

Deaf Culture Question of the Week - January 19 - 23, 2009
Bill Newell, Principal, Washington School for the Deaf

The term coined by professor Tom Humphries in 1977 indicating "the belief that life without hearing is futile and miserable, that hearing loss is a tragedy and a scourge on mankind, and that deaf people should struggle to be as much like hearing people as possible."

- a. audiophilia
- b. audism
- c. ableism
- d. disablism

Scroll down for the answer

Answer: "b" Audism "...the belief that life without hearing is futile and miserable, that hearing loss is a tragedy and "the scourge of mankind," and that deaf people should struggle to be as much like hearing people as possible. Deaf activists Heidi Reed and Hartmut Teuber at D.E.A.F. Inc., a community service and advocacy organization in Boston, consider audism to be "a special case of ableism." Audists, hearing or deaf, shun Deaf culture and the use of sign language, and have what Reed and Teuber describe as "an obsession with the use of residual hearing, speech, and lip-reading by deaf people." (Pelka 1997: 33)

The below website presents a concise discussion of the history of the term "audism" and other resources for understanding what this term means.

[http://library.gallaudet.edu/Library/Deaf_Research_Help/Frequently_Asked_Questions_\(FAQs\)/Cultural_Social_Medical/Audism.html](http://library.gallaudet.edu/Library/Deaf_Research_Help/Frequently_Asked_Questions_(FAQs)/Cultural_Social_Medical/Audism.html)

And another website which presents information on the term audism.

<http://deafness.about.com/cs/deafculture/a/audism.htm>

All of the terms used in the multiple choice questions above are "real words". Some of them are used to describe beliefs/attitudes which are similar to audism, racism, sexism etc. Why not look up all of these terms?