



Wiltshire Dyslexia Association

MARCH 2022



News and comment

Ministers' student finance eligibility change will disproportionately affect those with dyslexia

The Government is due to release a response surrounding the 2018 [Augar Review](#), which looked at post-18 education and funding in England.

A key part of the report will detail how students who do not receive a grade 4 or above in GCSE English and Maths will not be eligible for government-backed loans for tuition or maintenance when applying for higher education. This will disproportionately affect those living with a learning difference such as dyslexia or dyscalculia when choosing the next steps after school.

Currently, around 71% of students receive a grade 4 or above in GCSE English and Maths with this falling to 52% for those from a disadvantaged background. However, for those in secondary school learning with dyslexia, only 35% of students receive grades between 4-9. We also expect this to affect those who choose to gain a higher education qualification as mature students who gain access to courses via alternative qualifications.

"It is very important due to the cost of going to university that the courses are high quality and equip students with skills to enter employment."

"Creating a blanket rule with set grades required to enter university discriminates against those with dyslexia and dyscalculia. It excludes the strengths they might demonstrate through other forms of assessment."

Gillian Ashley. CEO British Dyslexia Association

If you believe the change in Student Finance England funding will affect you, you can reach out to our helpline [here](#).



Student loan ban will hit dyslexic people hard

Poet and Dragon's Den entrepreneur Theo Paphitis join outcry against linking GCSE results to loan eligibility.

Prominent figures who have dyslexia have accused ministers of putting up more barriers for those with the condition, after proposals that would see anyone failing GCSE maths and English barred from securing higher education loans in England.

Dyslexia charities and advocates are concerned that the measure could severely impact on the life chances of students with the condition:

[Student loan ban will hit dyslexic people hard, says Benjamin Zephaniah | Dyslexia | The Guardian](#)



The importance of early screening for dyslexia in primary schools

Darren Clark was invited to speak with [Matt Hancock](#) to discuss the latest dyslexia bill that has been put to parliament where Matt has introduced a bill for universal dyslexia screening of primary school children:

[Matt Hancock - Dyslexia Screening Bill 2021-22 contributions \(parallelparliament.co.uk\)](#)

"Early identification and intervention can be life changing for those with dyslexia and could significantly increase their life opportunities." (Fe News)

The interview is available at: [Matt Hancock MP's Dyslexia Screening Bill - YouTube](#)

This could be a game a changer for dyslexia in education if we can all come together to support this bill.

Know a teacher going above and beyond, working hard to support dyslexic students?

Nominate them for

"Teacher of the Year"

Regional winners get free student programs, cash prizes for themselves, and more!

Their hard work will inspire and be celebrated around the world!

Just Teach Me



It's time for the 2022 teacher of the year awards!

Do you know a dyslexia aware teacher?

A teacher who has gone above and beyond supporting diverse learners?

Nominate your teacher by emailing news@nessy.com or sending us a direct message. Tell us how they are supporting dyslexic students and diverse learners.

Finalists and winners win great prizes. Nominate a teacher you know today.

Deadline for nominations is the 24th March!



A new study by UCL and York University found grammar lessons don't help children to write creatively. Photograph: B Nordholm/IBL/Rex Features

[Fronted adverbials be damned. Let's teach the young what really matters | Cathy Rentzenbrink | The Guardian](#)

Do you know what a fronted adverbial is? *Joyfully*, the woman read the *report* from University College London and York University, which says that grammar lessons don't help children write stories. There you go. It's where the adverbial phrase is at the front of the sentence, before the verb. Do you feel better for knowing that? More inclined to write a story? Nor do our children, according to the report.

None of which comes as a surprise to me. I was introduced to fronted adverbials in 2020, when I was home schooling my son, Matt. It wasn't an easy time, I'm sure you'll remember, and as I reeled from trying to navigate a changed world, I was stunned by how much of the actual difficulty in my comparatively fortunate daily life came from the agony of trying to help Matt with his grammar lessons.

I tried to have a good attitude about it. I wasn't taught grammar at school and this never prevented me from expressing myself and earning my living as a writer, but maybe I could enjoy learning something new. Anyway, how hard could it be?

Dear reader, it was awful. Now, admittedly Matt is dyslexic, hypermobile and struggles to sit still, which adds complexity to his learning, but I am none of those things and it made me want to cry too. Surely this can't be right, I thought. Surely if a highly literate writer can't understand or see the point in the lesson then there must be something wrong in inflicting this on all 10-year-olds? Because it wasn't just difficult to grasp, most of it would lead to bad writing.

I asked around parents of other children and found Matt and I were far from alone in our anguish. The very best that could be said about it was that it was unhelpful. A writer friend said she'd had to stop offering her daughter any editorial suggestions because she was supposed to be writing clumsy, ugly sentences to demonstrate her knowledge.

"Do you know what Kafkaesque means?" I asked Matt.

We ended up in tears so often that I pulled the plug. It felt grim and wrong to try to force my child to do something I knew was pointless, so I took an executive decision that we would read *Animal Farm* instead. My husband, more of a rule follower, was uneasy at me going off-piste. “He’s never going to be able to do it,” I said. “And it’s making us both anxious and distressed. And if the world does end soon I’m going to be full of rage that I spent my last days on joy-squeezing activities introduced by [Michael Gove](#).”

The saddest thing for me about the education system, as I have witnessed it, is that it seems almost intentionally calculated to create anxious children, parents and teachers. Matt was only four the first time I was told he was “behind the benchmark”, which I still think is an obscene and revolting way to describe any child, and this emphasis on his shortcomings and failures has continued. The irony is that none of it will really matter in the future. He won’t need to understand grammar or have neat handwriting or even be able to spell to do most jobs. I just have to hope that we have sufficiently mitigated the damage over the years from him constantly feeling stupid for not being able to do things that are beyond his capabilities. Still, he knows what Kafkaesque means, which is the word I most often reach for to describe the education system.

None of this is the fault of the teachers, who are often in a situation of having to implement actions that they know don’t serve the children in their care. And the parents I feel most sorry for are those who aren’t confident writers, who don’t work out that the system is at fault, who are vulnerable to thinking that they and their child are in the wrong, that if only they work harder or concentrate better, then everything will be OK.

It’s a big, complex question, the matter of how we educate our children, and I imagine it feels overwhelming from the inside. I am not an expert. I’m just a parent and a lover of words and stories who feels deeply sad at all the unnecessary stress and missed opportunities and the avalanche of [mental health problems in children](#) and their parents and teachers. The bold thing would be to take a blank sheet of paper and start again. Could we not do that? Could we not ask how we want to educate our children, all of them, with creativity and joy? Failing that, we could undo anything that [Gove had anything to do with](#). Failing that, we could just stop teaching about fronted adverbials.

I promise, dear reader, that even if your child ends up making their living through words, they will never need to know what one is.

Cathy Rentzenbrink is the author of *Write It All Down: How to Put Your Life on the Page*



[Petition to make SEND training mandatory for all teachers gains traction \(twinkl.co.uk\)](#)

An online petition has been started calling for all teachers in England to undergo mandatory training in SEND. This Digest explores why this is and where SEND currently fits into the training and induction process of trainees and ECTs.

A [petition](#) for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) training to be mandatory for all teachers has been gaining momentum online. It calls for the government to 'commit to making knowledge of SEND essential for all teaching staff', stating that this should be 'reflected' in the 'ITT CCF, the ECF and all NPQs'.

The petition was started on 8 February 2022 and, at the time of publishing this article, has 5318 signatures.

Why has the petition been started now?

The petition references upcoming governmental plans in the world of education: the Institute of Teaching and the new publication of the SEND Review. It states that the government needs to commit to SEND training before these developments are launched.

The [Institute of Teaching](#) was announced in 2021, and will be launched in September 2022. It will provide teachers and school leaders with 'prestigious training and development throughout their career', becoming England's 'flagship teacher training provider'.

The SEND Review, a review of the services offered to young people with special educational needs and disabilities, will be published in the first quarter of this year. Will Quince, Children and Families Minister, stated this publication timeline in an [open letter](#) in November, after the review had been repeatedly delayed.

Where does SEND training currently fit into teacher training?

The petition has called for SEND training to be included in the Initial Teacher Training [Core Content Framework](#) - a Department for Education (DfE) [document](#) that details the knowledge and skills trainee teachers must learn and practise during their training.

