

Dyslexia: 37 common characteristics

Most dyslexics will exhibit about 10 of the following traits and behaviours. These characteristics can vary from day-to-day or minute-to minute. The most consistent thing about dyslexics is their inconsistency.

General:

- Appears bright, highly intelligent, and articulate but unable to read, write or spell at appropriate level.
- Labelled lazy, dumb, careless, immature, 'not trying hard enough', or 'behaviour problem'.
- Isn't 'behind enough' or 'bad enough' to be helped in school setting.
- High in IQ, yet may not test well academically; tests well orally, but not in writing.
- Feels 'stupid'; has poor self-esteem; hides or covers up weaknesses with ingenious compensatory strategies; easily frustrated and emotional about school, reading or testing.
- Talented in art, drama, music, sports, mechanics, story-telling, sales, business, designing, building or engineering.
- Seems to 'zone out' or daydream a lot; gets lost easily or loses track of time.
- Difficulty sustaining attention; seems 'hyper' or 'daydreamer'.
- Learns best through hands-on experience, demonstrations, experimentation, observation, and visual aids.

Vision, reading and spelling:

- Complains of dizziness, headaches, or stomach-aches while reading.
- Confused by letters, numbers, words, sequences, or verbal explanations.
- Reading or writing shows repetitions, additions, transpositions, omissions, substitutions, and reversals in letters, numbers and/or words.
- Complains of feeling or seeing non-existent movement while reading, writing, or copying.
- Seems to have difficulty with vision, yet eye exams don't reveal a problem.
- Extremely keen sighted and observant, or lacks depth perception and peripheral vision.
- Reads and rereads with little comprehension.
- Spells phonetically and inconsistently.

Hearing and speech:

- Has extended hearing; hears things not said or apparent to others; easily distracted by sounds.
- Difficulty putting thoughts into words; speaks in halting phrases; leaves sentences incomplete; stutters under stress; mispronounces long words, or transposes phrases, words, and syllables when speaking.

Writing and motor skills:

- Trouble with writing or copying; pencil grip is unusual; handwriting varies or is illegible.
- Clumsy, uncoordinated, poor at ball or team sports; difficulties with fine and/or gross motor skills and tasks; prone to motion sickness.
- Can be ambidextrous, and often confuses left/right, over/under.

Maths and time management:

- Has difficulty telling time, managing time, learning sequenced information or tasks, or being on time.
- Mental maths dependent on finger counting and other tricks; know answers but can't do it on paper.
- Can count, but has difficulty counting objects and dealing with money.
- Can do arithmetic, but fails word problems; cannot grasp algebra or higher maths.

Memory and cognition:

- Excellent long-term memory for experiences, locations and faces.
- Poor memory for sequences, information and facts not experienced.
- Thinks primarily with images and feeling, not sounds of words; little internal dialogue.

Behaviour, health, development and personality:

- Extremely disorderly or compulsively orderly.
- Can be class clown, trouble-maker, or too quiet.
- Unusually early or late developmental stages (talking, crawling, walking, tying shoelaces).
- Prone to ear infections; sensitive to foods, additives, and chemical products.
- Can be an extra deep or light sleeper; bedwetting beyond appropriate age.
- Unusually high or low tolerance for pain.
- Strong sense of justice; emotionally sensitive; strives for perfection.
- Mistakes and symptoms increase dramatically with confusion, time pressure, emotional stress or poor health.

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