

# MEANING OF IMPAIRMENT AND DISABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UN CONVENTION

## IMPAIRMENT

A physical, mental or sensory loss or abnormality. In the Paralympic context, the word "impairment" is reserved for use in reference to an athlete's physical condition (e.g. IPC Athlete Classification Code).

## DISABILITY

A physical, mental or sensory impairment causes a disability when, combined with environmental and attitudinal barriers, it limits the ability to do something. This includes such things as the ability to wash/dress, walk/drive, cook/eat, communicate in order to make oneself understood, use public transport and access play, education and employment. This means they do not have access to the same human rights as others and prevents them from full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Here's an example of a barrier: a person whose impairment requires them to use a wheelchair might find it difficult to work; not because of their impairment, but because public transport is inaccessible, or access to the place of work is by stairs only. Environmental barriers limit their opportunity to participate fully in society.

Can students think of barriers that prevent people with an impairment taking part fully in school and the local community?

### ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIERS

Access to:

- buildings and transport
- information
- technology

### ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS

Our view of people with a disability and the way in which society chooses to interact with them.



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