The Core Content Framework (CCF) provides all initial teacher training (ITT) providers with guidance on what their courses must cover. The CCF does refer to special educational needs and disabilities, stating that it is 'deliberately designed to emphasise the importance of high-quality teaching, which is particularly important for disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs'. However, the framework then continues to state that it 'deliberately does not detail approaches specific to particular additional needs... while also providing opportunity for providers to tailor their curricula to the needs of their trainees'.

In this regard, it is up to the individual ITT providers to determine the amount of SEND training their trainee teachers receive, as well as the focus of any training given.

The Core Content Framework refers again to SEND in Section 5 'Adaptive Teaching'. The DfE document states that trainee teachers must learn that,

Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities are likely to require additional or adapted support; working closely with colleagues, families and pupils to understand barriers and identify effective strategies is essential.

Furthermore, the CCF continues that trainee teachers must learn how to 'develop an understanding of different pupil needs' by:

Receiving clear, consistent and effective mentoring in supporting pupils with a range of additional needs, including how to use the SEND Code of Practice, which provides additional guidance on supporting pupils with SEND effectively.

There is no explanation in the document of what this mentoring or training looks like.

Where does SEND training currently fit into early career teachers' inductions?

As part of the government's plan to ensure new teachers receive high-quality training and support for the first three years of their teaching career, the two-year induction period for early career teachers (ECTs) is also determined by a framework [document](#) produced by the DfE. The [Early Career Framework](#) provides guidance on what ECTs should learn and experience during the first years of their career.

Like, the CCF, the ECF refers to SEND in Section 5: 'Adaptive Teaching', stating that all ECTs should learn how to 'develop an understanding of different pupil needs' by:

Using the SEND Code of Practice, which provides additional guidance on supporting pupils with SEND effectively.

Again, what this looks like in practice is determined by the ECT's school, not the Department for Education.

What will happen next?

The petition, like all parliament petitions, will stay open for six months, closing on 8 August 2022.

Parliament petitions require a certain number of signatures before they will be responded to.

- If the petition hits 10,000 signatures, the government will respond
- If the petition hits 100,000 signatures, the petition will be 'considered for debate in Parliament'.

Although the SEND training you will receive as part of your training or ECT induction will vary depending on your provider or school, it is referenced in both the CCF and ECF, so should be covered in some format. If you have yet to have received this training, speak to your course tutor or ECT mentor and find out when it will be. Meeting the needs of all young people is a core aspect of your teaching practice, and is, therefore, something you should be supported with.

If you need help supporting young people with special educational needs and disabilities, speak to your mentor, colleagues and the school's [SENCo](#).

What SEND training have you received on your teacher training course or ECT induction so far? Let me know on social media [@SophieDigest](#)

Sophie Hardy: Sophie Hardy is a content writer for Twinkl Digest, Twinkl's new education update service. Sophie writes for trainee teachers. Follow her on Twitter [@SophieDigest](#) and on Facebook [SophieDigest](#).

Sally Daunt, Chair of the BDA Music Committee, sent the WDA this information about a 'Rainbow harp' that could be particularly useful in its use of colour coding for dyslexic musicians. The BDA cannot endorse any product, but Sally provided information that may be useful to any harp teachers and players we might know.

The Rainbow Harp

Designed by dyslexic harp teacher Morwenna Louttit-Vermaat, the Rainbow Harp is a proper Celtic Harp that has been adapted to make it easier to learn. The concept is simple, rainbow coloured strings to go with rainbow coloured sheet music. Morwenna came up with the idea as a teenager to help her learn the harp herself and has used this technique to become a fully-fledged harper and harp teacher.

We offer training workshops, online and in person, on the use of the Rainbow Harp to teach music to neurodiverse students.

Please get in touch via info@rainbowharp.co.uk to find out more. You can read more about the Rainbow Harp at www.rainbowharp.co.uk



Have your say over dyslexia research priorities

Join the University of Reading study

We have had a positive response to our appeal over social media but we still need adults with dyslexia or parents or caregivers of people with dyslexia to come forward and take part in the study to decide on the direction of dyslexia research. Participants must be over 18.

[Find out more](#)



1 person in 10 is dyslexic

Dyslexia Awareness Week 2022

3rd - 9th October

This year's theme will be "Dyslexia - breaking through barriers"



World Book Day 2022

We hope you had fun dressing up as your favourite book character?

Let's keep the fun going and get creative to celebrate World Book Day!

For your chance to win a copy of BOTH Dekko Drawing and the Dekko Mental Health and Wellbeing comic, simply create a comic page with Dekko (or Dekko inspired) characters.

Don't worry if you think you can't draw, this is a comic creation competition - not a drawing competition! Tell us a story and have fun expressing yourself.

To help get you started, you can download and print our free panel layout using the button below (but feel free to create your own).

[Download your blank comic template here](#)

How to submit

Once your comic page is finished, simply take a scan or photo of it and email it to info@dekkocomics.com before Thursday 31 March 2022.

Visit the competition page on our website [HERE](#) for more information.



Congratulations to our friend Myles Pilling! He now has his name on a Great Western train!

Very well deserved! 😊

"Myles Pilling - Used technology to bring disabled people together and helped loved ones speak to families in care homes. In memory of Richard Marchant."

DROP EVERYTHING AND READ FOR DYSLEXIA



#DEAR FOR DYSLEXIA

Get involved

DEAR For Dyslexia is a global initiative where readers, parents and educators are encouraged to nurture a love for literacy in any way that they can.

We would love you to get involved too...

Do you want to learn more about **DEAR** campaign?
Email us on info@succeedwithdyslexia.org





- Like, follow and share
- Send us photos of your favourite books
- Send us videos of you and your children reading
- Share your favourite reading spots
- Join us in some fun reading challenges
- Tag us using **#DEARForDyslexia** in all of the above



www.dearfordyslexia.org
#DEARForDyslexia

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Ready to try a new strategy for Dyslexia

Posted on February 22, 2022 by olivehickmott

Thousands of children are confused with the phonics **only** approach to literacy. Learning how to picture words is so easy when you know how. I believe that everyone can learn the elements of improving literacy and dyslexia in just 60 minutes. It works for children and adults alike.

To help parents whose bright creative children maybe struggling after all the restrictions of the last 2 years, this is offered for free. [So click here to book](#) your place now on one of the next 3 sessions March 7th, 14th or 21st.

Can you imagine how much happier your child would be if they could spell and read fluently? In just 1 hour you will know the answer for yourself.

My name is Olive Hickmott; I would be pleased to support you in any way I can.

You are welcome to contact me olive@empoweringlearning.co.uk

Please register here to follow my blog at <http://www.olivehickmott.co.uk>

You will find other useful information at <http://www.empoweringlearning.co.uk>

Here is my YouTube channel for more free resources: <https://www.youtube.com/c/OliveHickmott>



Department
for Education

The Department for Education
EdTech Demonstrator Programme
is hosting a free, national online conference on
Thursday 10 March and Wednesday 16 March.

There will be over 70 sessions on offer on a variety of edtech related topics, including SEND specific sessions on accessibility for all, utilising built-in accessibility features and how technology can be best used to support SEND and EAL pupils.

The live sessions will be delivered by EdTech demonstrator schools and colleges who were selected by DfE for their expertise and experience in the effective use of edtech.

School leaders, teachers and technical staff at all publicly funded schools, trusts and FE institutions in England are encouraged to attend. Sessions will be recorded and uploaded onto the EdTech Demonstrator website after the event.

Sign-up: <https://edtechdemo.ucst.uk/events/edtech-conference>



TechEd Showcase AT SEN Bitesize Online Webinar | 15 March

Join us for a free webinar discussing how Widgeit Symbols can be used to support the boosting of language and literacy attainment through vocabulary teaching in Key Stage One.

[View our events](#)



driver youth trust

for literacy



Literacy difficulties, dyslexia and when to intervene

At what point does difficulty with reading, writing and communication become dyslexia? Join our **free** online DYT Community roundtable on **21st March (7-8pm)** as our Head of Innovation and Learning, Kelly Challis, runs through a masterclass in literacy difficulties and dyslexia, and our community members share their experience and recommendations of interventions and strategies for supporting all learners.

