



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

THE MIRACLE WORKER

BY WILLIAM GIBSON



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ISBN 978-1-60389-267-4

Item No. 301482
Written by Marie Y. Smith

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**Purpose for Reading****Objective:** Identifying potential themes for a book**Activity**

Read the book summary on the back of the book and the following quotations from Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan. In your small groups, discuss the meaning of these quotations, and identify potential themes you expect to learn about while reading *The Miracle Worker*.

- “Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it.”—Helen Keller
- “Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.”—Helen Keller
- “People seldom see the halting and painful steps by which the most insignificant success is achieved.”—Annie Sullivan
- “Keep on beginning and failing. Each time you fail, start all over again, and you will grow stronger until you have accomplished a purpose.”—Annie Sullivan

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act 1**Perspective****Objective:** Understanding how events can affect the author's life**Activity**

Before directors of movies or plays actually begin production, they prepare a storyboard, which is a rough sketch of the action of each scene. It includes the background, props, and sketches of each character in a series of drawings to show the sequence of the scene.

By the end of Pg. 7, Kate and Captain Keller have discovered that the baby Helen is blind and deaf due to the fever she has had. In your group, draw a storyboard of a scene that might take place when Helen is two or three years old. Be sure to include details of what she may look like, what she may be doing, and how she interacts with her family members, including her father, mother, and other children in the family.

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 2**Newspaper Writing**

Objective: Identifying dramatic moments and relating them in a news article
Writing letters to the editor of a newspaper
Understanding the use of satire in editorial cartoons

Activity 1

As Annie sits at the breakfast table watching Helen wander around putting her fingers in everyone's food, she is shocked that Kate, Captain Keller, and James seem to be completely unaware and unconcerned about Helen's behavior. Write a front-page newspaper article detailing the meal and subsequent argument between Annie and the Kellers about disciplining Helen. Write the story in the factual, detached, unbiased style required of newspaper reporters.

- There must be an eye-catching headline.
- The first paragraph should include the basic facts—who, what, where, why, when, and how, so that a reader who has time to read only the first paragraph learns what happened.
- The subsequent paragraphs should add factual details and substance to the story for the readers who want more information.
- The last paragraph should indicate how this incident was resolved.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act 2**Point of View****Objective:** Understanding a character's point of view**Activity 1**

At the time of this play, it was very common for people to keep a journal in which they wrote about their thoughts and feelings. After years of allowing Helen's unruly behavior, Kate learns that Annie has taught Helen how to sit at the table, use a fork and spoon, and fold her napkin. Assume the part of Kate, and write a journal entry describing your feelings when you heard this from Annie.

Activity 2

Continuing in Kate's role, remember the argument the Captain just had with Annie before he left the house. Write another paragraph in your journal entry describing what you expect the Captain to say when he returns.

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: _____

Act 3**Personal Conflict****Objective:** Identifying the three types of personal conflict**Activity**

In our lives, we usually encounter three types of conflicts—conflicts with other people, conflicts with nature, and conflicts with ourselves. Complete the following chart with at least two examples of each of these types of conflict for Annie.

Type of Conflict	Reference	Event
Conflict with Other People		
Conflict with Nature		
Conflict with Herself		

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-up**Book Review****Objective:** Considering the strengths and weaknesses of a book**Activity**

Now that you have finished the book, write a book review of *The Miracle Worker*. Include a synopsis of the book, specific parts you liked and disliked, what you learned from the book, and whether you recommend the book to other students and teachers.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-up

Writing an Epilogue

Objective: Learning to write a script

Activity

At the end of *The Miracle Worker*, Helen Keller had just started to learn to sign and communicate. She and Annie Sullivan remained together for the rest of Annie's life, with Annie always supporting Helen and encouraging her to push herself in new areas.

As a group, use the library, the Internet, and other sources to research Helen Keller's life and relationship with Annie Sullivan after Helen learned to sign. Write a script of a scene that could be added as an epilogue to *The Miracle Worker*. Set your scene at least ten years later.