robert E. Lee surrendered at the Appomattox Court House in Virginia. Lincoln wanted the country to heal, forgive, and rebuild. He wanted to be generous to the southern states in helping them during the reconstruction. Unfortunately, he would not live to see the country rebuild.

How did he die?

President Abraham Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth while attending a play at the Ford Theatre in Washington D.C. He died the next day on April 15, 1865.
Martin Luther King Jr.

Biography for Kids

- **Occupation:** Civil Rights Leader
- **Born:** January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, GA
- **Died:** April 4, 1968 in Memphis, TN
- **Best known for:** His "I have a dream" speech

**Biography:**

Martin Luther King Jr. was a civil rights activist in the 1950s and 1960s. He led non-violent protests to fight for the rights of all people including African Americans. He hoped that America and the world could become a colorblind society where race would not impact a person's civil rights. He is considered one of the great orators of modern times and his speeches still inspire many to this day.
Who Was Jackie Robinson?

On April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson made history when he stepped onto the Brooklyn Dodgers' Ebbets Field as the first African American to play in a Major League Baseball game. The controversial decision to put a black man on a major league team prompted a barrage of criticism and initially led to Robinson's mistreatment by fans and fellow players alike. Robinson endured that discrimination and rose above it, going on to win Rookie of the Year in 1947 as well as the National League MVP Award in 1949. Hailed as a civil rights pioneer, Robinson was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Robinson was also the first African American inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Dates: January 31, 1919 -- October 24, 1972

Also Known As: Jack Roosevelt Robinson

Childhood in Georgia

Jackie Robinson was the fifth child born to sharecropper parents Jerry Robinson and Mallie McGriff Robinson in Cairo, Georgia. His ancestors had worked as slaves on the same property that Jackie's parents farmed. Jerry left the family to look for work in Texas when Jackie was six months old, with the promise that he would send for his family once he was settled. But Jerry Robinson never returned. (In 1921, Mallie received word that Jerry had died, but could never substantiate that rumor.)

After struggling to keep the farm going by herself, Mallie realized it was impossible. She needed to find another way to support her family, but also felt it was no longer safe to stay in Georgia. Violent racial riots and lynchings of blacks were on the rise in the summer of 1919, especially in the southeastern states. Seeking a more tolerant environment, Mallie and several of her relatives pooled their money together to buy train tickets. In May 1920, when Jackie was 16 months old, they all boarded a train for Los Angeles.

The Robinsons Move to California

Mallie and her children moved into an apartment in Pasadena, California with her brother and his family. She found work cleaning houses and eventually earned enough money to buy her own house in a mostly-white neighborhood. The Robinsons soon learned that discrimination did not limit itself to the South. Neighbors shouted racial insults at the family and circulated a petition demanding that they leave. More alarming still, the Robinsons looked out one day and saw a cross burning in their yard. Mallie stood firm, refusing to leave her house.

With their mother away at work all day, the Robinson children learned to take care of themselves from an early age. Jackie's sister Willa Mae, three years older, fed and bathed him, and took him to school with her. Three-year-old Jackie played in the school sandbox for most of the day, while his sister peered out the window at intervals to check on him. Taking pity on the family, school authorities reluctantly allowed this unorthodox arrangement to continue until Jackie was old enough to enroll in school at the age of five.

Young Jackie Robinson managed to get himself into trouble on more than one occasion as a member of the "Pepper Street Gang." This neighborhood clique, made up of poor boys from minority groups, committed petty crimes and minor acts of vandalism. Robinson later credited a local minister with helping to get him off the streets and involved in more wholesome activities.

A Gifted Athlete
petitioned for, and won, the right to attend OCS. Louis' fame and popularity no doubt helped the cause. Robinson was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1943.

Known for his talent on the baseball field, Robinson was approached to play on Fort Riley's baseball team. The team policy was to accommodate any of the other teams who refused to play with a black player on the field. Robinson would be expected to sit those games out. Unwilling to accept that condition, Robinson refused to play even one game.

Robinson was transferred to Fort Hood, Texas, where he faced more discrimination. Riding on an Army bus one evening, he was ordered to go to the back of the bus. Fully aware that the Army had recently outlawed segregation on any of its vehicles, Robinson refused. He was arrested and tried in a military court of law for insubordination, among other charges. The Army dropped its charges when no evidence could be found of any wrongdoing. Robinson was granted an honorable discharge in 1944.

Back in California, Robinson became engaged to Rachel Isum, who promised to marry him once she completed nursing school.

**Playing in the Negro Leagues**

In 1945, Robinson was hired as a shortstop for the Kansas City Monarchs, a baseball team in the Negro Leagues. Playing major league professional baseball was not an option for blacks at that time, although it hadn't always been that way. Blacks and whites had played together in the early days of baseball in the mid-nineteenth century, until "Jim Crow" laws, which required segregation, were passed in the late 1800s. The Negro Leagues came into being in the early 20th century to accommodate the many talented black players who were shut out of Major League Baseball.

The Monarchs had a hectic schedule, sometimes traveling hundreds of miles by bus in a day. Racism followed the men wherever they went, as players were turned away from hotels, restaurants, and rest rooms simply because they were black. At one service station, the owner refused to let the men use the rest room when they stopped to get gas. A furious Jackie Robinson told the proprietor they would not buy his gas if he didn't allow them to use the rest room, persuading the man to change his mind. Following that incident, the team would not buy gas from anyone who refused to let them use the facilities.

