

# Glossary of Terms

## Grades 4-8

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**Accessible:** Capable of being reached without difficulty.

**Advocacy:** Active support of an idea or cause, especially the act of pleading or arguing for something.

**Advocate:** A person who supports a particular cause or group. There are many types of advocates which include disability advocates, youth advocates, health advocates, animal advocates, etc. (*see also: Self-Advocate.*)

**Almshouse:** An almshouse (also known as a poorhouse) was a house for people who could not take care of themselves. (i.e. people who were elderly, poor, had disabilities, etc.)

**Amateur:** A person who takes part in an art, science, study or athletic activity as a pastime rather than a profession.

**Amendment:** Changing for the better or an improvement to something that already exists.

**Anthropological:** The scientific study of the origin, the behavior, and the physical, social, and cultural development of humans.

**Anticonvulsant:** An anticonvulsant is a medication used to prevent people from having epileptic seizures or convulsions.

**Architectural:** The art and science of designing and construction of buildings.

**Artificial Respiration:** Artificial Respiration is a mechanical or manual means of maintaining a person's breathing (respiration) by forcing air into and out of the lungs.

**Assumption:** Something taken for granted or accepted as true without proof.

**Asylum:** An asylum was a place for orphans, people with mental illness and disabilities or for people who needed assistance to live.

**Autism:** Autism is a developmental disability.

**Barbiturate:** A barbiturate is a medication used to depress or calm a person's central nervous system. Barbiturates were often given to people who had seizures.

**Biological:** Anything that relates to, is caused by, or affects living things.

**Birth Defect:** A birth defect is a physical or mental deficit that occurs when a baby is born.

**Blind:** Blind is a term used to describe the disability of a person who is unable to see. (See also *Visually Impaired*.)

**Blistering:** Blistering is when a small pocket of fluid forms underneath the skin. This may occur when the skin becomes damaged or as a side-effect of medication.

**Bloodletting:** Bloodletting was a technique used to reduce extra blood by opening a vein or artery. Bloodletting was thought to be a cure for disabilities.

**Braille:** Braille is a system of reading and writing for individuals who are blind. Letters and numbers are represented by patterns of raised dots on paper. These dot patterns are read with the finger tips.

**Breeding:** The reproducing of offspring or young.

**Calisthenics:** Gymnastic exercises designed to develop muscular tone and promote physical well-being.

**Caucasians:** Caucasian is a term used when a person is considered "white" based on their skin color.

**Cerebral Palsy:** Cerebral Palsy (or CP) is a developmental disability. CP is caused by damage to the brain before or shortly after a baby is born. An individual with Cerebral Palsy may have difficulty with coordination and walking, moving their muscles and with speaking.

**Chromosome:** Chromosomes are clusters of genes that determine a person's hereditary characteristics, such as eye and hair color. Children inherit genes from both of their parents.

**Codified:** Codified is something that is systematically collected and written down; "written laws".

**Compulsory:** Something that is required by regulation or laws.

**Consistent:** Something that stays the same throughout.

**Constitutional:** Established by or working under a set of laws or constitution.

**Crippled:** Crippled was a term used to describe a person with a disability who could not perform tasks in the same manner as a person without a disability.

**Curable:** Curable means being able to be healed.

**Deaf Mute:** Deaf Mute is a term used to describe a person who is unable to hear and speak.

**Defectives:** Defectives is a term that described a person's physical or mental state when they were perceived as having imperfections or flaws.

**Defects:** Something that is imperfect in the body.

**Degeneracy:** Falling below a normal or desirable way of being.

**Deinstitutionalization:** Deinstitutionalization is the process of closing all institutions that housed people with disabilities. Deinstitutionalization is a result of the maltreatment and lack of care provided to the people residing in institutions.

**Demons:** Demons was a term used to describe an evil supernatural. Historically, people with disabilities were called demons because they were viewed as an evil to society.

**Deplorable Conditions:** Something that has become very poor quality or is a very dangerous place to live.

**Depression:** When a person is depressed, they have sad feelings of gloom.

**Deranged:** See Insane

**Deterioration:** Deterioration is when something gets worse over time.

**Developmental Disability:** A mental or physical disability that is present before the age of 22 and interferes with normal, physical, intellectual or emotional development and usually lasts throughout life.

