**Winter Paralympics Vocabulary**

This page covers the [vocabulary of the Winter Paralympics](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/sports-paralympics-winter.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22wordchecker) by looking at its background, events and people.

The Winter Paralympic Games, or the Winter Paralympics, is an international sporting tournament held shortly after the Winter Olympics. Every four years, thousands of athletes with a physical disability come from all over the world to represent their country. Some are missing one or more limbs, some have difficulty using their muscles because of cerebral palsy or a spinal cord injury, and others might have a visual impairment. But whatever their disability might be, they compete with as much determination as any other athlete in their quest for gold, silver and bronze medals.

**Winter Paralympic Sports**

The Winter Paralympic Games were first held in Sweden in 1976, with 198 athletes from 16 countries competing in just two sports; alpine skiing and cross-country skiing. The tournament is much bigger nowadays, and it regularly attracts over 500 athletes from nearly 50 countries. They compete in over 70 events in five winter sports; alpine skiing, biathlon, cross-country skiing, ice sledge hockey and wheelchair curling. Many events involve the use of special equipment. For example, in ice sledge hockey (also known as "sled hockey") players who've lost their legs, or can't use them, sit on small, bladed sledges and use two short "sledge hockey sticks" to push themselves along and to pass the puck or shoot for goal. Two Swedish ice hockey players invented the game in the 1960's after becoming disabled, and it's now one of the most popular and exciting sports at the Winter Paralympics.

**Disability Categories and Impairment Levels**

The Winter Paralympics are organized by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). The IPC has established ten disability categories that apply to both the Summer and Winter Paralympics. They cover a range of mostly physical and visual impairments. The IPC has also established several levels of impairment, from mild to severe, to ensure that athletes compete against others with a similar level of impairment.

**Related Tournaments**

Other winter-sport tournaments for athletes with disabilities include the Special Olympics World Winter Games for athletes with an intellectual disability, and the Winter Deaflympics for athletes with a hearing impairment. Each of these tournaments is also held once every four years.

**disability** (n): any condition that prevents full or normal use of the body or mind - *A severe physical disability didn't stop Stephen Hawking from achieving greatness.*

**limb** (n): an arm, or a leg - *My cousin lost a limb in a motorbike accident.*

**impairment**(n): imperfect function of a body part or sense organ - *Many people with impairments get really good jobs these days.*

**cerebral palsy**(n): a medical condition that limits control of movement and speech - *Kids with cerebral palsy often get bullied and teased.*

**spinal cord** (n): the bundle of nerves inside the spine - *His spinal cord is damaged, so he might never walk again.*

**sledge** (n) (also **sled**): a vehicle for moving over ice or snow, with runners or blades instead of wheels - *We loved playing on the little sledges we made every winter.*