Discussion points

- **Dyslexia or literacy difficulties:** when are difficulties with reading, writing and language dyslexia, and should our support and interventions be different?
- **Risk and resilience:** exploring research by Muter (2021) into the role of risk and resilience in the diagnosis of dyslexia and developing support.
- **Interventions and classroom practice:** which interventions and adjustments have community members had success with and in which context?

**Online roundtable: Literacy difficulties, dyslexia and when to intervene
FREE**

[Join us on 21st March](#)

Who is this session for?

The DYT Community is a space for educational professionals to come together to tackle the issues facing teachers, schools, and learners today, with a focus on SEND and literacy difficulties. Our community is free, and open to everyone with an interest in education and inclusion. All of our roundtables are run free of charge – [all we ask is that you sign up to our DYT Community.](#)

Dolphin Education Webinar Series



You are invited to join us for a series of short, informative webinars to find out more about how Dolphin assistive technology helps students with visual impairments or dyslexia to reach their full potential. Recommended for educational and support staff in UK schools, colleges and universities.

Textbooks That Talk Webinar

Together with RNIB Bookshare, this webinar details how your students can browse, download and read accessible versions of textbooks for the UK school curriculum, college and university studies.

Select date and register: [29 March 2022 at 3pm](#) or [28 April 2022 at 1pm](#)

EasyReader is an accessible reading app, used by people with visual impairments and also students with a range of neurodiverse conditions, such as dyslexia.

EasyReader opens a world of accessible books. Use it to browse, download and read accessible versions of books from a range of libraries.

Students in the UK can access textbooks for school, college and university, free and in a range of accessible formats, in the RNIB Bookshare Education Collection.

[Read more about Dolphin EasyReader](#)



New free CDC E-learning Course

[The role of CAMHS in the EHCP process | Council for Disabled Children](#)

Sign up to complete our new e-learning module:

The role of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in the EHCP process.

This is a freely available, self-guided course.

There are four lessons, and each lesson will take approximately 30-60 minutes.

This training is aimed at adults with a role to play in the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) system. It includes topics such as :

- The SEND system and legislative processes
- The importance of children and young people's (CYP) voices
- Support on CAMHS advice
- Roles and responsibilities in the SEND system regarding CAMHS.

This package of online training has been developed as part of the Delivering Better Outcomes Together programme, funded by the Department for Education and delivered in partnership by the Council for Disabled Children, NDTi and Mott Macdonald.

[SIGN UP](#)



This is a part-time degree. You can also study this degree full-time: [Educational Assistive Technology MSc](#)

Assistive Technology (AT) supports students with a broad range of learning difficulties, physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments. These range from high incidence, lower impact disabilities (for example, dyslexia, dyspraxia) through to low incidence, higher impact disabilities (for example, cerebral palsy, autism).

This course has been developed to address a global need for the professionalisation of the 'Assistive Technologist' role within all levels of education provision.

You will qualify as an Educational Assistive Technologist (EduAT). You will learn about:

- the role tasks and responsibilities of the Educational Assistive Technologist
- Assistive Technology (AT) solutions
- assessment for AT
- AT in educational programmes
- specialist and mainstream AT solutions
- AT partner relationships
- models of disability
- therapeutic considerations of disability and the learning environment
- teaching practice

This course is primarily for teachers, therapists and technologists who are seeking to develop and enhance their ability to support learners who require AT. It will equip you with the skills, knowledge and working methodology needed to practise as an educational assistive technologist.

We have an international reputation for accessibility and the development of digital assistive technology. You will interact with expert users of AT within our unique User Centre. We also have links with learning environments across the UK and will help you to find suitable situations for practical work.

Scholarship: There is a dedicated scholarship for the part time, two-year version of this course. This covers tuition fees for Scottish, Rest of UK, and Irish students. [Find out if you are eligible to apply.](#)

Additional links:

If you are pressed for time, you can watch the [5-minute AT short on MSc EduAT](#) that was recorded for the Natspec TechAbility 2021 conference.

There is a recording available of the 2021 open afternoon - the most interesting / useful part is the students giving their views at around 1:07 in this recording: [MSc Educational Assistive Technology Open Day - YouTube](#) There is a recording explaining the core modules towards the start of the video.

There is a set of slides for the [EduAT modules on the TechAbility 2020 conference website](#). There is also a shorter presentation that was given - see [MSc EduAT recording on the Call Scotland website](#).

FREE Online Autism Training Autism in the Classroom – Wednesday 23rd March 7:00pm – 8:00pm

Helen Eaton hosts a variety of online autism training sessions, one of which she offers free of charge. The live talks on Zoom give you a chance to ask questions, share ideas, or just relax and watch. This popular talk is for families, schools and professionals to explore ideas to help support Autistic children in the classroom.

For more information on available courses and to book your place(s), please click [HERE](#).

More events

Bett Show 23rd - 24th March 2022 | ExCel London

Just under a month to go until the Bett Show! The Bett is a global series of education shows and is filled with exhibitors, seminars and activities that can help you in your setting.

This event is free to register for and attend with the opportunity to book onto various CPD talks and sessions. Book your place below.

[Book tickets now](#)

A round up of some of the best assistive technology to help students access learning and support inclusion.

2Simple Software - Stand NE61
Auris Tech Limited - Fonetti - Stand NC65
Google - Platinum Suite
IDLS - NH50
Just2easy.com - NA46
Explore Analytics - Stand NG71
Microsoft - Stands NC43, NE41
Mighty Writer Ltd - Stand NA23
Omolab komunikacije d.o.o. - Stand NB23
Scanning Pens Ltd - Stands NE11, NF10
Texthelp - Claro Software - Stand NF60
TTS Group LTD - Stand SG41



This annual conference brings you the latest updates and practical guidance delivered via interactive Q&As, panel discussions and breakout rooms.

[Find out more](#)

Come together with colleagues from across the sector to engage with best practice and evidence-based interventions shared via interactive workshops and roundtables. You will have access to online downloadable resources, helping you to effectively prepare, plan and implement learnings.

Connect with peers during live sessions and via dedicated topic-focused networking opportunities, including via three streams of tailored content according to your area of work, whether primary or secondary settings, or local authority and social care, and opportunities to learn from colleagues in other settings.

We look forward to bringing you together again for updates in this year, including reflections on the SEND Review.



Bookings for the WPCC's March 2022 Information Event are now Open!

WPCC's Next Information Event – Friday 25th March 2022

We are delighted to announce that we are taking bookings for the WPCC's Next Information Event which will take place on **Friday 25th March 2022** at The Civic Centre, Trowbridge. As a slight change to our last event, this event will run **from 9.30am to 1.00pm** (Registrations from 9.30am, event starts at 10.00am).

A key feature of our event will be our 'Market Place', where we hope approximately 30 services and providers across the local area will showcase their offer. Free refreshments will be available throughout the day for everyone who attends.

We will be offering a workshop at this event on Anxiety: with tips and strategies aimed to support parent carers help children and young people who are struggling with anxiety. Places for the workshop will be limited and will be offered on a first come, first served basis. Parent carers will be able to claim car parking, travel and childcare expenses if attending the event.

See WPPC virtual [Advance Information Booklet](#) for lots more information about the event.

If you want to book without reading the advance information, simply click [HERE](#).

Booking closes at 5pm on Sunday 20th March 2022. We hope you can join us.

Unfortunately, the WDA will be unable to attend this event due to a clash of dates. However, our friends from the Marlborough & District Dyslexia Association do plan to attend with a stand. 😊



Reminders



Europe's Largest Dyslexia Event
25th–26th March 2022, NEC Birmingham

[Register Now](#)

The Dyslexia Show is free to attend, please go to <https://dyslexiashow.co.uk/> for further details. The British Dyslexia Association is a supporter of the show and will have a stand next to the BDA village (a selection of seven local associations from the local area).

Thursday 17th March BDA Virtual Literacy Conference 2022



Information regarding the day can be found on the website [here](#).

The full conference agenda can be found [here](#).

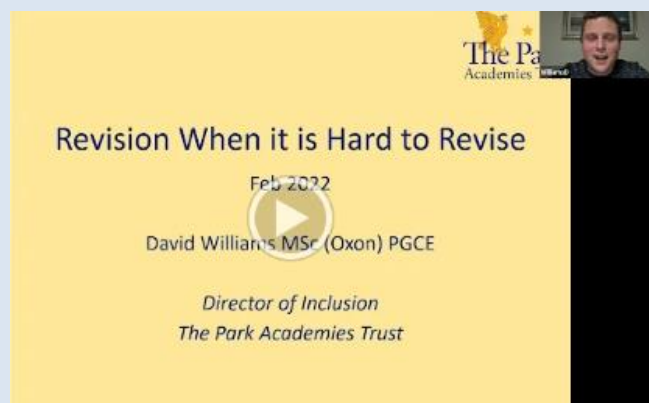
The conference is for teachers, tutors and lecturers to give them insight into factors affecting learners of all ages, and how to support their educational journey.