**Developmentally Disabled:** Developmentally disabled is a term used to describe a person who does not develop according to normal standards either mentally or physically before the age of 22.

**Disabilities:** Being unable to perform a task or function because of a mental or physical impairment.

**Disability Insurance:** Disability insurance is money that is paid to individuals who are unable to work because of an injury or illness.

**Disadvantages:** Something that puts a person in a situation that does not help them but instead makes things more difficult.

**Discrimination:** Unfair treatment of a person, racial group, or minority.

**Dominance:** When one person or group has power over someone or something else.

**Dormitories:** Large rooms, especially at a school or institution that contains many beds.

**Down syndrome:** A disorder caused by the presence of an extra 21<sup>st</sup> chromosome. People with Down syndrome have mild to moderate intellectual disabilities, are short in stature, and have flattened facial features.

**Downtrodden:** Downtrodden is when someone is abused or oppressed by people in power.

**Electroconvulsive Therapy:** A therapy that sends an electric current through a person's body to produce a seizure. Electroconvulsive Therapy is sometimes given to people who are very depressed.

**Endorsements:** Approval or support of a certain cause or organization.

**Epidemic:** A disease that affects a specific region or group of people.

**Epilepsy:** Epilepsy is a disorder of the central nervous system where a person may have recurring attacks of their sensory motors and may also have seizures.

**Equalize:** To make something equal or uniform.

**Eugenics:** The study or belief of improving the human race through selective genetics.

**Euthanasia:** Euthanasia is the act of putting a person or animal to death without pain.

**Evolution:** Evolution is the process of gradual change or development.

**Exceptional Children:** Children who are unique and uncommon.

**Exclusion:** Exclusion is the act of separating or keeping away.

**Exposé:** The act or instance of bringing a scandal or crime to public notice.

**Feeble-Minded:** Feeble-Minded was an early medical term to describe a person with an intellectual disability.

**Folic Acid:** A vitamin that is needed for the formation of red blood cells and to help babies develop properly before they are born.

**Freak Show:** A sideshow or circus act using people with physical disabilities as a form of entertainment.

**Genetic:** Related to chromosomes, which are the basic building blocks. Genes are the building blocks of chromosomes.

**Group Homes:** A residence in the community where several individuals with disabilities live with supportive staff.

**Handicapped:** Handicapped is a term formerly used to describe physical or mental disabilities.  
\**A more acceptable term is a person with a disability.*\*

**Harbingers of Evil:** A person or thing that announces the approach of evil that is to come.

**Harmony:** Agreement in a feeling or opinion.

**Hate Crimes:** A crime occurring out of prejudice toward a person's gender, race, religious beliefs, or social group.

**Hearing Impaired:** Hearing Impaired is a term used to describe a person who lacks partial or complete hearing.

**Heredity:** Heredity means genes being passed from a parent to their offspring. These genes include such characteristics as hair and eye color.

**Heroine:** A woman recognized for a special achievement in a particular field.

**HIV:** An infectious virus that causes AIDS.

**Hydrotherapy:** A type of therapy that is used in the water.

**Idiot:** Idiot was a term used to describe a person who did not have any professional knowledge. The term later evolved to include anyone with a disability.

**Imbecile:** An early medical term to describe a person with a mental disability.

**Immunization:** Immunization means becoming immune or resistant to diseases.

**Incentive:** Something used to motivate people.

**Inclusion:** Inclusion means treating individuals with disabilities equally and allowing those individuals the same opportunities available to everyone else. Inclusion also means educating all students together in one classroom, regardless of disability.

**Incurred:** Incurred is when someone brings something upon themselves.

**Infant Mortality:** The death rate during the first year of a baby's life.

**Infanticide:** The act of killing newborn babies.

**Infantile Paralysis:** An early term to describe the polio virus. Also see: Polio

**Inheritability:** Having the right to receive something from someone else.

**Injections:** Something that is put into the body with a needle such as medicine.

**Insane:** Insane was a term used to describe a person with a mental disability.

**Insane Asylum:** An insane asylum is similar to a mental hospital or institution. It is a place where individuals considered mentally ill or individuals with a disability were sent to live.

