



## CHARACTERISTICS OF DYSLEXIA

- ✦ Mixing up sounds in multisyllabic words. For example, “aminal” for “animal”, “bisghetti” for “spaghetti”, “hekalopter” for “helicopter”, “hangaberg” for “hamburger”, “mazageen” for “magazine”, etc.
- ✦ Most dyslexic children and adults have significant directionality confusion. They will show confusion about left versus right, over versus under, before versus after, and other directionality words and concepts. Other such concepts include confusing directionality in time (first–last, before–after, next–previous, over–under, yesterday–tomorrow ) and north–south, east–west confusion.
- ✦ Left–Right confusion. Some children with dyslexia are also up–down confused and often confuse the letters b–p, d–q, n–u, and m–w.
- ✦ Because of such directionality confusion, adults with dyslexia get lost a lot when driving around, even in cities where they've lived for many years and often have difficulty reading or understanding maps.
- ✦ Late to establish a dominant hand. May switch from right hand to left hand while coloring, writing, or doing any other task. Eventually, the child will usually establish a preferred hand, but it may not be until they are 7 or 8. Even then, they may use one hand for writing, but the other hand for sports.
- ✦ Inability to correctly complete phonemic awareness tasks (i.e. unable to distinguish and identify the distinctive sounds of speech).
- ✦ Difficulty learning the names of the letters or sounds in the alphabet; difficulty writing the alphabet in order.
- ✦ Despite listening to stories that contain lots of rhyming words, such as Dr. Seuss, cannot tell you words that rhyme with cat or seat by the age of 4½.
- ✦ Trouble correctly articulating R's and L's as well as M's and N's. They often have



“immature” speech. They may still be saying “wed and gween” instead of “red and green” in 2nd or 3rd grade.

- ✦ Can read a word on one page, but won't recognize it on the next page.
- ✦ Knows phonics, but can't—or won't—sound out an unknown word.
- ✦ Slow, labored, inaccurate reading of single words in isolation (when there is no story line or pictures to provide clues).
- ✦ When they misread, they often say a word that has the same first and last letters, and the same shape, such as house–horse or beach–bench.
- ✦ They may insert or leave out letters, such as could–cold or star–stair.
- ✦ They may say a word that has the same letters, but in a different sequence, such as who–how, lots–lost, saw–was, or girl–grill.
- ✦ When reading aloud, reads in a slow, choppy cadence (not in smooth phrases), and often ignores punctuation.
- ✦ Becomes visibly tired after reading for only a short time.
- ✦ Reading comprehension may be low due to spending so much energy trying to figure out the words. Listening comprehension is usually significantly higher than reading comprehension.
- ✦ Substitutes similar-looking words, even if it changes the meaning of the sentence, such as sunrise for surprise, house for horse, while for white, wanting for walking.
- ✦ When reading a story or a sentence, substitutes a word that means the same thing but doesn't look at all similar, such as trip for journey, fast for speed, or cry for weep.
- ✦ Misreads, omits, or even adds small function words, such as, an, a, from, the, to, were, are, and of.
- ✦ Omits or changes suffixes, saying “need” for “needed”, “talks” for “talking,” or “late” for “lately.”



- ✦ They have difficulty with vowel sounds and often leave them out.
- ✦ Spelling difficulty and difficulty learning and understanding grammar.
- ✦ With enormous effort, they may be able to remember Monday's spelling list long enough to pass Friday's spelling test, but they can't spell those very same words two hours following the test when writing those words in sentences.
- ✦ Copying notes off the board is slow, painful, and tedious. The student may look up and visually “grabs” just one or two letters at a time, repeatedly sub-vocalizes the names of those letters, then stares intensely at their paper when writing those one or two letters. This process is repeated over and over. They may frequently lose their place when copying, misspell when copying, and not always match capitalization or punctuation when copying—even though they can read what was on the board.
- ✦ A disconnect between their oral expression and written expression. This means there is a difference between their ability to tell you something and their ability to write it down.
- ✦ Handwriting difficulty, such as using space poorly on the page; odd spacing between words, may ignore margins, sentences tightly packed into one section of the page instead of being evenly spread out.
- ✦ Do not notice their errors when proofreading. Instead, they will read back what they wanted to say, not what is *actually* on the page.
- ✦ Difficulty sequencing steps in a task and learning any task that has a series of steps which must be completed in a specific order can be difficult. That's because you must memorize the sequence of steps, and often, there is no logic in the sequence. Such difficulty will result in related symptoms including:
  - ◆ Handwriting issues,
  - ◆ Rote memorization, and
  - ◆ Math difficulties.



**The following tasks are usually challenging for people with dyslexia:**

- ▶ Learning to tie shoes.
- ▶ Printing letters.
- ▶ Memorizing facts that are not personally meaningful (i.e. not personally interesting or relevant) is extremely difficult for most dyslexic children and adults.
- ▶ In school, this difficulty with memorizing impersonal facts leads to difficulty learning:
  - ◆ Multiplication tables.
  - ◆ Days of the week or months of the year in order.
  - ◆ Science facts: Water boils at 212 degrees Fahrenheit, the speed of light is 186,000 miles per second, etc.
  - ◆ History facts: Dates, names, and places. Dyslexic students do well in history classes that emphasize why some event happened, and the consequences of that event, rather than rote memorization of dates and names.
  - ◆ Telling time on a clock with hands