The conference will look at the importance of early intervention, the impact of mental health and how to support learners of all ages, including some easy ICT/Assistive Technology tools.

The event will take place from 9am to 5pm and includes a host of knowledgeable speakers. All those who attend will receive a CPD certificate after the event, and there is facility for those who are unable to watch live to purchase a recording ticket.



We were extremely grateful to David Williams for being our guest speaker following our recent AGM. His talk was absolutely brilliant – so informative - and the strategies he provided are great for all students, not just those who are dyslexic.



LINK TO RECORDING:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TFapHzjZ2OJF1exPGwe-3g6O8oFfx48uW/view?usp=sharing>



The WDA has changed its Facebook page name from 'Dyslexia Support Group – Chippenham' to [Wiltshire Dyslexia Association](#) . . . news items posted almost daily.



British Dyslexia Association

Our YouTube channel offers access to many of our free webinars, event recordings, ambassador interviews and resources.



If you are looking for information or inspiration about dyslexia, subscribe to our channel here: <https://bit.ly/3aC19bQ>

Scanning Pens Sponsored Webinar

Last week, [Scanning Pens](#) released a sponsored webinar, now available for free on the nasen website for members. Scanning Pens are partners of nasen and are celebrated for the accessibility of their different products to assist those with reading difficulties.



In the webinar, Jim Bowen from Scanning Pens shares his experience with dyslexia and how the Scanning Pens ReaderPen can help those who struggle to read. Jim and his colleague, Julia Clouter, former SENCO & Head of Education at Scanning Pens also go over Jim's strategies for overcoming difficulties he may encounter in his work life.

Some of Scanning Pens products such as the ReaderPen and the ExamReader are then introduced and they explain how they can assist students with self-confidence, different needs including dyslexia and even language barriers. There are also various resources available to help with getting the most out of using the pens. There also signpost to various free resources to help with getting the most out of using the pens.

Watch webinar

Dyslexia Friendly Good Practice

Katrina Cochrane
MA, PGCE, PGDip(Dyslexia), AMBDA, APC, FRSA

Dyslexia: Good Teaching and Learning Practice: Ask the Expert Webcast

Dyslexia Friendly Good Practice presented by Katrina Cochrane and introduced by Donna Stevenson.

Link to recording:
<https://youtu.be/zntW5SQt-0>



**THE
STUDYING
WITH
DYSLEXIA
BLOG**

Understanding the emotional cost of dyslexia for our children and how we can help them.

Link to the recording:

[Watch the recording.](#)

Advice for Dyslexic Teens

By Georgia Ryan, **Youth Ambassador, Dyslexia Mid North Coast, Australia.**

"I know that teaching is the one occupation that has the potential to change the world. With your help we can change the world for every student that may be struggling."



Georgia Ryan

Georgia Ryan is a student and Youth Ambassador for the Dyslexia Mid North Coast in New South Wales, Australia. Georgia was diagnosed with dyslexia and dysgraphia in her last year of primary school. Since then, she has become a passionate campaigner, petitioning for the inclusion of a compulsory module on learning difficulties for all teachers. Georgia is a creative musician and a formidable global advocate raising positive awareness for people with dyslexia.

Nessy asked Georgia to write a blog piece about advice for teenagers with dyslexia. Here she talks about whether or not a teenager should get a test for dyslexia and how to talk to others about your dyslexia.

Part 1

When my friend Tiffany James at Nessy asked if I might like to write an article giving advice to teenagers about dyslexia, my first thought was a big definite NO! After all, what teenager wants to get 'advice' from another teenager they don't even know. Especially as my only qualification to write such an article, is that I am aged 15, meaning I do at least qualify as a teenager, and I also have dyslexia and dysgraphia. But that's it.

I also get lots of questions through my social media platforms asking for advice. Nearly every single one of these requests comes from a parent, so I know there are very few teenagers looking for advice.

So, you can understand my reluctance in writing an article giving 'advice' to teenagers. Unfortunately though, I'm also a people-pleaser and I hate to say no to anyone, so here I am thinking about what I should write in this article offering advice to teenagers with dyslexia.

I was originally going to write about practical suggestions such as colour-coding your books for each subject, having a study plan and other similar ideas. However I'm guessing if you're a teenager with dyslexia, you are most likely already doing most of these things and I know this isn't the type of thing most teenagers are going to want to read about (parents maybe, but teenagers not so much). So instead of giving you any particular 'advice', I thought I would just tell you about some of the things that work for me as a student in high school with dyslexia and about some of the issues surrounding dyslexia that people most often ask me about.

To Test or Not to Test?

I didn't find out that I 'officially' had dyslexia and dysgraphia until my parents had me tested in my last year of primary school. What a lot of people seem interested in, or message me about, is whether they should pursue an 'official diagnosis'. I am in no way, not even in the slightest bit, qualified to answer this but let me just say this, firstly, (at least in Australia) you do not need an 'official' diagnosis to get help at school. It might make it easier at some schools to get this help, but it shouldn't matter, all children are entitled to this help.

Now speaking personally, finding out that I had dyslexia was a relief! It meant that there was a reason why I had been struggling so much and I knew I was just as smart as everyone else, I now had a reason to explain why I was having so much trouble keeping up. So, for me, testing felt very freeing and was a definite plus.

To Disclose to Others

This seems to be another big question for us teenagers. Do we do something as 'uncool' as to deliberately point out something that makes us 'different', when all we really want to do is 'fit in'? Or do we just keep it to ourselves?

I haven't yet had the issue of whether I need to disclose my dyslexia to any future employers but there is often the question of whether we should disclose our dyslexia to others in our friendship circle or school setting. This again is a personal thing, but I am a big believer in telling as many people as possible. Your friends are going to love you no matter what and believe me, they are way more worried about how they are doing in school and life, to think badly of you just because you might need extra help sometimes. Besides your friends will probably turn out to be your biggest cheer-squad and your greatest supporters.

There is also a lot of misinformation surrounding dyslexia so I think it's important that more people talk about it. This not only increases how many more people know about it, but it also helps to ensure the right information is getting out and not just some of the myths surrounding dyslexia. Privacy issues also mean that unless we disclose it ourselves, it is often difficult to know if there are even other students at school that are dyslexic, this can be frustrating as it limits our chances of networking with the other kids going through the same thing. So, I think disclosing helps us to connect with others and to get the best support we can.

I have happily been sharing my journey with the world ever since I found out I had dyslexia, which has helped me to meet the most amazing people not just here in Australia but all over the world. Social media is also great for networking and to helping you to find a community you feel comfortable sharing things with, especially if you aren't really sure as to whether you're ready to share with others closer to home yet."

Check the Nesy blog next week for more advice from Georgia!

