

<b>Lesson</b>	Redefining Disabled
<b>Module</b>	Language & History Around Disability
<b>Learning Intention</b>	Students will consider the language used to describe people who have disabilities.
<b>Lesson Duration</b>	45 minutes
<b>Materials Needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redefining Disabled Discussion Questions, 2 per page, cut apart, 1 copy per group of 3-4</li> <li>• TED Talk by Aimee Mullins: <a href="#">“The Opportunity of Adversity”</a> (21:43)</li> <li>• Redefining Disabled Reflection handout, 1 copy per student</li> </ul>

### Lesson Structure

Begin the lesson by telling students that they are going to be considering the language that is used to describe people who have disabilities. Explain that they will be watching a TED Talk by Aimee Mullins, a record-breaking Paralympic athlete. Instruct students to take down notes as they watch, such as phrases, quotes, single words, or bullet points, to help them recall their thoughts and reactions later.

Show the video, [“The Opportunity of Adversity”](#).

After the video, break students into groups of 3-4 and give each group a copy of the Redefining Disabled Discussion Questions. Allow students time for discussion.

Bring the class back together and hand out the Redefining Disability Reflection sheet. Ask students to read the quotes, select one, and write a brief response outlining if they agree or disagree with the idea and noting additional questions the idea raises for them.

### Assessment

- Participation in the group and class discussions.
- Completed Redefining Disability Reflection.

### Extensions

- Have students write a list of questions they would ask Aimee Mullins in an interview.

## **Redefining Disability Discussion Questions**

- Did the video change how you think about when the word “disabled?”
- What is the main idea of Aimee’s talk?
- What is/are the major difference(s) between the 1982 thesaurus entry and the 2009 thesaurus entry of “disabled?”
- What does Aimee mean when she says, “The human ability to adapt is our greatest asset”? Can you think of other examples of people adapting to challenging personal circumstances?
- What words might you use instead of “disabled?” Do you think it is important to use other words?
- How would you want to be described or identified if you had a disability?

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- What is/are the major difference(s) between the 1982 thesaurus entry and the 2009 thesaurus entry of “disabled?”
- What does Aimee mean when she says, “The human ability to adapt is our greatest asset”? Can you think of other examples of people adapting to challenging personal circumstances?
- What words might you use instead of “disabled?” Do you think it is important to use other words?
- How would you want to be described or identified if you had a disability?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Redefining Disability Reflection**

Choose one of the following quotes from the video and explain your reaction to it. Circle the quote you select. Do you agree or disagree with the idea? How strongly? Does the quote lead you to new questions or ideas?

- *“Adversity isn’t an obstacle that we need to get around in order to resume living our lives. It’s part of our life... The question isn’t whether or not you’re going to meet adversity, but how you’re going to meet it.”*
- *“There’s an important difference between the objective medical fact of my being an amputee and the subjective societal opinion of whether or not I’m disabled.”*
- *“Perhaps the existing model of ‘what is broken in you and how do we fix it?’ is more disabling to the individual than the pathology itself.”*