



People with **Aphasia** helping each other to become independent, communicate with other **Aphasic** people and overcome **Aphasia** together

## A Rose By Any Other Name Is All Greek To Some Prof Chris Code

### How do you describe a person with aphasia?

Is it important to you how people with aphasia are described?

**Do you say**, for instance, that -

- John *is an aphasic*, or
- John *has aphasia*, or
- John *is an aphasic person*, or
- John *is a person with aphasia*?

The issue has been discussed many times in the history of aphasia. Originally, **in 1861**, Paul Broca called the condition he described for the first time, '**aphemia**', taken from the Greek for '**speechless**'. But the word 'aphasia' became more popular in the following years.

In some countries (United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand) some professionals call it **dysphasia** because aphasia means literally a **complete loss** of language and 'dysphasia' means only **some loss** of language.

**You may agree** that this is not very important.

But to describe someone as '**an aphasic**' is **using the word as a noun** - an **object** word, rather than an adjective - a **describing** word.

The argument is that it is **grammatically incorrect** to use the word 'aphasic' as a noun. So to say **John is an aphasic man** is therefore OK.

But **you may agree** that this is also too trivial to worry too much about it.

Perhaps more important is that some professionals believe that to describe someone with aphasia as '**an aphasic**' is **degrading and demeaning**. **What is your opinion?**

Many professionals prefer to ensure that when they use the word 'aphasic' they always use it with a noun like 'aphasic speaker, aphasic client, aphasic patient, aphasic person'. Whichever is appropriate for the context. For example, 'aphasic patient' for someone receiving medical treatment.

This **may** all seem rather unimportant to many people, but for others it is important because, as we know, **language is very powerful and changes the way people perceive things and think about them**.

Post a message on our [aphasia related forum](#) and **let us and others know your opinion!**