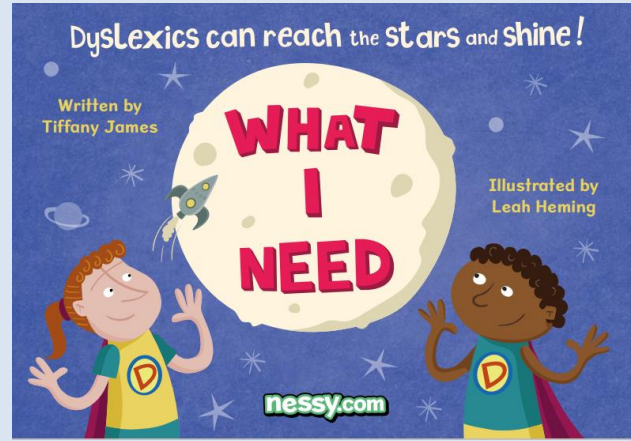
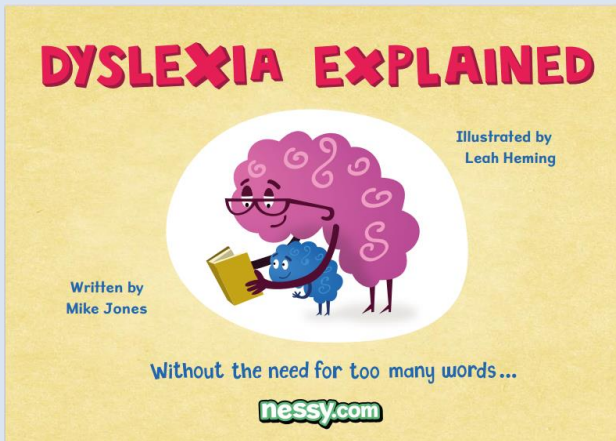
You can visit Georgia's social media here:

Instagram: [@georgia_iamdyslexic](https://www.instagram.com/georgia_iamdyslexic)

Facebook: [dyslexicwarrior](https://www.facebook.com/dyslexicwarrior)

Twitter: [@i_am_dyslexicau](https://twitter.com/i_am_dyslexicau)

* FREE NESSY BOOK DOWNLOADS*



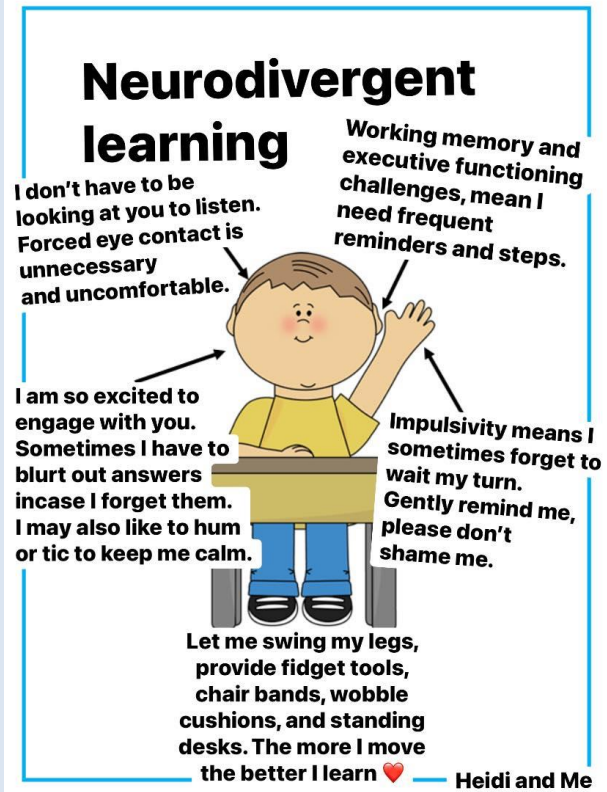
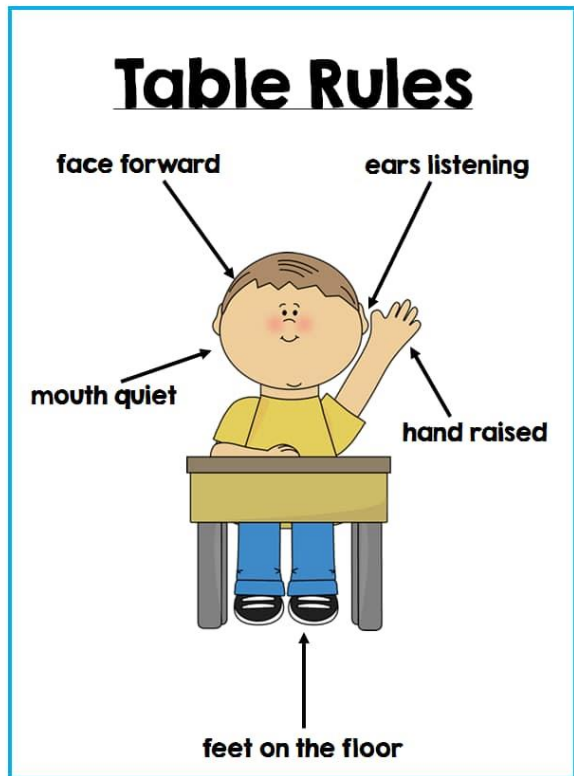
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[7dc899559141e094cf2bd5cf2ce2d10e:e5f89de8da09b5bcc01cb0fa21524bfb](https://www.nesy.com/7dc899559141e094cf2bd5cf2ce2d10e:e5f89de8da09b5bcc01cb0fa21524bfb) (website-nesy.com)

[Heidi and Me. Our Neurodiversity Journey. Home | Facebook](#)

The internet is crammed full of these 'classroom rules' - many of which are impossible for our neurodivergent children to achieve.

Impulsivity, hyperactivity, attention/executive functioning and working memory challenges are not a 'choice' or a behaviour that can be modified.



Decoding Dyslexia-IA

Is My Child Dyslexic? Fact sheet from the [International Dyslexia Association](https://sw.dyslexiaida.org/is-my-child-dyslexic/) - view the entire document online here: <https://sw.dyslexiaida.org/is-my-child-dyslexic/>



Is My Child Dyslexic?

Individuals with dyslexia have trouble with reading, writing, spelling and/or math even though they have the ability and have had opportunities to learn. Individuals with dyslexia can learn, but they often need specialized instruction to overcome the problem. Often these individuals, who have talented and productive minds, are said to have a language learning difference.

Common characteristics of dyslexia

Most of us have one or two of these characteristics. That does not mean that everyone has dyslexia. *A person with dyslexia usually has **several** of these characteristics that persist over time and interfere with his or her learning.*

Oral language

- Late learning to talk
- 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

Reading

- 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

Written language

- Difficulty putting ideas on paper
- Many spelling mistakes
- May do well on weekly spelling tests, but may have many spelling mistakes in daily work
- Difficulty proofreading

NINE STRATEGIES FOR DYSGRAPHIA

Unique Key Educational Services

1. Stretch out your hands. Before you begin an activity such as typing or handwriting, it's a good idea to shake your hands out, rotate your wrists, wiggle your fingers and maybe even squeeze a stress ball. Some people press their fingers into putty, anything to get the blood flowing and prepare the muscle.
2. Learn to touch-type. Computers are recommended for people with dysgraphia because they reduce the number of variables that need to be controlled including letter formation, letter and word spacing and even writing text left to right along a straight line. Moreover, they allow for ease of correction without the stigma of erasure marks and they provide access to spell-checkers. An individual who learns how to touch-type is even better off because they can use muscle memory in the hands to help with spelling and enhance literacy skills, such as decoding and sight-reading.
3. Use cursive vs. print. If you must write by hand, many experts see cursive as an easier medium than print because there is more connectivity between letters. This reduces the distraction caused by spacing. Cursive script also has fewer reversible letters and requires a steady movement and flow, which can be beneficial to individuals who struggle with fine motor skills.
4. Request accommodations. Students who struggle with dysgraphia should request accommodations in the classroom including being able to record classroom discussion and their teacher's instructions with an audio recorder or use a computer to take notes and complete written assignments. Keep in mind dysgraphia can get in the way of performance, therefore, assessment measures might also need to be adjusted. For example, a short answer section could be replaced by multiple-choice questions that don't require a text-based answer.
5. Try different paper and pens. It can sometimes make a difference to write by hand on paper that has thick or raised lines. Paper of different colours may also be beneficial. Fine motor skills impact the way an individual grips a writing utensil, thus consider using a thicker pen or a pencil with a rubber grip.
6. Make audio-recordings. Writing is a cognitively taxing activity for individuals that is made even more difficult when they have to both receive information during a lecture and write it down. Even copying text from the board is hard for someone who struggles with dysgraphia. That's why it is recommended that individuals bring an audio recording device or be provided with handouts that cover what was discussed. It can also be useful to pair a dysgraphic student up with a note-taking buddy.

7. Recite word spelling out loud. Spelling can sometimes be challenging because dysgraphia impacts on orthographic encoding or translating words into their component letters. Spelling out loud is not impacted therefore individuals should complete spelling quizzes verbally and recite a word's spelling quietly to themselves before attempting to write it down. It also helps to learn touch-typing as repeat drilling of a word means spelling is learned via muscle memory in the hands.
8. Brainstorm ideas before writing. When composition is impacted at the phrase, sentence and paragraph level, it is often because there is difficulty in translating information and organizing it on paper. It can help to access prior knowledge of a topic and brainstorm ideas before you begin as this activates them in the brain and helps you prepare for writing.
9. Use outlines and multiple drafts. When organization and expression are still difficult, a student with dysgraphia may wish to make an outline that organizes ideas in a clear manner. Working in multiple drafts means there is less pressure or stress for getting something right on the first try. It's also a more natural approach to writing. Reviewing previous information and re-writing and adapting to ensure a reader can follow a train of thought are habits found in good writers.



