

Dyslexia

What is dyslexia?

- Dyslexia is a learning disability that manifests primarily as a difficulty with written language, particularly with reading and spelling.
- It has many underlying causes that are believed to be a brain-based condition that influences the ability to read written language.
- It is identified in individuals who fail to learn to read in the absence of a verbal or nonverbal intellectual impairment, sensory deficit (e.g., a visual deficit or hearing loss), pervasive developmental deficit or a frank neurological impairment.

Why do some people have dyslexia?

- Evidence suggests that dyslexia results from differences in how the brain processes written and/or verbal language.

What symptoms are commonly associated with dyslexia?

- **Spelling errors**
 - Because of difficulty learning letter-sound correspondences, individuals with dyslexia might tend to misspell words, or leave vowels out of words.
- **Letter order**
 - Dyslexics may also reverse the order of two letters especially when the final, incorrect, word looks similar to the intended word (e.g., spelling "dose" instead of "does").
- **Highly phoneticized spelling**
 - Dyslexics also commonly spell words inconsistently, but in a highly phonetic form such as writing "shud" for "should". Dyslexic individuals also typically have difficulty distinguishing among homophones such as "their" and "there".
- **Reading**
 - Due to dyslexics' excellent long term memory, young students tend to memorize beginning readers, but are unable to read individual words or phrases.
- **Vocabulary**
 - Having a small written vocabulary, even if they have a large spoken vocabulary.

Symptoms continued

- Letters and numbers appear to be disfigured, unclear, or even “dancing” to dyslectics.
- Confusion with the curvatures of letters. So, “b” could be confused with “d”
- One can experience dizziness or nausea while reading.
- The letters and words might look all bunched together
- The letters of some words might appear completely backwards
- A dyslexic might see the letters o.k., but not be able to sound out words – that is, not be able to connect the letters to the sounds they make and understand them

Is there a cure?

- No, but there is education and treatment which can help dyslexics.

Teaching a dyslexic

- Teachers of dyslexic students employ a “**multi-sensory**” approach while teaching.
 - The students do not have to learn to read by using just their eyes, but also auditory devices like cassettes or CDs that read the words to them.
 - This helps dyslexics better understand the phonics behind the words.
 - Similarly, making letters and numbers physically by using clay or tape helps the students understand the curvatures of letters.

Who has dyslexia?

- In the United States, researchers estimate the prevalence of dyslexia to range from 5 to 9 percent of school-aged children, though some have put the figure as high as 17 percent
- Recent studies indicate that dyslexia is particularly prevalent among small business owners, with roughly 20 to 35 percent of U. S. and British entrepreneurs being affected.
 - Researchers consider that many dyslexic entrepreneurs are successful by delegating responsibilities and excelling at verbal communication

Can someone with dyslexia be successful?

- Yes! In fact, a list of famous dyslexics includes:
Albert Einstein
Thomas Edison
Alexander Graham Bell
Leonardo daVinci
Walt Disney
Winston Churchill
Hans Christian Anderson
Woodrow Wilson
Whoopi Goldberg
and many others.

A few examples, found online:

On one day, in the middle of a thick
forest, I saw the home of a
very little Red
Riding Hood, because of the brightly colored
coat she wore. One day, her mother's
voice came full of grief, and said:

"Grandma! Take her this basket of cake,
but be very careful! Don't stray from the path
through the woods."

Another example:

If there is a pupil in your class who seems bright verbally with good ideas but has difficulty in expressing him/herself in writing it is possible that this student is dyslexic. It is also possible that another, less obvious student, could have this disability.

To ascertain for certain whether he/she is dyslexic a complex assessment would have to be carried out.

There are many definitions of dyslexia, and it has been broken down into many, many types. I have never found two dyslexic pupils who are the same as each other and there are, therefore, almost certainly as many forms of dyslexia as there are dyslexics.

<http://www.dyslexia-testing.com.au/wordpress/>

- The author of this website, Dawn Matthews, invites you to read the above paragraph and give some thought to:
- The skills you used to decode it.
- The frequency and types of error you made in reading it.
- How much of the content you understood in the first reading.
- If you found the reading of this paragraph tiring or a strain.
- Imagine a life where you had to read extensive information and even whole books written like the above passage. Think about how tired you would be and how easily distracted. Imagine that the rest of the world could easily read passages like this one. Imagine how stupid you would feel and how frustrated.

For many dyslexic children, the experience of reading and writing is like driving in a foreign country. Everything seems to be on the wrong side, going in the wrong direction. Everyone seems to be traveling faster than you. It requires exhausting concentration -- and you experience a sense of tension, fear and total isolation as everyone roars past, hooting and looking at you as if you were an idiot.

When you finally reach your destination, after many wrong turns and a circuitous route that has taken an insanely long time, you then have no desire ever to get behind the wheel again. Meanwhile, your hosts have gone off to a party without you.

And yet. And yet. You could excel behind the wheel, if only you were on familiar roads.

Her child wrote:

when i do riting and pariigrafs my brayn is uncunferdble and herts and i get the writ word but wen it travls down my arm it disapeeurs befour it coms out of my hand and sumtymes im chrying.