Robinson had a successful year with the Monarchs, leading the team in batting and earning a spot in the Negro League's all-star game. Intent upon playing his best game, Robinson was unaware that he was being closely watched by baseball scouts from the Brooklyn Dodgers.

**Branch Rickey and the "Great Experiment"**

Dodgers president Branch Rickey, determined to break the color barrier in Major League Baseball, was looking for the ideal candidate to prove that blacks had a place in the majors. Rickey saw Robinson as that man, for Robinson was talented, educated, never drank alcohol, and had played alongside whites in college. Rickey was relieved to hear that Robinson had Rachel in his life; he cautioned the ballplayer that he would need her support to get through the upcoming ordeal.

Meeting with Robinson in August 1945, Rickey prepared the player for the kind of abuse he would face as the lone black man in the league. He would be subjected to verbal insults, unfair calls by umpires, pitches intentionally thrown to hit him, and more. Off the field as well, Robinson could expect hate mail and death threats. Rickey posed the question: could Robinson deal with such adversity without retaliating, even verbally, for three solid years? Robinson, who had always stood up for his rights, found it difficult to
Robinson used his prominent position to promote racial equality. When the Dodgers went on the road, hotels in many cities refused to allow blacks to stay in the same hotel as their white teammates. Robinson threatened that none of the players would stay at the hotel if all of them were not welcome, a tactic that often worked.

In 1955, the Dodgers once again faced the Yankees in the World Series. They had lost to them many times, but this year would be different. Thanks in part to Robinson's brazen base-stealing, the Dodgers won the World Series.

During the 1956 season, Robinson, now 37 years old, spent more time on the bench than on the field. When the announcement came that the Dodgers would be moving to Los Angeles in 1957, it came as no surprise that Jackie Robinson had decided it was time to retire. In the nine years since he had played his first game for the Dodgers, several more teams had signed on black players; by 1959, all of the Major League Baseball teams were integrated.

**Life After Baseball**

Robinson stayed busy after his retirement, accepting a position in community relations for the Chock Full O' Nuts company. He became a successful fundraiser for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Robinson also helped to raise money to found the Freedom National Bank, a bank that primarily served minority populations, extending loans to people who might not otherwise have received them.

In July 1962, Robinson became the first African American to be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. He thanked those who had helped him earn that achievement -- his mother, his wife, and Branch Rickey.

Robinson's son, Jackie, Jr., was deeply traumatized after fighting in Vietnam and became a drug addict upon his return to the United States. He successfully fought his addiction, but tragically, was killed in a car accident in 1971. The loss took a toll on Robinson, who was already battling the effects of diabetes and appeared much older than a man in his fifties.

On October 24, 1972, Jackie Robinson died of a heart attack at the age of 53. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom posthumously in 1986 by President Reagan. Robinson's jersey number, 42, was retired by both the National League and the American League in 1997, the 50th anniversary of Robinson's historic major league debut.
Jackie Robinson grew up at a time when people were treated differently because of the color of their skin. He went to college, where he played football, baseball, and basketball and ran track.

Jackie Robinson entered the army to serve his country in World War II. He thought African American soldiers were not treated fairly. He spoke out and wrote letters.

While he was in the army, Jackie Robinson heard about a baseball team called the Kansas City Monarchs. At that time African Americans were not allowed to play in the major leagues. Jackie Robinson signed up to play with the Monarchs.

In 1947 Jackie Robinson was asked to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers. He became the first African American to play in the major leagues. At first some of the fans called him names. Jackie Robinson did not fight back. He let his great baseball playing speak for him. In 1957 Jackie Robinson retired from baseball, but he kept on speaking out for equal rights for all Americans.

Directions: Read the song below by Woodrow Johnson. Then write a song or poem honoring another hero.

Did You See Jackie Robinson Hit That Ball?

Did you see Jackie Robinson hit that ball?
It went zoom across the left field wall.
Yeah boy, yes, yes. Jackie hit that ball.

And when he swung his bat,
the crowd went wild,
because he knocked that ball a solid mile.
Yeah boy, yes, yes. Jackie hit that ball.
Susan B. Anthony was born February 15, 1820, in Adams, Massachusetts. Her parents were Quakers and raised Susan under the principle that men and women are equal. Beyond her Quaker home, however, the world had a different idea. Susan was allowed to go to school, but even there boys were allowed to do things that girls were not. This made Susan angry, and she did them anyway.

There was so much unfairness and inequality that Susan determined to do something to change the way the world worked. She devoted her life to fighting the injustice of women's inequality. She started in the schools by becoming a teacher. She taught all her students about these inequities.

Later, Susan became interested in banning alcohol, thinking that many people who drank alcohol became abusive and intolerant under its influence. Frustrated that because she was a woman she was not allowed to publicly speak out about such things, she began her organization, the Women's State Temperance Society of New York. During this time, she met Elizabeth Cady Stanton, another woman who shared her beliefs.

That women were not allowed to vote infuriated many women. In 1869, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton formed the National Woman Suffrage Association. Their goal was to get a 19th amendment added to the Constitution of the United States. This amendment would give all women of the United States the right to vote.

Susan felt so strongly about her right to vote that she voted in the 1872 presidential election even though it was illegal for her to do so. Susan actively fought for women's rights for more than 50 years. She gave impassioned speeches, wrote persuasive books and articles, and courageously led women's rights organizations.

Susan B. Anthony died in 1906, never seeing one of her fondest dreams realized. It was not until 1920 that the 19th Amendment was added to the Constitution and women were allowed to vote.

19th Amendment

The right of the citizens of the United States to vote. Shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.