

# Frequently Asked Questions About Dyslexia

## **What is dyslexia?**

Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability. Dyslexia refers to a cluster of symptoms, which result in people having difficulties with specific language skills, particularly reading. Students with dyslexia usually experience difficulties with other language skills such as spelling, writing, and pronouncing words. Dyslexia affects individuals throughout their lives; however, its impact can change at different stages in a person's life. It is referred to as a learning disability because dyslexia can make it very difficult for a student to succeed academically in the typical instructional environment, and in its more severe forms, will qualify a student for special education, special accommodations, or extra support services.

## **What causes dyslexia?**

The exact causes of dyslexia are still not completely clear, but anatomical and brain imagery studies show differences in the way the brain of a dyslexic person develops and functions. Moreover, most people with dyslexia have been found to have problems with identifying the separate speech sounds within a word and/or learning how letters represent those sounds, a key factor in their reading difficulties. Dyslexia is not due to either lack of intelligence or desire to learn; with appropriate teaching methods, dyslexics can learn successfully.

## **What are the effects of dyslexia?**

The impact that dyslexia has is different for each person and depends on the severity of the condition and the effectiveness of instruction or remediation. The core difficulty is with word recognition and reading fluency, spelling, and writing. Some dyslexics manage to learn early reading and spelling tasks, especially with excellent instruction, but later experience their most debilitating problems when more complex language skills are required, such as grammar, understanding textbook material, and writing essays.

People with dyslexia can also have problems with spoken language, even after they have been exposed to good language models in their homes and good language instruction in school. They may find it difficult to express themselves clearly, or to fully comprehend what others mean when they speak. Such language problems are often difficult to recognize, but they can lead to major problems in school, in the workplace, and in relating to other people. The effects of dyslexia reach well beyond the classroom.

Dyslexia can also affect a person's self-image. Students with dyslexia often end up feeling "dumb" and less capable than they actually are. After experiencing a great deal of stress due to academic problems, a student may become discouraged about continuing in school.

Click any of these subjects for more information on a specific topic:

- [\*What is dyslexia? \(formal definition\)\*](#)
- [\*Common signs of dyslexia\*](#)
- [\*Are there other learning disabilities besides dyslexia?\*](#)
- [\*Are Attention Deficit Disorder \(ADD\) and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder \(ADHD\) learning disabilities?\*](#)
- [\*How common are language-based learning disabilities?\*](#)
- [\*Can individuals who are dyslexic learn to read?\*](#)
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