

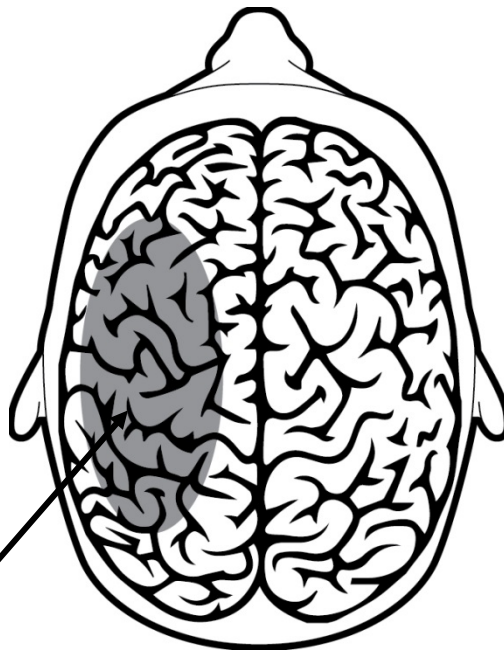
# Learning about Aphasia: Writing

## Speech after Stroke

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A stroke is damage to part of the brain. It happens when a blood vessel in the brain gets blocked or when it bursts.

A stroke can cause many different problems, depending on the part and amount of the brain that is damaged.

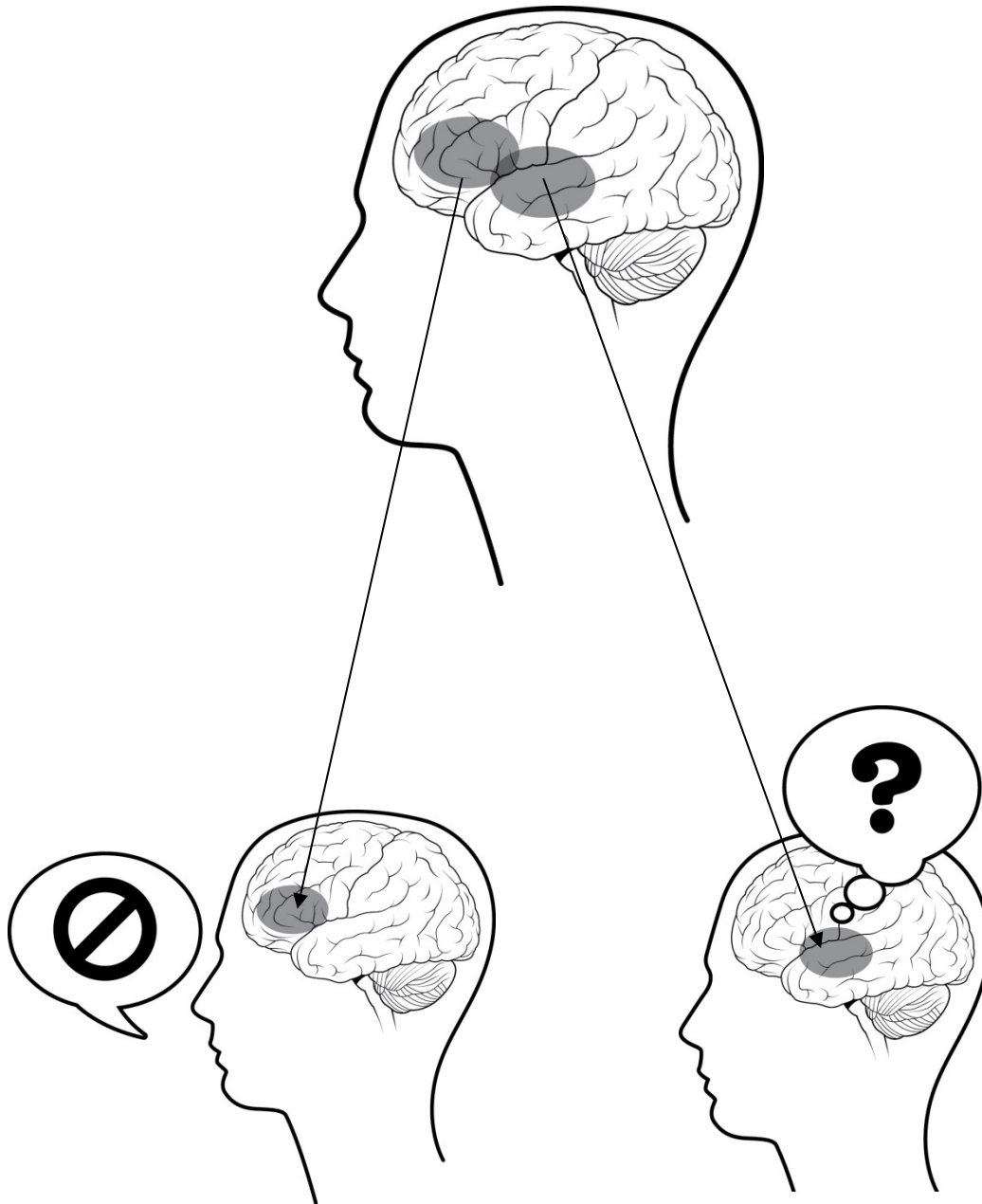


Part of the brain  
that is damaged

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One effect on speech is called aphasia. The word “aphasia” is like the word “stroke” – it can mean many different things.

Aphasia can affect a person’s speaking and understanding.



**Difficulty speaking**

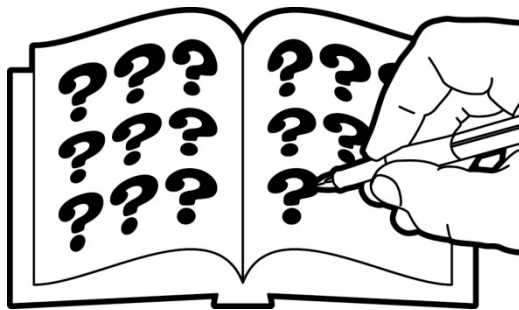
**Difficulty understanding**

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Aphasia can also affect a person's reading or writing.



Reading



Writing

This handout explains a stroke's effect on understanding.

It is important to point out that writing problems due to aphasia have nothing to do with using your hand or holding the pencil.

Having to use your left hand instead of your right does make it more difficult. But, even if the muscles in your hand work perfectly, the aphasia will still show in your writing.

Some people have severe aphasia and cannot even write a single letter. Other people have mild aphasia and may only have difficulty writing full sentences or spelling certain words.

When a person with aphasia writes, the words may come out wrong, even though they are thinking of the right words. Sometimes the word is close to the one they want, like writing "shoe" instead of "sock" or "chore" instead of "chair". Other times the word is completely unrelated, like writing "foot" instead of "window", or writing a made up word like "kerchump" instead of "supper".

Aphasia affects a person's ability to understand words and sentences. It does not affect a person's intelligence.

## So what can you do to help?

Check with the Speech-Language Pathologist to see how well the person with aphasia can write. The Speech-Language Pathologist can then give you specific ideas about what type of reading material would be good practice.

## More ways to help ...

- ✓ Allow the person plenty of time to write – being rushed or excited will only make writing more difficult.
- ✓ Be aware of how much we rely on writing. Think of how often we jot down a note, write a cheque or sign our name. Keep in mind that the person with aphasia may no longer be able to do these things and may need your help.
- ✓ Unless the person asks you to, do not be picky with his/her writing. If an “i” is not dotted, it does not really matter – you will still understand the message.

If you would like more information, please call the Speech-Language Pathologist below:

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