

12 Definitions of Dyslexia

Beyond having troubles reading, what constitutes Dyslexia? Many differing opinions are below.

1. DSM V – Specific Learning Disorder

<http://www.dsm5.org/Documents/Specific%20Learning%20Disorder%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

“Because of the changes in DSM-5, clinicians will be able to make this diagnosis by identifying whether patients are unable to perform academically at a level appropriate to their intelligence and age. After a diagnosis, clinicians can provide greater detail into the type of deficit(s) that an individual has through the designated specifiers. Just as in DSM-IV, dyslexia will be included in the descriptive text of specific learning disorder. The DSM-5 Neurodevelopmental Work Group concluded that the many definitions of dyslexia and dysgraphia meant those terms would not be useful as disorder names or in the diagnostic criteria. “

DSM is the manual used by clinicians and researchers to diagnose and classify mental disorders. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) published the DSM-5 in 2013, culminating a 14-year revision process.

In a document describing the changes from the DSM-IV,

<http://www.dsm5.org/Documents/changes%20from%20dsm-iv-tr%20to%20dsm-5.pdf>

“Specific learning disorder combines the DSM-IV diagnosis of reading disorder, mathematics disorder, disorder of written expression, and learning disorder not otherwise specified. Because learning deficits in the areas of reading, written expression, and mathematics commonly occur together, coded specifiers for the deficit types in each area are included. The text acknowledges that specific types of reading deficits are described internationally in various ways as dyslexia and specific types of mathematics deficits as dyscalculia.”

2. DSM-IV

Dyslexia (Reading Disorder)

According to the American Psychiatric Association, the diagnostic criteria for Reading Disorder (Dyslexia) are as follows:

- Reading achievement, as measured by individually administered standardized tests of reading accuracy or comprehension, is substantially below that expected given the person's chronological age, measured intelligence, and age-appropriate education.
- The disturbance in Criterion A significantly interferes with academic achievement or activities of daily living that require reading skills.

- If a sensory deficit is present, the reading difficulties are in excess of those usually associated with it (the specific sensory deficit).

There are three accepted types of dyslexia: language disorders, articulatory and graphomotor dyscoordination, and visuospatial perceptual. Sometimes, dyslexia can be acquired in adults, who read well before clinical damage to the nervous system (perhaps they had a stroke), but is usually apparent in patients by the first or second grade.

3. International Dyslexia Association:

Q: What Is Dyslexia?

A: Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological 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 consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

Adopted by the IDA Board of Directors, Nov. 12, 2002. This Definition is also used by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

Studies show that individuals with dyslexia process information in a different area of the brain than do non-dyslexics.

Many people who are dyslexic are of average to above average intelligence.

4. Dr. Abraham Schmitt, Doctor of Social Work

Brilliant Idiot, An Autobiography of a Dyslexic

Dr. Schmitt struggled all of his life thinking he was an idiot. He had to work very hard, but eventually got through his schooling, and got a doctorate in Social Work. In 1982 he was diagnosed with Dyslexia, and created a chart of 72 symptoms, taken from various lists about Dyslexia from the time, that can characterize a Dyslexic, which he lists in the back of his book. But in the following paragraphs, he describes how he processed information:

“The word “dyslexia” literally means “impaired words.” The prefix “dys” indicates faulty or impaired, and the Greek root word “lexis” refers to speech, words, or vocabulary – this summarizes well my most obvious handicaps.

“Letter reversals, often a diagnostic indicator of dyslexia, plague me. As I write, reversals appear almost one per sentence. It is as though that part of my brain controlling letter order and spelling stalls momentarily and short-circuits, and during that instant I write “whis” instead of “wish.” Sometimes I lose the middle of a word. I mean to write “no one,” but a blip in my brain occurs at that moment and “ne” appears on my paper. It is as if my mind sees the ending of the second word before finishing the first and omits the letters in between.

“I easily confuse “was” and “saw”. I know the difference between the two; perhaps the fact that I use them so often has worn out that particular brain connection.”

5. Merriam-Webster

dys·lex·ia

noun \dis-'lek-sē-ə\

medical : a condition in the brain that makes it hard for a person to read, write, and spell

Full Definition of DYSLEXIA

: a variable often familial learning disability involving difficulties in acquiring and processing language that is typically manifested by a lack of proficiency in reading, spelling, and writing

6. Wikipedia

Dyslexia, or developmental reading disorder, is characterized by difficulty with learning to read fluently and with accurate comprehension despite normal or above-average intelligence. This includes difficulty with phonological awareness, phonological decoding, processing speed, orthographic coding, auditory short-term memory, language skills/verbal comprehension, and/or rapid naming.