WHAT IS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assistive Technology (AT) is any device, piece of equipment or software that helps a person to more easily tackle daily challenges at school or at work. It makes learning and communication simpler and more functional.

[FIND THE BEST ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TOOLS & APPS](#)

[Does My Child Have Dyslexia? A parent's Guide to Identification.](#)

[Listen](#)

Does your child show any of these dyslexia related symptoms? Learn about child's dyslexia and how to identify it.

[How To Spot Early Signs of Dyslexia in Children](#)

[Listen](#)

Identifying symptoms and signs of dyslexia early can increase the odds of effective treatment. In this post you'll learn to identify early symptoms.



Crossbow Education | Visual Stress | Dyslexia resources



Our Visual Stress Collection is a selection of our award-winning resources that are Dyslexia-Friendly and can help relieve the symptoms of Visual Stress/Irlen. 1 in 5 children have Visual Stress and this can make reading and writing very difficult and uncomfortable.

Visual Stress is caused by the harsh contrast of black text on a white background and the stripes found in text; these combined causes "Pattern Glare". This can create illusions on the page, like the words/letters moving around or jumping of the page.

Reading through the individuals optimum colour and writing on tinted paper can relieve the symptoms. Reading through colour can also increase reading speed and improve comprehension.

Free Assistive Technology Resources

In January, nasen, working in partnership with Microlink, [launched a DfE funded pilot project](#) that aims to grow and develop the use of assistive technology.

Twenty-four secondary schools and 57 primary schools have started the programme, with each nominating an Assistive Technology Champion to receive training and support to review and implement more assistive technology in their schools.

As part of the programme a suite of resources are being developed that all schools can access. [Assistive Technology Resource Bank One and Two](#) have been published and are located on the nasen website.

The resource banks contain a variety of resources designed to support the auditing of resources as well as policy and professional development in the field of AT.

All resources are free to access once you have registered on the nasen website.

[Find out more](#)

The Modern English Alphabet

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ


The set of letters used when writing
 The letters combine to form graphemes, morphemes and words

Consonant
 A speech sound produced when the vocal tract has various restrictions of airflow.


Vowel
 A speech sound produced with no restriction of airflow.

The Alphabetic Principle
 The starting point of any alphabetic writing system.
 The understanding that there are predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds.


Phoneme
 The smallest unit of sound within oral words. We must help children reach the phoneme level, but this isn't natural because we don't talk in segmented sounds.



Grapheme
 A letter or letter string that represents a phoneme (speech sound).




Digraph
 2 letters that represent a speech sound.




boat

Trigraph
 3 letters that represent a speech sound.



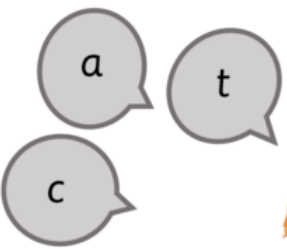
light

Tetragraph
 4 letters that represent a speech sound. There are etymological reasons that some refute this terminology. In the early years it is easiest to discuss spellings that relate to speech sounds. In later years, a discussion about etymology may help some to spell and understand the system.




doughnut

Phonological Awareness
 An umbrella term for sounds (phoneme) awareness, rhyming, alliteration, syllables and onset and rime.
 The ability to notice, segment and move around the individual sound units within words.

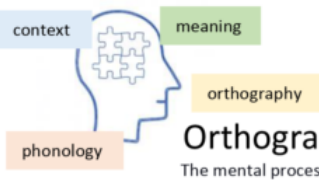


↔

Phonics
 Instruction that shows children how speech sounds relate to print.




Orthographic Mapping
 The mental process we use to store words for automatic retrieval.




↕

Orthography
 The correct spelling of words.
 The orthography of a language is how we visually represent language on paper.



Morphology
 Study of the structure of words.



↔

Morphemes
 The smallest unit of meaning in a language.

[Announcing an expanded literacy portfolio to reach every learner | Microsoft EDU](#)

By [Paige Johnson, Vice President, Microsoft Education](#)

Reading Coach is also coming to Immersive Reader in our Office 365 apps. This will allow anyone to practice reading with any content in Immersive Reader.

While educators around the world focus on accelerating learning for all, the pandemic continues to widen pre-existing achievement gaps, hitting the most vulnerable students the hardest. Digital reading tools can help ensure that all learners can explore their full potential. [Literacy solutions](#) designed with the intention of addressing a diverse set of student needs make them better for everyone. All students deserve equitable opportunities to develop strong literacy skills for success in and beyond the classroom, and teachers deserve more support in helping their students reach these goals. Today, we're pleased to announce the new Reading Coach experience in [Microsoft Teams](#) and updates to Reading Progress designed to help provide the best support for all learners. Please read on at [Announcing an expanded literacy portfolio to reach every learner | Microsoft EDU](#)

SINCE



1959

LISTENING BOOKS

A UK audiobook service for anyone who lives in the UK and has dyslexia



Reasons audiobooks are great for people with dyslexia

- You can concentrate on the story without the need to decode the words
- Increased vocabulary
- Enjoyment and escapism!
- Talk about the same books your peers are reading
- For children, you can listen to books that are written for your age
- Learn to love literature and books by opening up a whole new world

Why Listening Books?

- Over 9000 audiobooks
- No long wait times
- Heavily subsidised membership fee - and free memberships available to those that need them!
- Audiobooks that cover the National Curriculum
- Podcasts, author interviews, competitions and more
- Access to thousands of newspapers and magazines that you can see and listen to at no extra cost
- Online (FB) book group

Membership fee's are £20 for the year or free if you would find that a barrier to joining, find out more and join at www.listening-books.org.uk/join

info@listening-books.org.uk

www.listening-books.org.uk



Kids – Made By Dyslexia

What makes you xtraordinary?



How your extraordinary brain works

When you're dyslexic, you think a little differently. This xtraordinary way of thinking makes you good at all sorts of things. When we're good at something, we do it so much that we become xtraordinary at it! When we grow up, we use our xtraordinary powers to help us become xtraordinarily good at our jobs.

Your dyslexic strengths

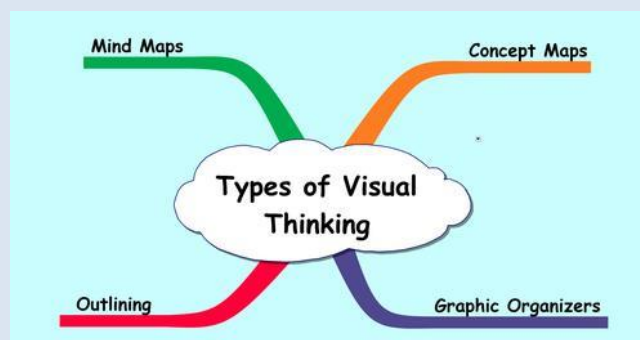
There are 7 types of Xtraordinary superpowers. You might be one of them or a mixture of a few.



The Xtraordinary People Quiz

What kind of xtraordinary person are you?
What do you love to do?
What are you naturally good at?

Tick the descriptions that sound like you to find out: [Quiz – Kids – Made By Dyslexia](#)



[Understanding How Visual Thinking Strategies Support Dyslexic Learning \(inspiration-at.com\)](#)

A visual thinking strategy helps with arranging thoughts, concepts, facts and ideas in a way that helps with understanding and communicating information especially for dyslexic learners. Let us look at why this is the case and what types of visual thinking strategies are useful . . . please read on using link above.

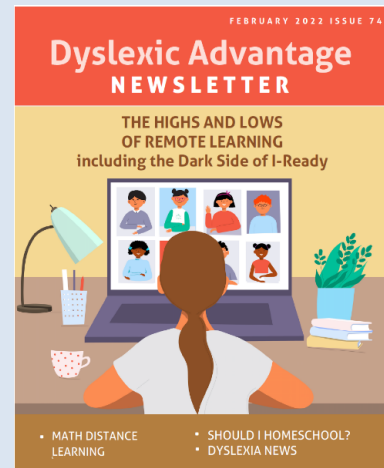
Articles and Blogs



February Newsletter [Click to DOWNLOAD](#)

Articles:

The Highs and Lows of Remote Learning
- including The Dark Side of I-Ready
Math Distance Learning for Students with Dyslexia
Should I Homeschool?
Dyslexia News



Newsletter Archives (back issues) are [HERE](#).



