

# Dyslexia characteristics

## 1. Reading

- Very slow in acquiring reading skills. Reading is slow and awkward
- Mixing up similar linked items, eg: letters such as "b" and "d"; words such as "was" and "saw";
- Mixing directions such as "left" and "right";
- Problems with linear sequences. Anything which runs in a linear sequence can cause problems, eg: the alphabet; times tables; sentences; lists of instructions; etc
- Trouble reading unfamiliar words, often making wild guesses because he cannot sound out the word.
- Doesn't seem to have a strategy for reading new words
- Avoids reading out loud

## 2. Speaking

- Searches for a specific word and ends up using vague language such as "stuff" or "thing" a lot, without name the object
- Pauses, hesitates, and/or uses lots of "umm's" when speaking
- Confuses words that sound alike, such as saying "tornado" for "volcano," substituting "lotion" for "ocean."
- Mispronunciation of long, unfamiliar, or complicated words
- Seems to need extra time to respond to questions.

## 3. School and Life

- Trouble with remembering dates, names, telephone numbers, random lists.
- Has trouble finishing tests on time
- Extreme difficulty learning a foreign language
- Messy handwriting
- Low self-esteem that may not be immediately visible

**4. Associated problems:** Some people with dyslexia also have other problems not directly connected to reading or writing, such as:

- difficulties with numbers (dyscalculia)
- poor short-term memory
- problems concentrating and a short attention span, including [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder \(ADHD\)](#)
- poor organisation and time-management

- physical coordination problems ([developmental coordination disorder](#), also called DCD or dyspraxia)

## 5. Strengths

- Excellent thinking skills: conceptualization, reasoning, imagination, abstraction
- Learning that is accomplished best through meaning rather than rote memorization
- Ability to get the "big picture"
- A high level of understanding of what is read *to* him
- The ability to read and to understand at a high level overlearned (that is, highly practiced) words in a special area of interest; for example, if his hobby is restoring cars, he may be able to read auto mechanic magazines
- Improvement as an area of interest becomes more specialized and focused, when he develops a miniature vocabulary that he can read
- A surprisingly sophisticated listening vocabulary
- Excellence in areas not dependent on reading, such as maths, computers, and visual arts, or excellence in more conceptual (versus factoid-driven) subjects such as philosophy, biology, social studies, neuroscience, and creative writing