

WHEELCHAIR-ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

Words

Write the letter of each definition with the word it defines. If you don't know the definition, use the context of the reading passage to help you. Look for the words in bold as you read the passage.

PARAGRAPH 1

Words	Definitions
1 disability	A n., the condition of being poor
2 incapacitated	B n., a condition that makes it difficult to do things other people do
3 poverty	C adj., unable to do things normally
4 account for	D v., to be responsible for; be the cause of

PARAGRAPH 2

Words	Definitions
5 unwieldy	E n., leisure activities
6 slippery	F v., to exist in large numbers
7 slope	G adj., causing things to slide or slip; difficult to hold or stand on
8 abound	H n., a surface at an angle, with the top higher than the bottom
9 recreation	I adj., difficult to manage

PARAGRAPHS 3-4

Words	Definitions
10 switch	J n., a smooth surface that allows access between levels
11 ramp	K n., the outside of something
12 exterior	L n., the raised edge of the street
13 curb ¹	M n., a button used to turn on lights or machines
14 interior	N n., the inside of something
15 corridor	O n., hallway

PARAGRAPHS 5-6

Words	Definitions
16 necessitate	P v., to make necessary
17 update	Q adj., small
18 capable	R adj., able to do something
19 terrain	S n., the surface of land
20 compact	T v., to modernize ² ; improve

¹BrE: kerb²BrE: modernise

Reading

Wheelchair-Accessibility Issues

- (1) As many as 650 million people worldwide live with some form of physical **disability**, and about 100 million of the disabled need a wheelchair at least part of the time. Industrialized¹, higher-income nations in Asia, Europe, and North America are seeing an older population grow more **incapacitated** as they age, whereas in lower-income countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, **poverty**, conflict, injuries, and accidents **account for** most disabilities, many of them in children.
- (2) Wheelchairs provide a more independent lifestyle, but they come with their own set of problems: They are wide, **unwieldy**, and difficult to maneuver² in tight spaces, on **slippery** surfaces, and on steep **slopes**—not to mention impassable stair steps. Accessibility issues **abound** at home, work, and school; in **recreation** activities; and in transportation³.
- (3) One of the most difficult places to use a wheelchair is the home. The average doorway width of about 76 centimeters⁴ (30 inches) falls some 5 to 15 centimeters (2 to 6 inches) short of the space necessary to accommodate a wheelchair. To be accessible to a person in a wheelchair, bathrooms require grab bars in showers and tubs⁵, built-in shower seats, lower sinks and mirrors, and higher toilet seats. Kitchens need lower counters and shelves as well as accessible **switches** for lights, garbage disposals, and exhaust fans. Also, because most homes have at least a few steps, a wheelchair **ramp** is a must.
- (4) Many countries have laws requiring public buildings—workplaces, stores, restaurants, and entertainment and sports⁶ facilities—to be wheelchair accessible. To accommodate wheelchairs, building **exteriors** need wide sidewalks⁷ with **curb** cuts and ramps. Automatic doors, including those on elevators⁸, must be broad and

¹BrE: industrialised

²BrE: manouever

³BrE: transport

⁴BrE: centimetres

⁵BrE: baths

⁶BrE: sport

⁷BrE: pavements

⁸BrE: lifts

remain open long enough for a person in a wheelchair to come and go with ease. In a building **interior**, **corridors** must be wide enough for a person in a wheelchair and another person on foot to pass side by side, and carpeting should be firm enough for wheelchairs to roll over easily. Restrooms⁹ must be wheelchair accessible, too. Although many countries have made these improvements, many more have yet to follow their example.

- (5) Transportation needs must also be considered. With appropriate technology, some wheelchair users can drive cars, although getting in and out of a vehicle while in a wheelchair usually **necessitates** a portable ramp. Many cities have subway and bus systems that accommodate wheelchairs, and the list is growing. For example, Beijing **updated** its subway system for the 2008 Olympics, providing disabled riders there access to it for the first time.
- (6) In most developing countries, a major concern is not so much wheelchair accessibility as access to a wheelchair. People may have limited finances and live in places without improved roads and sidewalks. Growing public awareness is contributing to less expensive types of wheelchairs being designed for specific environments—for example, chairs **capable** of maneuvering across dirt roads and rugged **terrain** but lightweight and **compact** so they can fold up to fit in crowded spaces, such as the aisle of a bus. These wheelchairs also must be affordable and constructed of locally available materials for easy repair.
- (7) The number of people needing a wheelchair is expected to increase by 22 percent¹⁰ over the next decade, with most of the increase coming in developing countries, where fewer than 1 percent of those in need now have access to one.

⁹BrE: toilets

¹⁰BrE: per cent

Answer the questions about **Wheelchair-Accessibility Issues**.

Questions 1-3

Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B**, **C**, or **D**.

- 1 In industrialized nations, disabilities are found more often among
 - A older people.
 - B children.
 - C students.
 - D injured people.

- 2 To be accessible to wheelchairs, buildings need
 - A more compact curbs.
 - B wider doors and corridors.
 - C elevators on the exterior.
 - D carpets in the interior.

- 3 Compact wheelchairs are
 - A more unwieldy.
 - B easier to use on a bus.
 - C less affordable.
 - D much wider.