[Sophie Hardy](#) Content writer - Twinkl Digest

[Top tips for reducing your workload as a trainee teacher \(twinkl.co.uk\)](#)

A trainee teacher's workload can be intense and excessive. How can you take steps to reduce this?

Earlier this week, Twinkl Digest explored the results of a Twinkl Trainee Teachers and ECTs poll that revealed [how many hours a week trainees are working](#). Shockingly, the poll revealed that 41.4% of respondents are working more than 50 hours a week, with 14% working more than 60 hours a week.

So how can you reduce this? In today's article, we'll provide top tips for reducing your trainee teacher workload. Click on title link above for full details on how to:

- Identify where your time goes
- Consider long-term planning
- Dedicate time to respond to emails
- Make use of resources that already exist
- * Make to-do lists based on time or priority
- * Plan what you'll do in PPA periods
- * Cut unnecessary tasks

... and read the guidance from experienced teachers.

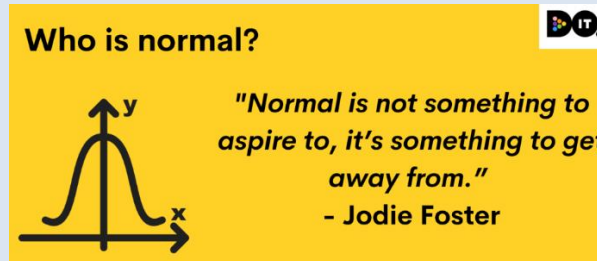
Neurodiversity 101



By Prof Amanda Kirby

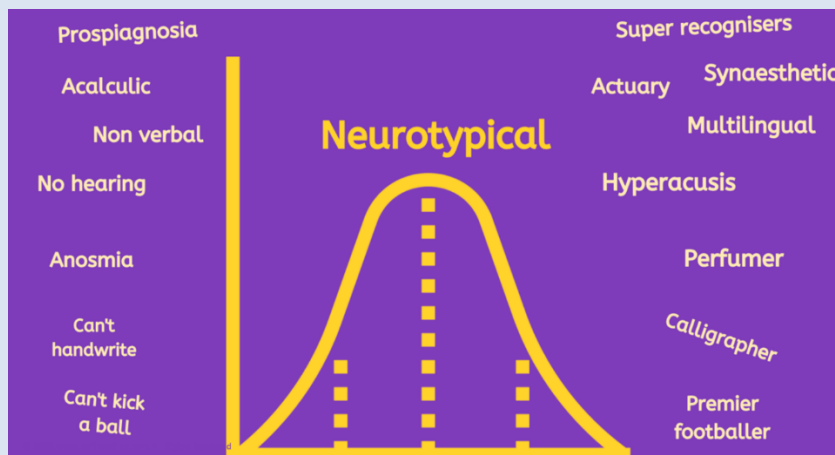
[Open on LinkedIn](#)

Neurodiversity - not a Norma or Normman in sight?



No-one is average.

Terms used and the meanings we may ascribe:



View full article at:

[\(99+\) Neurodiversity- not a Norma or Normman in sight? | LinkedIn](#)



Helping Everyone Achieve

Get the most out of your free nasen membership with our amazing new resources! Access the latest information, training and tools to develop your SEND workforce.

- [Routes to Becoming a Teacher of Learners with SEND | Free](#)
- [National Award for SEN Co-ordination Research Posters | Free](#)
 - [Scanning Pens Assistive Technology Webinar | Free](#)
 - [Reflect with Connect | Free](#)
 - [SEND Review Webinar | Free](#)
 - [Preparation for Adulthood Showcase | Free](#)



**THE
STUDYING
WITH
DYSLEXIA
BLOG**

My latest articles written for you.

Dear Wiltshire DA,

How are you doing? I wanted to send this quick email to you to let you know about the latest articles that I have written across January and February. These are listed below:

[Dyslexia Show Live: Latest News](#)

[Can children benefit from using assistive technology to support their learning needs?](#)

[How to research an extended project](#)

[Webinar recording: What is 'text to speech' and how should my child use it at school?](#)

[How to take away the stress of writing homework with speech to text technology](#)

[Is there a place for spell checking in school?](#)

[How I nearly dropped out of Uni because of my dyslexia](#)

[Non-conventional reading is OK! #DEARForDyslexia](#)

There is a lot to read but I hope that you will find it useful.

With regards to the first article. The Studying With Dyslexia Blog is the media partner to the Dyslexia Show taking place at the end of March. This will be Europe's largest dyslexia specific expo taking place at Birmingham NEC.

I will be attending and delivering two talks and I am looking forward to exploring the huge exhibition of dyslexia focused products and services. I really would encourage you to come along and if you do, and you see me there (on the Friday) then please do come and say 'hello' because I would love to know more about how your journey of supporting children and young people with dyslexia is going.

Register your free place at the Dyslexia Show by [clicking here](#).

As always if you have any questions or feedback about The Studying With Dyslexia Blog, then please do not hesitate to reply and let me know. It is important to me.

Hope it helps,

John Hicks

The Studying With Dyslexia Blog



Read on a LinkedIn post . . .

Apparently, Albert Einstein didn't say this . . . but anyone could use a similar story:

Albert Einstein once wrote on a chalkboard:

$$\begin{aligned}9 \times 1 &= 9 \\9 \times 2 &= 18 \\9 \times 3 &= 27 \\9 \times 4 &= 36 \\9 \times 5 &= 45 \\9 \times 6 &= 54 \\9 \times 7 &= 63 \\9 \times 8 &= 72 \\9 \times 9 &= 81 \\9 \times 10 &= 91\end{aligned}$$

Suddenly chaos erupted in the classroom because Einstein made a mistake. Obviously, the correct answer to 9×10 isn't 91. And all his students ridiculed him. Einstein waited for everyone to be silent and said:

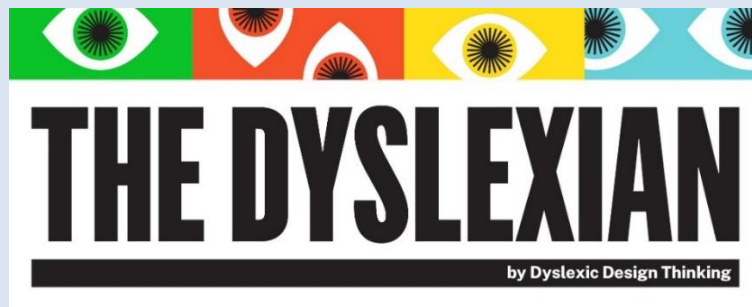
"Despite the fact that I analysed nine problems correctly, no one congratulated me. But when I made one mistake, everyone started laughing. This means that even if a person is successful, society will notice his slightest mistake. And they'll like that. So don't let criticism destroy your dreams. The only person who never makes a mistake is someone who does nothing."



This may well be true!

When Einstein was granted the Physics Chair at Princeton University, they telegraphed him and asked him what he needed for his office.

He wrote back "all the typical office stuff but be sure there's a large waste basket". They asked why. He said, "I make lots of mistakes."



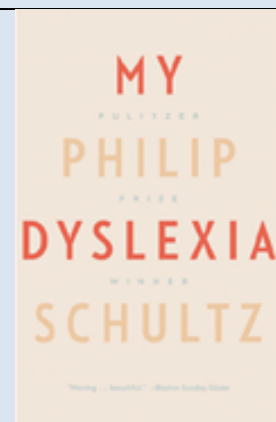
Six works by authors with dyslexia

Need suggestions for your 2022 reading list? Crack open one of these books by authors who leveraged their dyslexia to become literary leading lights. All are available as audiobooks, so you can absorb them as you walk, drive, exercise or travel.

My Dyslexia by Philip Schultz

Schultz is a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, and *My Dyslexia* is a memoir of his life with dyslexia. The book—relatively brief at 128 pages—tells inspiring stories about the power of creative determination. For a preview, read Schultz’s [2011 opinion article](#) in *The New York Times*.

