

# Unit 5:

# Accommodations

## PURPOSE



**T**he purpose of Unit 5 is to introduce you to the concept of accommodations and to help you identify the accommodations you may need. Terminology provided in this unit will help you better understand this topic. We strongly suggest that you read the discussion on page 5-2.

## TERMINOLOGY



**Y**ou may know some of these words already, or you may just have heard them in passing. First, define these words as you understand them. Then check your definitions against the glossary that is located in the back of this workbook. The following terms are used in Unit 5:

Accommodation

Barrier

Modification

**Accommodation** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Barrier** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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## Modification

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## DISCUSSION



**W**hat is an accommodation? **An accommodation is essentially any strategy that gets rid of or lessens the effect of a specific barrier.** A **barrier** is an obstacle which may exist in school, at the workplace, in the community, or in your own home. An accommodation is any change or adjustment to an environment that makes it possible for an individual with a disability to enjoy an equal opportunity. Accommodations are used to help individuals with disabilities learn or demonstrate what they have learned; work as independently and efficiently as possible; and live comfortably within their communities and home, among other things. Sometimes accommodations can be **modifications** to existing equipment or materials to make them usable for people with disabilities (such as lowering a countertop for a register at a store, or changing the software on a computer to read school assignments aloud.) Reasonable accommodations like these allow a person with a disability to participate in the application process (job or college, for example), perform the essential functions of a particular job (yes, being a college student is considered a job!), and enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment and education equal to those enjoyed by those individuals without disabilities.

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An accommodation is essentially any strategy that gets rid of or lessens the effect of a specific barrier.

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Accommodations are NOT intended to justify or compensate for a lack of knowledge, skills, or abilities necessary to succeed. Whenever possible, accommodations should be based on the use and further development of existing skills and capabilities.

One easy way to think about reasonable accommodations is to think of them in three basic categories:

1. Changes to facilities and equipment (such as putting in ramps and parking spaces, making materials available in large print, or providing low- and high-tech assistive technology);
2. The provision of special services (such as sign language interpreters or qualified readers); and
3. Creative thinking and problem solving!

There are many types of accommodations, including *but not limited to* the following:

- Educational accommodations;
- Workplace accommodations; and
- Community accessibility that serves to accommodate.

Some common examples of these various types of accommodations available to people with disabilities are listed below:

### Educational Accommodations

- Accessible classrooms.
- Modified instruction (for example, use of small groups).
- Modified curricula (for example, different learning outcomes or different materials from those for other students).
- Modified class schedules (for example, block schedules).
- Providing supervised breaks or allowing extra response and processing time during testing sessions, and administering the test at best time for the individual.
- Providing special seating in a general education classroom (for example, seating in the front of the room or in a study carrel), a small group setting, or special education support.
- Providing large print materials, Braille materials, calculators, computers with spelling and grammar checkers, and electronic dictionaries.
- Providing written copies of orally presented materials found in examiner's manual, closed-caption of video materials, or sign language interpreters.
- Allowing individuals to answer by pointing rather than marking in a test

booklet, by dictating responses to examiners for verbatim transcription, or by responding to an interpreter for transcription.

### Workplace Accommodations

- Changing an employee's workstation arrangement.
- Modifying equipment or devices (for example, computer software).
- Reassigning non-essential functions through job restructuring.
- Providing qualified readers and interpreters.
- Providing part-time or modified work schedules.
- Telecommuting options.
- Personal assistance services.
- Adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, and policies.

### Community Accessibility

- Providing ramps and reserved parking spaces (increasing physical accessibility).
- Providing assistive technology (for example, readers, calculators, spell checkers, or communication devices).
- Providing interpreters.
- Providing accessible bathrooms.
- Providing accessible drinking fountains.
- Providing accessible equipment (for example, computers, desks, or copiers).
- Providing wide aisles and doorways.

**ACTIVITY:**  
**THE JOB ACCOMMODATION NETWORK (JAN)**



**T**he **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)** is a free service of the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), in the US Department of Labor. JAN provides information about disability and accommodation and receives questions concerning students with disabilities in classroom environments such as public schools, colleges, technical schools, continuing education, internships, and employment, and about adults with disabilities.

To begin this activity, **log on to the JAN website** (<http://www.jan.wvu.edu/>). Click “Individuals with Disabilities” on the left-hand toolbar. Take some time to explore what information and resources JAN has to offer. Make a list of those that you find particularly useful. If you do not have access to the World Wide Web, there is a toll-free phone number that you can call. Someone will be able to answer your questions and send you information. The phone number for JAN is 1-800-JAN-7234 V/TTY.

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Next, **use the Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR)** to research ideas about accommodations both on the job and in school. Make a list of those accommodations that you currently use, and those accommodations that you might try.

Accommodations I use	Accommodations to try

## GROUP ACTIVITY: SITUATIONS AND SOLUTIONS AT SCHOOL AND AT WORK



**R**eview the accommodation examples below. Your job is to figure out the obstacle (or barrier) for each young person. Use your creativity, the JAN website, and the broad categories of accommodations presented previously to create a list of possible accommodation solutions. Be prepared to discuss your solutions with the group.

**Situation #1:** A student with Muscular Dystrophy is taking an SAT prep class at night. He has trouble filling in the bubbles on the answer sheets during practice drills.

**Potential accommodation solutions:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Situation #2:** A teenager could not shop with her friends at the local mall because her wheelchair did not fit between many of the clothes aisles in the major department stores.

**Potential accommodation solutions:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Situation#3:** A student with dyslexia is taking a literature class. He reads more slowly and with more difficulty than the other students. Every student is required to read aloud from the texts in class.

**Potential accommodation solutions:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Situation #4:** A graphic artist for a small employer is deaf and needs to be alerted to the employer’s audible emergency alarm system.

**Potential accommodation solutions:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Situation #5:** A student with depression writes for her school newspaper. When she has a depressive episode she misses article deadlines.

**Potential accommodation solutions:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Situation #6:** A chef with dyscalculia (a math learning disability) is having trouble measuring the ingredients for recipes.

**Potential accommodation solutions:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Situation #7:** A corporate businessman with social anxiety is overcome with anxiety about speaking in front of his co-workers at business meetings.

**Potential accommodation solutions:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Situation#8:** A student in medical school who has a reading disability is also a poor speller. She has difficulty reading and spelling the medical terminology and prescription names.

**Potential accommodation solutions:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**NOTES** 



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