

"INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT DISABILITY"

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Homer, ancient Greek writer of "The Iliad" and "The Odyssey," was blind.

The typewriter was invented as a private writing device for a blind member of a royal family. Other developers of early typewriters also designed for individuals who were blind.

English King George III (1783–1820) ruled England during the time of the American Revolution. He took the throne in 1760, had repeated bouts of mental illness during his reign, and was removed from power after an extended period of mental illness in 1811 by his son George IV. George IV officially took the throne in 1820 after the death of George III.

In 1776, Stephen Hopkins referred to his Cerebral Palsy when he signed the U.S. Declaration of Independence saying, "My hands trembles, but my heart does not."

French Impressionist painter Pierre–Auguste Renoir (1841–1919) developed Rheumatoid Arthritis late in life and required a wheelchair to get around the last few years of his life. In order to continue painting, Renoir employed assistants who would dip brushes in paint for him and strap the brushes to his hands. Renoir later paintings are celebrated for their looser brushwork. It is probable that his looser brushwork is the result of his arthritis.

Thomas Alva Edison (1847–1931) was born with an overly large head and had developmental disabilities which slowed his early motor and language skills. Doctors claimed he would be "an invalid". Edison's school diagnosed him as "mentally ill" and "unteachable" because he could not complete his academic work. His mother Nancy Edison, a former teacher, removed her son from school and home–schooled him. She struggled to find methods to accommodate for Edison's developmental disabilities and dyslexia, and eventually found that Edison had to see and test things for himself. Edison went on to become one of the most

recognized inventors of all the time. He patented over a thousand inventions; among his most famous are: the phonograph (1877), the electric light bulb (1879), the dictating machine, and the motion picture (1896). In 1882 he also designed the first hydroelectric plant in Appleton, Wisconsin.

When Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876, he was attempting to convert speech to visual representation in order to accommodate for his wife's hearing loss. Unfortunately Bell's invention failed to convert sounds to visual representations, though it extended verbal communications in ways Bell never could imagine.

In 1984 Gallaudet University football quarterback Paul Hubbard created the "huddle" to prevent the opposing team from seeing the signs the Gallaudet team used to communicate their next play to their teammates.

Baseball hand signals used by umpires to signify balls, strikes, out and safe originate from Outfielder William Hoy's request to umpires that they use sign language because he was deaf and could not hear the umpires' verbal calls.