

## Find out more about dyslexia

What is dyslexia?

**“Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word **reading** and **spelling**.”**

*(Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties, an independent report from Sir Jim Rose to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, 2009).*

But what does that mean?

There are other definitions of dyslexia that help us to understand what it is. Here are two others taken from [\*A Framework for Understanding Dyslexia\*](#):

*“an unexpected or surprising difficulty in learning to read, write and spell”*

*“a specific difficulty, typically characterised by an unusual balance of skills”*

Are there any more definitions of dyslexia?

There have been many definitions, but it is important to remember that there are many **characteristics** of dyslexia and no two people will have the same profile.

**However** people with dyslexia will have many strengths too.

You mentioned 'characteristics' of dyslexia – what are they?

**Characteristic features of dyslexia:**

- difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed;
- present across the range of intellectual abilities; and
- best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, with no clear cut-off points.

**Other factors can also include:**

- co-occurring difficulties which may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation (but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia); and
- the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties despite how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention.

*(Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties, Sir Jim Rose, 2009).*

So, how do these dyslexic characteristics affect learning?

It's not just about reading, writing and maths – although some or all of these skills may be affected. There are sometimes barriers with:

- organising work and other aspects of life;
- poor sense of the passage of time and mixing up appointments;
- directional confusion, getting lost easily;
- doing more than one thing at once – automaticity;
- carrying out instructions, copying and remembering what has just been said;
- poor motor control;
- confusion between letters and words;
- mispronunciation;
- visual distortions making reading difficult; and
- sequencing.

***Dyslexia is a recognised learning disability.***

How is dyslexia a recognised learning disability?

According to the **Equality Act 2010**, someone has a disability if:

- they have a physical (e.g. sensory) or mental impairment (e.g. learning difficulty, such as dyslexia and others); and
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal, day-to-day activities.

Does the Act tell us what we have to do to help learners?

The Equality Act 2010 builds on, clarifies and subsumes **previous disability discrimination legislation**. This most recent Act is very clear that dyslexia is a disability and that 'reasonable adjustments' should be made to accommodate the needs of dyslexic learners / workers.

What does that mean?

Most people agree that structured, multisensory teaching and learning works best for learners with dyslexia. You can find out more about this on the **Excellence Gateway** ([link here](#)) and do some training to help develop your skills and knowledge.

I want to learn more about dyslexia.  
What is there on the Excellence Gateway and how do I find it?

There are excellent online materials on dyslexia to be found on the Excellence Gateway which include;

- The Dyslexia Starter Kit;
- A Framework for Understanding Dyslexia;
- A one-day awareness raising training,
- Online CPD materials: Supporting Dyslexic Learners in Different Contexts,
- Video snapshots;
- Materials for Embedded Learning: Dyslexia Support Pack;
- Diagnostic assessment tools

Have a look at them for information, resources, assessment, guidance and CPD training.

There's certainly plenty of material,  
but where should I start?

If you are a manager or a practitioner and don't have much experience of dyslexia, why not try the Dyslexia Starter Kit?

If you want to improve and develop your skills, try the CPD training and the video snapshots which show effective practice.

Other documents offer guidance, resources and links to further information about dyslexia.

Have a go at the quiz to challenge some preconceptions about dyslexia – how much do you know already?

## Mythbusters – Fact or Fiction?

Fact or Fiction?	True or False
Dyslexia is a middle class disease –it's not a real learning disability.	True / False
10% of the population is affected by dyslexia and about 4% are significantly affected.	True / False
About 4 males to 1 female are affected by dyslexia.	True / False
Dyslexia is a lifelong condition.	True / False
Dyslexia is an illness.	True / False
If you have dyslexia you can't succeed in life.	True / False
Dyslexia only occurs in very intelligent people.	True / False
Dyslexia only affects English and maths	True / False
All people with dyslexia have the same difficulties.	True / False
Dyslexia can create difficulties with maths.	True / False
Dyslexia can affect self esteem and confidence.	True / False

## Mythbusters – Fact or Fiction?

Fact or Fiction?	True or False
Dyslexia is a middle class disease –it’s not a real learning disability.	<p>True / False</p> <p><b>The Equality Act 2010 recognises dyslexia as a disability which significantly affects how people function and access learning, training and work.</b></p>
10% of the population is affected by dyslexia and about 4% are significantly affected.	<p>True / False</p> <p><b>That means that in every class or group of 30 there may be 3 people with dyslexia!</b></p>
About 4 males to 1 female are affected by dyslexia.	<p>True / False</p> <p><b>Well, the jury is still out, but recent research suggests that there may be the same number of males and females affected by dyslexia.</b></p>
Dyslexia is a lifelong condition.	<p>True / False</p> <p><b>Most people are born with dyslexia although some can acquire it through injury.</b></p>
Dyslexia is an illness.	<p>True / False</p> <p><b>It is a learning disability but not an illness – and it is not ‘curable’.</b></p>
If you have dyslexia you can’t succeed in life	<p>True / False</p> <p><b>There are lots of examples of people who have succeeded in all walks of life – look at the <a href="#">BDA website</a>.</b></p>
Dyslexia only occurs in very intelligent people.	<p>True / False</p> <p><b>Dyslexia can occur right across the ability range.</b></p>
Dyslexia only affects English and maths.	<p>True / False</p>

	<b>Dyslexia can have an impact on every aspect of life – difficulties with areas like organisation, memory, speed of processing and motor skills can create many barriers.</b>
All people with dyslexia have the same difficulties.	<b>True / False</b>  <b>No two people are exactly the same and the impact of dyslexia on each individual is different.</b>
Dyslexia can create difficulties with maths.	<b>True / False</b>  <b>Dyslexic difficulties with sequencing, short-term and working memory and speed of information processing can affect learning in maths.</b>
Dyslexia can affect self esteem and confidence.	<b>True / False</b>  <b>Some people with dyslexia have experienced many barriers to learning and achievement as well as in their working and personal lives.</b>