Aphasia

Sheltering Arms Institute
A collaboration with VCU Health

Aphasia is a condition that affects **language**.

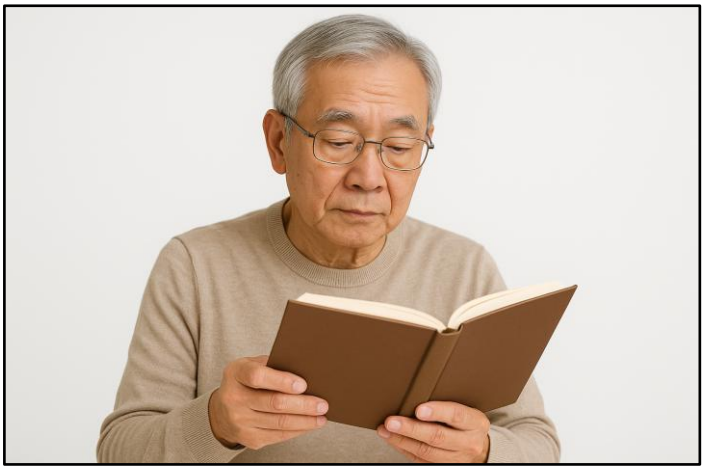
It causes **trouble** with:



Speaking



Understanding



Reading



Writing

Aphasia makes **talking** with **friends** and **family harder**.



Friends



Family

Aphasia does **not change** how **smart** you are.



Smart

- People with aphasia **know what they want to say**.

- They have trouble **finding** the **right words**.



Finding words

Around **2 million people** in the United States have aphasia.



2 million people



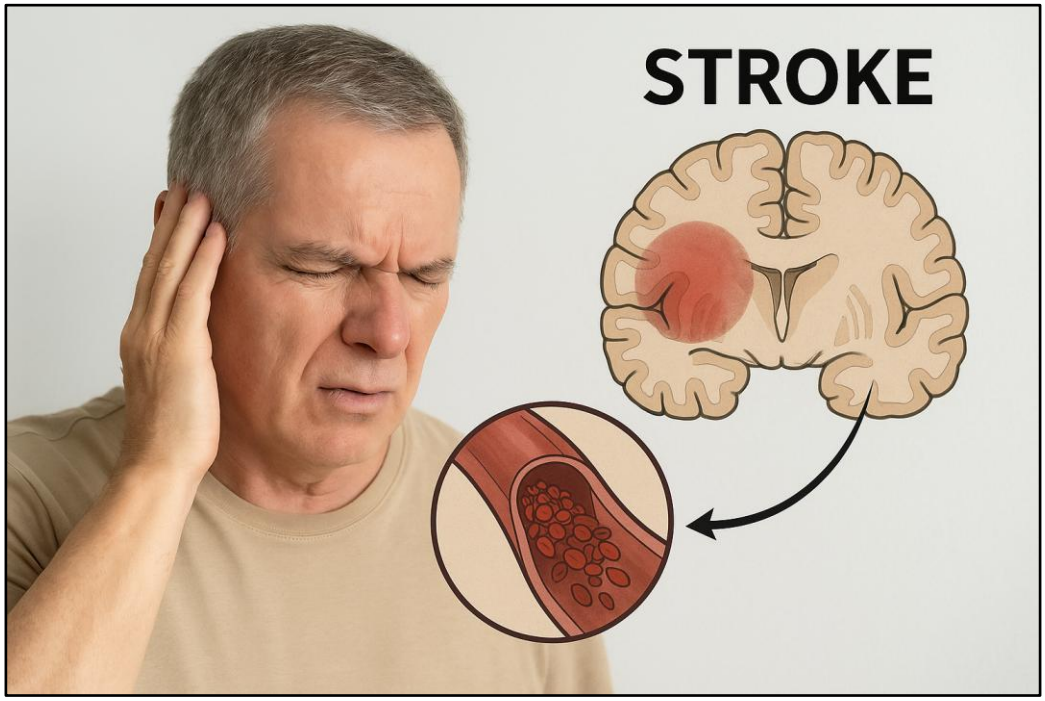
United States

It happens when the **left side** of the **brain** is **damaged**.



Left-sided brain damage

The **most common cause** of aphasia is a **stroke**.



Stroke

1 in 3 people who have a **stroke** get **aphasia**.



