

Dyslexia Characteristics

Provided by:





Dyslexia Characteristics Guide

Please note that this guide is not exhaustive. A person may have dyslexia without displaying all of the characteristics listed, or may exhibit traits that aren't included here.

This resource is provided as a courtesy and should not be considered legal advice.

My hope is that it serves as a helpful starting point in identifying where you may want to seek further support.

Wishing you all the best,

Susan Clabaugh

Certified Dyslexia and OG Practitioner
CALP/ALTA, MAT, (A/OGA in process)



Dyslexia Definition

"Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary problems may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge."

International Dyslexia Association



Dyslexia Characteristics by grade

Pre-K - Kindergarten

- delayed language
- trouble learning common nursery rhymes
- mispronunciation of words/baby talk
- difficulty learning and remembering names of letters
- failure to know letters of his/her own name

Kindergarten - 1st grade

- unable to understand that words come apart.
- inability to associate letters with sounds
- reading errors that have no connection to the sounds of letters, ex. reading "big" as "goat"
- cannot read or sound out simple words - mat, hop etc.
- a history of reading problems in parents or siblings

2nd - 4th Grade

- Slow and labored reading
- misreads same words repeatedly
- cannot read nonsense words
- trouble reading and spelling small, easy words (is, and etc.)
- comprehension is better than decoding
- listening comprehension is better than reading comprehension
- weak spelling
- avoidance of writing

5th grade and up

- poor fluency (slow, choppy reading)
- many errors when reading
- cannot read nonsense words
- cannot read longer words (2 syllables or more)
- still exhibits reversal of letters in writing (b for d, etc.)
- avoids reading
- weak spelling
- brief writing with poor spelling
- vocabulary can lag behind
- struggles with foreign language study.



Dyslexia Characteristics in general

- difficulty pronouncing words
- difficulty acquiring vocabulary or using age appropriate grammar
- difficulty following directions
- confusion with before/after, right/left, and so on
- difficulty learning the alphabet, nursery rhymes, or songs
- difficulty understanding concepts and relationships
- difficulty with word retrieval or naming problems
- difficulty learning to read
- difficulty identifying or generating rhyming words, or counting syllables in words (phonological awareness)
- difficulty with hearing and manipulating sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
- difficulty distinguishing different sounds in words (phonological processing)
- difficulty in learning the sounds of letters (phonics)
- difficulty remembering names and shapes of letters, or naming letters rapidly
- transposing the order of letters when reading or spelling
- misreading or omitting common short words
- "stumbles" through longer words
- poor reading comprehension during oral or silent reading, often because words are not accurately read
- slow, laborious oral reading
- difficulty putting ideas on paper
- many spelling mistakes
- may do well on weekly spelling tests, but may have spelling mistakes in daily work
- difficulty proofreading
- difficulty naming colors, objects, and letters rapidly, in a sequence (RAN: Rapid Automatized Naming)
- weak memory for lists, directions, or facts
- needs to see or hear concepts many times to learn them
- distracted by visual or auditory stimuli
- downward trend in achievement test scores or school performance
- inconsistent school work
- teacher says, "If only she would try harder," or "He's lazy."
- relatives may have similar problems



Who am I?

My name is Susan, and I am a Certified Dyslexia Practitioner and Orton-Gillingham-trained educator with over 20 years of experience in the field of education. I specialize in supporting students with dyslexia and other language-based learning differences through structured literacy, multisensory instruction, and personalized intervention. I am also a consultant, curriculum designer, lifelong learner, and dedicated to helping each child break the reading code.

My journey in education began more than two decades ago, driven by a passion to help students unlock their full potential and become confident, capable, and contributing members of society.

Professional Background

I am a Certified Academic Language Practitioner (CALP) through the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) and am currently completing my Associate Level certification with the Orton Gillingham Academy (A/OGA). Additionally, I have received training through the Institute for Multisensory Education (IMSE). I am a Missouri state-certified educator with a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Education and certification in Early Childhood Education. Over the course of my career, I have served as a public elementary school teacher, preschool educator, and instructor at a private learning center. I now operate my own private practice, providing specialized literacy intervention and academic support to students and families.

Beyond My Private Practice

Outside of my private practice, I enjoy reading, staying active in my local church, and volunteering through various ministries. I value the opportunity to serve others and build meaningful connections beyond my work with students. At home, I share life with my beloved (and grumpy) Persian cat, Mia, who adds a touch of humor to my days.

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Still need guidance?

I'm passionate about having meaningful conversations with parents—whether you're navigating a new diagnosis, exploring the possibility of one, looking for the right tutor, or trying to make sense of the school system. Whatever stage you're in, I'm here to help guide you through it.

And the best part? We can connect from the comfort of your home or office via Zoom. Let's set up a time to talk soon!

Wishing you all the best on your journey,

Susan Clabaugh

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[Ready to book a
consultation?](#)

[Let's get it scheduled!](#)