**Institution:** A place where large numbers of people with disabilities were housed and treated.

**Institutionalize:** To place a person in the care of an institution.

**Institutionalized Individuals:** Institutionalized Individuals are people that have been placed in an institution.

**Intellectual Disability:** Intellectual disability is a disability that affects a person's intelligence or ability to learn.

**Intellectual Impairments:** See Mental Retardation

**Intelligence Tests (IQ):** Any number of tests used to measure a person's mental skills.

**Interdisciplinary:** Participating in two or more areas of study.

**International Organization:** An organization in which many different countries participate.

**In utero:** In utero means unborn and in the uterus.

**Jesters:** A professional clown that was used for the entertainment of kings and royal courts. In medieval times, some people with disabilities were used as jesters.

**Legislation:** The act or process of making laws.

**Liberation:** The act or process of trying to achieve equal rights.

**Litigation:** The process of engaging in legal proceedings.

**Lobotomy:** A lobotomy was a type of operation on the brain used to treat people with mental disabilities.

**Lunatic:** A term used to describe a person with a mental disability. Also see: Insane

**Mainstream Society:** The way most of the population thinks, acts, works, and lives.

**Mainstreaming:** Mainstreaming is when students with disabilities attend public schools instead of special schools.

**Mandated:** A command that is assigned by law.

**Media Blitz:** The widespread and rapid printing, writing, editing, photographing, or broadcasting of news on a certain topic.

**Mental Deficiency:** See Mental Retardation

**Mental Disability:** An incomplete development of mental capabilities.

**Mental Hygiene:** The branch of medicine dealing with the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders.

**Mental Illness:** Disorders in which a person's thoughts, emotions or behavior cause suffering to himself, herself, or other people.

**Mental Retardation:** Below-average intellectual ability resulting from a genetic defect, brain injury, or disease and usually present from birth or early infancy.

**Mentally Challenged:** See Mental Retardation

**Mentally Ill:** A person suffering from a mental illness or disability.

**Mentally Retarded:** A developmental disability that causes a lack of normal intellectual development.

\*A more acceptable term is "Intellectual Disability"\*

**Metaphor:** A figure of speech in which a word or phrase that usually describes one thing is used to describe another to make a comparison, for example, "All the world's a stage."

**Mongoloid:** An early medical term for a person with Down syndrome.

**Moral Traits:** The qualities someone has that defines their character.

**Moral Treatment:** Treatment that is viewed as being more humane.

**Moron:** Moron is a term that was historically used to define an individual with some form of mild mental retardation. After the 1970s, mild mental retardation became the more acceptable terminology.

**Muscular Dystrophy:** Muscular Dystrophy, also known as MD, is a genetic (inherited) disorder that causes the muscles in the body to become very weak over time.

**Nativism:** Nativism means protecting the people living in a certain location from outsiders trying to come into that specific location.

**Natural Selection:** The process of adapting certain traits to survive in the surrounding environment. Natural Selection is sometimes called "Survival of the Fittest."

**Neurological:** The medical science that deals with the nervous system and disorders affecting it.

**Non-Profit Organization:** An organization whose main goal is to support or take part in activities without making any money.

**Normalization:** The policy of offering people with disabilities patterns, conditions, and experiences of everyday life as close as possible to those of people without disabilities by not separating them physically, socially, and administratively from the rest of society.

**Opium:** A drug derived from poppy seeds. Opium was given to treat individuals who had seizures.

**Oral Vaccine:** A means of immunity from a certain disease by taking a weakened form of that disease through the mouth.

**Paralympics:** An athletic competition designed for people with physical disabilities.

**Paralysis:** The lack of ability to move a certain part of the body.

**Pauperism:** The quality or state of being very poor or not being able to care for oneself.

**Pediatric:** The branch of medicine involving the treatment of children and babies.

**Perceptions:** Understanding something by becoming aware through any of the senses especially sight or hearing.

**Persecution:** The act of harassing or mistreating based on the beliefs of another person.

**Pharmaceutical:** Pharmaceutical is related to a pharmacy, pharmacist, or prescription medication.

**Phenobarbital:** A drug that was used to treat seizures.

**Philosopher:** A specialist in philosophy which is the investigation of questions about existence and knowledge and ethics.