Other **causes** of aphasia are:

- **Brain injury**
- **Brain tumor**
- **Brain infection**
- Other **problems** that **affect the brain**



Brain injury



Brain tumor



Brain infection

There are **different types of aphasia.**

People with **fluent** aphasia:

- Use **longer sentences**
- May **not make sense**
- Use **made-up** or **incorrect words**
- Have **natural rhythm** and **melody**
- May **feel** like they are **speaking normally**

People with **nonfluent** aphasia

- Have trouble saying **what they mean**
- Use **single words** or **short phrases**
- **Leave out short words**
  - *Example: "is" and "the"*
- **Pause** and **hesitate**
- Usually **realize** they are **having difficulty**

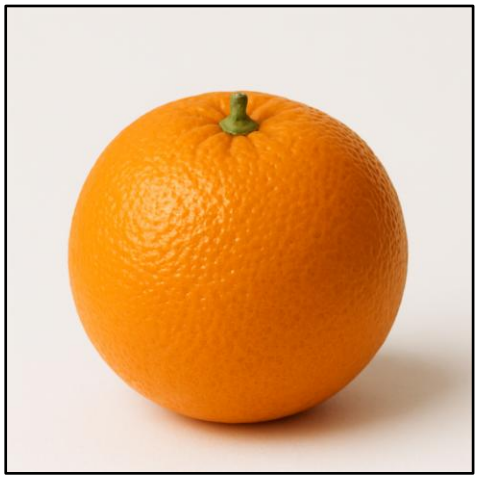
People with aphasia have

trouble finding the right words.

You might say a word that is **close, but not right.**



“Apple”



“Orange”

You might say a word that is **not related at all**.



“Apple”



“Fish”

You might **mix up the sounds** in a word.



“Ap-ple”

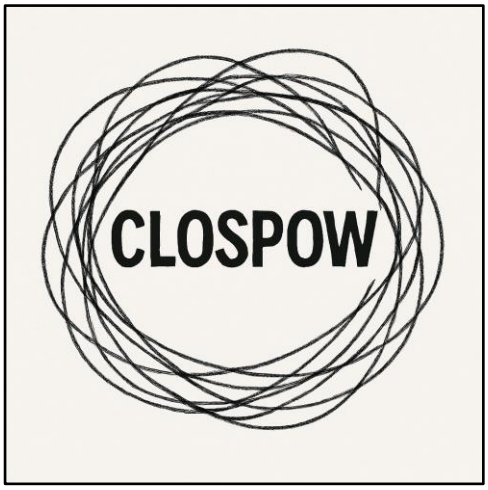


“Ap-sel”

You might say a word that **sounds made-up.**



“Apple”



“Clospow”

You might **describe it** if you can't find a word.



"Apple"



"That thing that grows on a tree"

You might get **<u>stuck on a word</u>** you **said earlier** and **keep repeating it**.



"Fish"



"Fish"



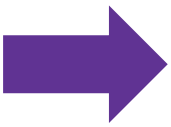
"Fish"

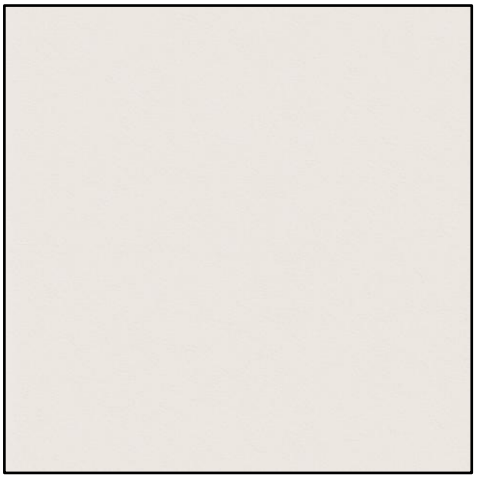


"Fish"

Some people might **not** be able to **speak at all.**







“Apple”

“_____”

Some people also have **trouble understanding others.**



Understanding

This can make it **hard** to:

- Understand **questions**
- **Follow directions**
- **Recognize pictures** or **objects**

Speech-language pathologists help people with aphasia.



Speech Therapy

Armour, M., Cherney, L. R., del Toro, C. M., Maher, L. M., & Raymer, A. M. (2021). Aphasia FAQs for the rehabilitation professional. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, *102*(6), 1243–1245. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2021.01.068

OpenAI. (2025). *A series of AI-generated photographs related to aphasia* [AI-generated images]. ChatGPT (GPT-5, DALL·E). https://chat.openai.com