



Easy Read Edition

A Self-Advocate's Guide to the Americans with Disabilities Act

**Part 1: What is the ADA
and Why Should I Care?**

Words to Know in Part 1



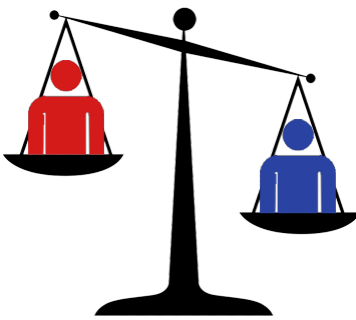
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

A law in the United States that gives people with disabilities rights. It is called “the ADA” for short.



civil rights laws

Laws that make sure people get treated fairly.



discrimination

When someone gets treated unfairly because of who they are.



legal rights

Rights that the law gives you. The government needs to make sure you get these rights.

What Is the ADA and Why Should I Care?

What are rights? What is the Americans with Disabilities Act?



Everyone has rights. You have rights!



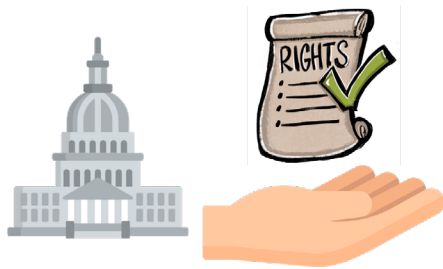
The word “rights” can mean two things.



Sometimes, rights are things that the law gives you.



These are called **legal rights**.



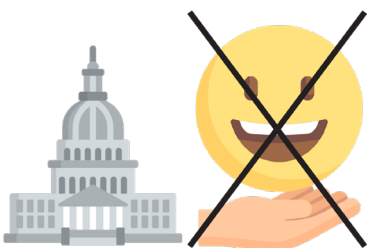
The government has to make sure you get these rights.



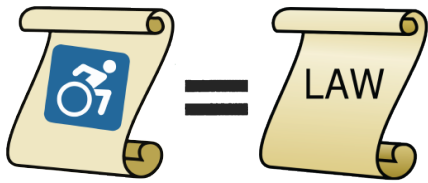
The second meaning of “rights” is “things that you *should* have.”



People might say you have the “right” to be happy.



But the government doesn't have to make sure that you are happy.



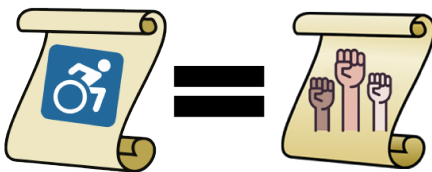
The **Americans with Disabilities Act** is a law.



We call the Americans with Disabilities Act "**the ADA**" for short.



The ADA gives people with disabilities legal rights.



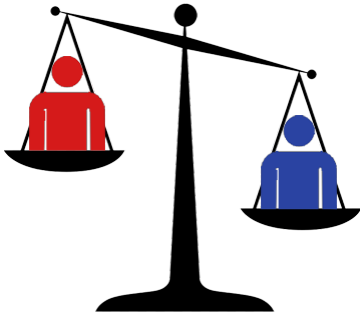
The ADA is a special kind of law. It is a civil rights law.



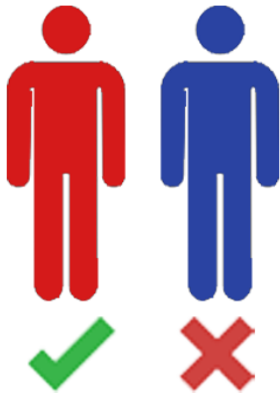
Civil rights laws are laws that make sure people get treated fairly.



Civil rights laws help protect people from discrimination.



Discrimination is when someone gets treated unfairly because of who they are.



Certain groups of people get treated unfairly more than others.



For example, some people get treated unfairly because of their race.



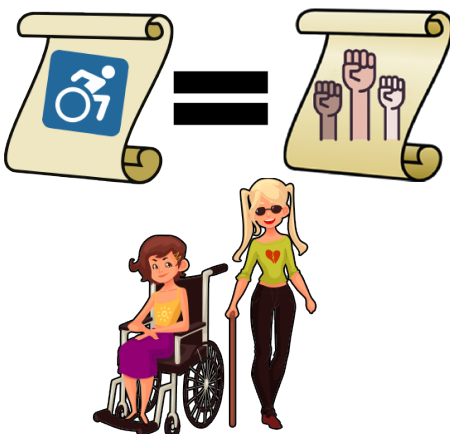
People with disabilities get treated unfairly because of our disabilities.



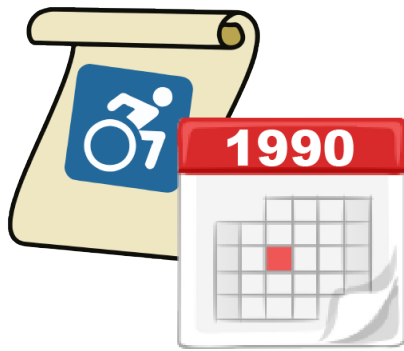
That is why civil rights laws are important.



There are civil rights laws for groups like women and black people.



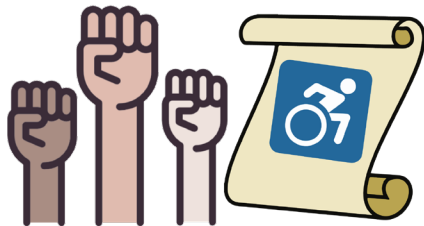
The ADA is a civil rights law for people with disabilities.



The Americans with Disabilities Act became a law in 1990.



People with disabilities worked hard to make the ADA the law.



We fought for our rights from the ADA.



We are still fighting for our ADA rights today.

Why should I care about the Americans with Disabilities Act?



People with disabilities are still discriminated against today.



We get put in institutions.



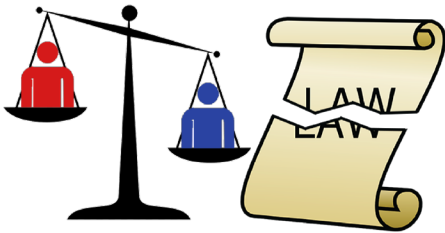
Other people tell us we can't do some things because we have disabilities.



Or, they don't give us the help we need to do what we want to do.



The ADA says that these things are not okay!



It says that discriminating against people with disabilities breaks the law.



The ADA says we have *the right* to live and work with everyone else.



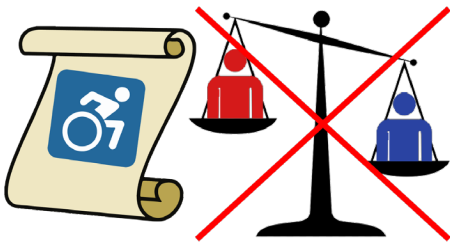
It says we have *the right* to go anywhere non-disabled people go.



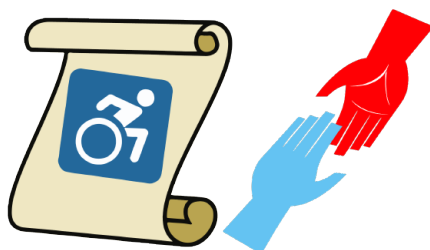
It says we have *the right* to do anything non-disabled people do.



It says we have the *right* to get help when we need it.



If we get discriminated against, the ADA lets us do something about it.



The ADA has helped lots of people with disabilities.



There is less discrimination against us than there used to be.



More people with disabilities are part of the community!



But there is still a lot of work to be done to protect our rights.



That is why it's important to know the rights the ADA gives us.