7. Mayo Clinic Staff

Dyslexia is a learning disorder characterized by difficulty reading. Also called specific reading disability, dyslexia is a common learning disability in children. Dyslexia occurs in children with normal vision and intelligence. Sometimes, dyslexia goes undiagnosed for years and isn't recognized until adulthood.

8. LDA – Learning Disabilities Association of America

Affects reading and related language-based processing skills.

The severity of this specific learning disability can differ in each individual but can affect reading fluency, decoding, reading comprehension, recall, writing, spelling, and sometimes speech and can exist along with other related disorders. Dyslexia is sometimes referred to as a Language-Based Learning Disability.

Signs and Symptoms

- Reads slowly and painfully
- Experiences decoding errors, especially with the order of letters
- Shows wide disparity between listening comprehension and reading comprehension of some text
- Has trouble with spelling
- May have difficulty with handwriting
- Exhibits difficulty recalling known words
- Has difficulty with written language
- May experience difficulty with math computations
- Decoding real words is better than nonsense words
- Substitutes one small sight word for another: a, I, he, the, there, was

9. Current Bill in Congress

<http://dyslexia.yale.edu/cassidy-house-dyslexia-resolution-january-10-2014.pdf>

Whereas, defined as an unexpected difficulty in reading in an individual who has the intelligence to be a much better reader, dyslexia reflects a difficulty in getting to the individual sounds of spoken language which typically impacts speaking, reading, spelling, and often, learning a second language.

10. Orton Dyslexia Society Research Committee (1992)

<http://www.helpingparents.net/Dyslexia.pdf>

Dyslexia is one of several distinct learning disabilities. It is a specific language-based disorder of constitutional origin characterized by difficulties in single word decoding, usually reflecting insufficient phonological processing abilities. These difficulties in single word decoding are often unexpected in relation to age and other cognitive and academic abilities; they are not the result of generalized developmental disability or sensory impairment. Dyslexia is manifest by variable difficulty with different forms of language, often including, in addition to problems reading, a conspicuous problem with acquiring proficiency in writing and spelling.

11. Wall Street Journal Article:

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887324020504578396421382825196>

As many as one in five Americans has some degree of dyslexia, according to Yale research, although only about 5% of children have been formally diagnosed. And it clearly runs in families; six gene variations have been linked to the condition to date. Dyslexia was long thought to be a vision-related problem, but there's a growing consensus that dyslexics instead have difficulty associating letters with spoken sounds and blending them together fluidly to make words. Neuroimaging studies can even pinpoint what goes awry.

Reading typically involves three distinct areas of the brain, all on the left side. The parieto-temporal region, just behind the ear, and the inferior frontal gyrus, at the front, slowly analyze words. The occipital-temporal area farther back recognizes the whole word instantly. Scientists think a word's meaning, pronunciation and spelling are stored there too.

Imaging studies show that the best readers have the most brain activity in the rear, instant-word-forming area when they read. Dyslexics have much less activity there and more in the two slower areas.

12. Optometric Assessment and Management of Dyslexia

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http://www.optometrists.org/therapists_teachers/dyslexia_dyslexic_vision.html

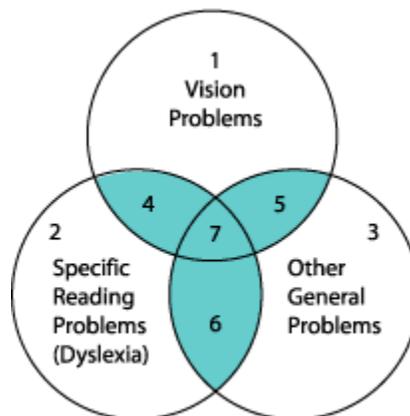


Figure 1

Vision problems and dyslexia

A useful model has been put forward in an attempt to relate vision problems, dyslexia and

other general problems (Figure 1). A general reading problem due mainly to vision problems, such as high, uncorrected hyperopic astigmatism would fall into circle 1. An individual with dyslexia and a concurrent vision problem would fall into area 4. From the diagram it can be seen that optometric evaluation would be useful for those people who fall into circle I and in particular areas indicated by and in particular areas indicated in Figure 1 by 4, 5 and 7.

Question: Do you now know exactly what Dyslexia is? What definition do you prefer?