



## Dyslexia

The word 'dyslexia' comes from the Greek and means 'difficulty with words'. It is a lifelong, usually genetic, inherited condition and affects around 10% of the population.

Dyslexia is a hidden disability thought to affect around 10% of the population, 4% severely. It is the most common of the SpLDs. Dyslexia is usually hereditary. A student with dyslexia may mix up letters within words and words within sentences while reading. They may also have difficulty with spelling words correctly while writing; letter reversals are common. However Dyslexia is not only about literacy, although weaknesses in literacy are often the most visible sign. Dyslexia affects the way information is processed, stored and retrieved, with problems of memory, speed of processing, time perception, organisation and sequencing. Some may also have difficulty navigating a route, left and right and compass directions.

Dyslexia is a combination of abilities as well as difficulties. It is the disparity between them that is often the give-away clue. The person who, despite certain areas of difficulty, may still be creative, artistic, sporting or orally very able and knowledgeable. However, alongside these abilities, will be a cluster of difficulties - individual for each person.

### Some difficulties associated with Dyslexia

#### I. Written Work.

- Has a poor standard of written work compared with oral ability;
- Has poor handwriting with badly formed letters;
- Has neat handwriting, but writes very slowly indeed;
- Produces badly set out or messily written work, with spellings crossed out several times;
- Spells the same word differently in one piece of work;
- Has difficulty with punctuation and/or grammar;
- Confuses upper and lower case letters;
- Writes a great deal but 'loses the thread';
- Writes very little, but to the point;
- Has difficulty taking notes in lectures;
- Difficulty with organisation of homework;
- Finds tasks difficult to complete on time;
- Appears to know more than can be committed to paper.



## 2. Reading.

- Is hesitant and laboured, especially when reading aloud;
- Omits, repeats or adds extra words;
- Reads at a reasonable rate, but has a low level of comprehension;
- Fails to recognise familiar words;
- Misses a line or repeats the same line twice;
- Loses their place - or uses a finger or marker to keep the place;
- Has difficulty in pin-pointing the main idea in a passage;
- Finds difficulty with dictionaries, directories, encyclopaedias.

## 3. Numeracy.

- Finds difficulty remembering tables and/or basic number sets;
- Finds sequencing problematic;
- Confuses signs such as  $\times$  for  $+$ ;
- Can think at a high level in mathematics, but needs a calculator for simple calculations;
- Misreads questions that include words;
- Finds mental arithmetic at speed very difficult;
- Finds memorising formulae difficult.

## 4. Other areas.

- Confuses direction - left/right;
- Has difficulty in learning foreign languages;
- Has indeterminate hand preference;
- Has difficulty in finding the name for an object;
- Has clear processing problems at speed;
- Misunderstands complicated questions;
- Finds holding a list of instructions in memory difficult, although can perform all tasks when told individually.

## 5. Behaviour.

- Is disorganised or forgetful e.g. over sports equipment, lessons, homework, appointments;



- Is immature and/or clumsy;
- Has difficulty relating to others: is unable to 'read' body language;
- Is often in the wrong place at the wrong time;
- Is excessively tired, due to the amount of concentration and effort required.

If you see a cluster of difficulties together with abilities in specific areas, the young person may be dyslexic.

## Other sources of information

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

<http://dyslexia-awareness.com/>

South Cumbria Dyslexia Association – ScuDA (click link below)

<http://www.soul-trade.com/scuda/SCuDA/Home.html>