Unit 8

Questions 4–7

Complete the summary using words from the list below.

necessitated
povertyramps
recreationslopes
switchesterrain
updated

For people in wheelchairs, accessibility is an issue in most areas of their lives, whether they are at home or at school, working, or enjoying 4..... during their free time. In homes, things need to be arranged so that they can be reached by a person in a wheelchair. Counters, shelves, and 5..... need to be placed lower than usual, and 6..... must be built in place of the usual front steps. Public buildings also need to be arranged to allow access to people in wheelchairs. Transportation is also an issue. Many cities have 7..... their buses and subways so that it is easier now than it was in the past for people in wheelchairs to get around.

Word Families

A

Complete each sentence with the correct word from the word family chart. Make nouns plural where necessary. Use the correct form of verbs.

noun	adjective	adverb
capability	capable	capably

- 1 Some wheelchairs are of being folded.
- 2 If a wheelchair has certain, it is easier to take on a crowded bus or subway.
- 3 People can get around quite with a wheelchair.

noun	noun	verb	adjective
disability	disabled	disable	disabled

- 4 The require many adjustments to a house.
- 5 An accident can a person for life.
- 6 Wheelchairs have helped many people get around.
- 7 A does not have to prevent a person from living a complete life.

noun	noun	verb	adjective
incapacity	incapacitation	incapacitate	incapacitated

- 8 His growing did not stop him from enjoying life.
- 9 People can become with age.
- 10 due to aging is one reason why people use wheelchairs.
- 11 Age, injury, and illness are all things that can people.

noun	verb	adjective	adverb
necessity	necessitate	necessary	necessarily

12 Wheelchairs the use of ramps and wide corridors.

13 Corridors in hospitals are wide to accommodate wheelchairs.

14 Ramps are to accommodate wheelchairs.

15 The aging population increases the for wheelchair accessible buildings.

noun	noun	verb	adjective
slip	slipperiness	slip	slippery

16 Ice can make a sidewalk too for a wheelchair.

17 The of the roads after an ice storm accounts for many accidents.

18 A wheelchair can on a wet or icy surface.

19 and falls are a major cause of injury in the elderly.

Word Families

B

Choose the correct word family member from the list below to complete each blank.

1 incapacity	incapacitate	incapacitated
2 necessitate	necessary	necessarily
3 disability	disable	disabled
4 capability	capable	capably
5 slipperiness	slip	slippery

Physical 1..... does not 2..... mean that one has to live a limited life. Wheelchairs, for example, help millions of 3..... people get around and live independent lives. Wheelchairs are 4..... of going just about everywhere. As with any form of transportation, the user has to be careful to avoid accidents. For example, after a snowstorm or rainstorm, the 5..... of sidewalks may make it difficult to maneuver a wheelchair safely.

Unit
8

Paraphrases

Read the sentence from the reading passage. Then, choose the sentence that has the same meaning.

1 Industrialized, higher-income nations in Asia, Europe, and North America are seeing an older population grow more incapacitated as they age, whereas in lower-income countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, poverty, conflict, injuries, and accidents account for most disabilities, many of them in children. (paragraph 1)

A In some countries, the occurrence of disabilities is more widespread than it is in other places.
 B In some parts of the world, many disabilities occur because of old age, while in other areas, most disabilities happen because of accidents, war, or other reasons.
 C In some parts of the world, most disabled people are elderly, but in other places, most disabled people are children.

2 For example, Beijing updated its subway system for the 2008 Olympics, providing disabled riders there access to it for the first time. (paragraph 5)

A When Beijing modernized its subway system in 2008, disabled people were finally able to use it.

B Many disabled people rode the Beijing subway during the 2008 Olympics.

C Disabled people did not have to pay to ride the Beijing subway during the 2008 Olympics.

Dictionary Skill

PARTS OF SPEECH

Exterior can be a noun or an adjective. *Interior* can also be a noun or an adjective.

Read the definitions below. Then read the sentences and write the letter of the correct definition for each sentence.

QUESTIONS 1–2

ex-te-ri-or [ex-TEE-ree-or]

A noun. the outside of something
B adjective. on or of the outside

1 The *exterior* doors need to be wide enough to allow wheelchairs to enter the building.

2 We need to make sure that the building's *exterior* can accommodate wheelchairs.

QUESTIONS 3–4

in-te-ri-or [in-TEE-ree-or]

A noun. the inside of something
B adjective. on or of the inside

3 The *interior* has been altered to accommodate wheelchairs.

4 The *interior* rooms need wider doors.

Listening

Track
24

*Listen to the conversation. Choose **FOUR** letters, **A-F**.*

Which **FOUR** accommodations for wheelchairs are already in place in the building?

- A** wide corridors
- B** wide doors
- C** ramp
- D** curb cuts
- E** elevator
- F** low switches

Unit 8

Writing (Task 1)

The graphs¹ below show basic information about employment among people with and without disabilities in a certain country.

Summarize² the information by selecting and reporting the main information and making comparisons.

Write at least 150 words.



*Severely Disabled is defined as needing a wheelchair, crutches, or a cane and requiring assistance with personal activities.

Speaking

Talk about the following topics.

Are there laws in your country that require public buildings to be accessible to disabled people? Do you think such laws are a good idea?

Think about the building where you work or study. Is it accessible to people in wheelchairs? In what ways could accessibility be improved?

¹BrE: charts

²BrE: summarise