**Physical Disability:** A disability that affects a person's physical ability.

**Physically Challenged:** See Physical Disability

**PKU:** An abbreviation for the genetic disease, phenylketonuria. This is an inherited disease of the metabolism that can cause brain damage and intellectual disabilities.

**Polio:** Abbreviation of Poliomyelitis (See Poliomyelitis)

**Portrayal:** A representation or description of something or someone.

**Prenatal:** Prenatal is a term used to describe events before or previous to birth.

**Prevention:** Prevention means to try to stop something from happening before it starts.

**Psychiatry:** Psychiatry is the practice of diagnosing and treating mental disorders.

**Purging:** Purging means getting rid or emptying.

**Quack:** An untrained person who pretends to be a doctor and gives medical advice and treatment.

**Quadriplegic:** A person who is paralyzed in the arms and legs.

**Quotas:** A certain number of something that is given out or needs to be completed by a person.

**Racism:** Abusive or discriminative behavior towards members of another race.

**Radical:** A person who supports extreme change in something that already exists.

**Rationale:** The reasoning behind an idea or law.

**Reform:** An improvement or a change for the better.

**Rehabilitate:** Rehabilitate means to return back to good conditions.

**Reintegrate:** Reintegrate means to restore or put back.

**Repercussions:** A result or consequence because of something that happened.

**Residential:** A place where people live.

**Restrictive:** Keeping within certain limits or bounds.

**Rubella:** Rubella is a disease that caused infants to have birth defects from mothers who were infected. Rubella is also known as German measles.

**Savant:** A savant is an individual with a developmental disability who has remarkable talent for solving problems and puzzles and with memory.

**Seizures:** Seizures are spasms or convulsions as a result of a disorder of the central nervous system.

**Self-Advocate:** Self-Advocates are individuals who speak up for themselves and for other individuals who share similar experiences. See also: Advocate

**Self Supporting:** A person that can support him or herself.

**Sibling:** One of two or more individuals having one or both of the same parents, a brother or sister.

**Slow Learner:** A person that takes a longer time to understand certain concepts.

**Spina Bifida:** Spina Bifida is a disability beginning at birth that causes problems with a person's spinal cord.

**Sterilization:** The process of destroying the ability of people to reproduce.

**Straitjackets:** A restrictive garment used to prevent movement of the arms.

**Subsistence:** The way in which someone maintains life.

**Superiority:** When someone is higher in rank or power over someone else.

**Supernatural:** Of or relating to existence outside the natural world.

**Telecommunication:** The electronic systems used to send messages by telegraphy, cable, telephone, radio, or television.

**Telethon:** A telethon is a fundraising television broadcast that lasts several days and raises money for a charitable cause. One of the most well known telethons is the Jerry Lewis MDA Telethon.

**Trepanning:** People with disabilities were sometimes thought to have evil spirits in their heads. Trepanning was a method to let these spirits out by cutting a hole in the skull.

**Tutor:** A private teacher that helps students with subjects that are difficult for them to understand.

**Unconstitutional:** Not consistent with or according to a constitution; contrary to the U.S. constitution.

**Vaccination:** A method used to prevent infectious diseases.

**Vaccine:** A method of preventing disease by building immunity, usually by administering a weakened form of the virus.

**Violated:** To break or disregard a law or promise.

**Visual Impairment:** A visual impairment is a term used when a person has low vision or is completely blind.

**Vocational:** Participation in training for a special skill to be used in a trade.

**Vocational Instruction:** The teaching of a certain skill or trade.

**Vocational Rehabilitation:** Vocational Rehabilitation is specific training in a trade with the intention of employment.

**Willowbrook:** A school for children with intellectual disabilities in Staten Island, NY. Willowbrook was open from 1942-1987.

**Zoning:** Dividing an area for a specific purpose, as a section of a city used only for a certain type of building or activity.

Definitions from: **The Free Dictionary** <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>