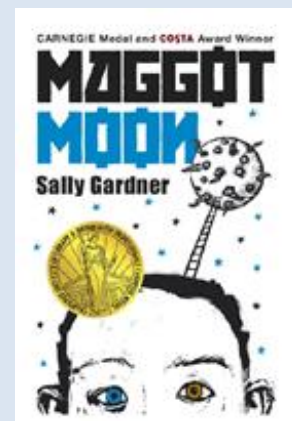
[Buy a copy or listen to the audiobook](#)



Maggot Moon by Sally Gardner

Maggot Moon is a sci-fi fable set in a dystopian take on 1950s England. The book centers on Standish Treadwell, a 15-year-old with dyslexia, and it’s a real page-turner: the book moves briskly through 100 short and exciting chapters. Gardner was also a guest on the [Unlocking Creativity With Dyslexia](#) episode of our [Dyslexic Design Thinking](#) podcast, available on Spotify and other popular podcast platforms.

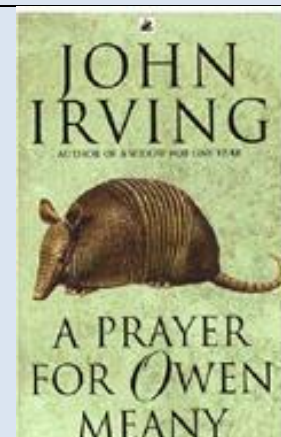
[Buy a copy or listen to the audiobook](#)



A Prayer for Owen Meany by John Irving

A Prayer for Owen Meany follows a dyslexic protagonist, Johnny Wheelwright, who grows up to become a voracious reader and a literature teacher. This story, which is largely based on Irving’s life, is a moving and relatable experience for dyslexics of all ages.

[Buy a copy or listen to the audiobook](#)



***Parable of the Sower* by Octavia E. Butler**

After enduring difficulties in school due to undiagnosed dyslexia, Butler became the first sci-fi author to earn a MacArthur “genius grant.” *Parable of the Sower* envisions a post-apocalyptic future in which a young Black woman must work to overcome her “hyper-empathy” disorder.

[Buy a copy or listen to the audiobook](#)



***The Witching Hour* by Anne Rice**

Embark on a journey through 400 years of witchcraft and the occult with San Francisco's own Anne Rice, who wrestled with dyslexia as a college student. *The Witching Hour* takes readers on a path that winds from 17th century Scotland to 1990s New Orleans and San Francisco. Rice, who passed away in December, once said, “I want to be loved and never forgotten. I’m really greedy, you know?” Read one of her books and see first-hand how she got her wish.

[Buy a copy or listen to the audiobook](#)



***Ben & Emma's Big Hit* by Gavin Newsom**

California Governor Gavin Newsom's children's book, illustrated by Alexandra Thompson, is inspired by his childhood experiences with dyslexia. The story about a boy who uses his love of baseball to improve his approach to reading is an astute take on dyslexia that's accessible to all ages. Newsom recently promised “a hell of a lot more” funding for dyslexia screenings and early education programs.

[Buy a copy or listen to the audiobook](#)



In case you missed it . . .

The Truth About Big-Picture Thinkers

Not everyone has dyslexia, but everyone has felt like they weren't good enough. Or fell short of expectations. Or were told we don't have what it takes. The sooner we understand that obstacles are part of the human experience, the quicker we can move toward wrestling with them.

Here are a few more tips for how to embrace dyslexia—or any difference that comes your way: [Continue reading](#)



Tom Hunt, the MP for Ipswich, told GB News he was diagnosed with both dyspraxia and dyslexia when he was 12 years old

View interview at:

[MP bravely reveals how he 'couldn't tie shoelaces until he was 14' in struggle with dyspraxia \(gbnews.uk\)](#)

Xindi Wei DIGITAL PRODUCER

PUBLISHED 15 February 2022

MP Tom Hunt has spoken of his struggles with dyspraxia and dyslexia, saying he couldn't "tie his shoelaces" until he was 14.

Tom Hunt, the MP for Ipswich, was diagnosed with both dyspraxia and dyslexia when he was 12 years old.

Speaking to Gloria De Piero on The Real Me, Tom Hunt said: "Schoolwork never came easy to me.

"I don't think I could do my shoelaces until i was about fourteen.

He said: "Dyspraxia impacts organisation, it impacts your ability to plan things and it just means you process means you process things in a very different way."

The Conservative MP has previously spoken about his struggle with the two conditions but has revealed his fear that children today are still being left behind.

Dyslexia is a learning disorder that leads to difficulties with reading, writing and spelling, while dyspraxia affects movement and co-ordination.

He went on said: "I would say that I was incredibly fortunate to be in a position where I had the support that I had. I was at an independent school, and half the reason that my dad fought to keep me there was because he felt I needed that additional support.

"So, my fear is that – and for me it was touch and go, I mean, I could have not got anywhere near to where I ended up going to academically – but my fear is that perhaps, I was looking at young people with disabilities that I had.

"Maybe I was one in 10 who was able to get through it.

"So, my passion is to try and make sure that all 'Toms' with those disabilities, regardless of their family circumstances, are given the educational opportunities and support that they need to achieve their full potential.

“And it really shouldn’t matter whether their parents happen to be in a position where they can afford to provide the kind of support that I got. So, for me, that’s probably the number one burning passion that I’ve got.”

Last year, Mr Hunt backed calls from Conservative former health secretary Matt Hancock to screen every child for dyslexia while they are in school and to give them extra support if needed.

Elsewhere in the GB News interview, Mr Hunt said he thought there was “more of an appreciation” of disabilities today than when he was in school.

He added: “But I still think we’ve got a long way to go, and I still think there are a lot of young people with learning disabilities who are being characterised in a certain way, being told that they can’t achieve. Where, if they were given the right support, they can. It’s not just about them treading water – given the right support they can fly, because a lot of them are very creative.”

#MyDyslexiaStory: Olivia Craig-Mcfeely

British Dyslexia Association

Despite preliminary testing showing that Olivia had significant issues with spelling, she was told because she got A's in her exams that she couldn't be dyslexic!

After a diagnosis at University, Olivia spoke openly about her dyslexia to create a community to help others and went on to succeed at Medical School.

Read the full story here:
<https://bit.ly/3BxQewF>

“By openly talking about my dyslexia I became part of a lovely community and have been able to talk and advise other students about testing and about coping with dyslexia at university.”

Olivia Craig-Mcfeely #MyDyslexiaStory

Read Olivia's Dyslexia Story on our website

My Advice for someone who has recently been diagnosed with dyslexia:

Don't let people tell you what you can and can't do, even if things are hard it doesn't mean that you can't do something.

You can study medicine with dyslexia, something I wish I could have shown my school when I was trying to get diagnosed.

Inspirational stories: The dyslexic teacher



Twinkl Digest had the pleasure of speaking to Joe Marucci, a Drama and English teacher who was diagnosed with dyslexia at the age of 22 while completing a Masters degree!

Join us as we retell Joe's inspirational story.

School

Joe wasn't diagnosed with dyslexia at school, that's not to say there weren't signs though. On noticing he was having difficulties with the reading speed, a teacher stepped in:

"When I was about 11 I was given a yellow overlay" Joe told Twinkl Digest "and the teacher asked, 'Is that better?'. When I said 'no, not really' they said 'right, he's just slow then!'".

"At school I was in low sets - what would now be called nurture groups - the work for that class could have been highly differentiated but, as a student, I wouldn't have known that. It was just 'the norm' to me".

"I was a bit of a lad at school! When I didn't understand a task I would 'fake it til I make it!'. I'd pretend I knew what the task was, complete it way before anyone else, it would be complete rubbish what I'd written! But at least it was done.

[Then I'd sit back and have a laugh with the teacher, read my book and think 'What on Earth was that?!'](#)

"This happened quite a lot but I just thought it was me not listening - but it wasn't, I know that now, it was me struggling to process."

"Weirdly, my skills at school included creative writing, I spelt everything wrong but I had the ideas and the language and I went on to do Drama and Script Writing at University."

"When I started my teacher training we were all asked to do a 500 word essay about the link between primary and secondary curriculum, I wrote it and handed it in. It was basically rubbish! I had to have a meeting with the teacher about it and they said 'You're either dyslexic or just really lazy'."

Diagnosis

In 2018 two local authorities, Staffordshire and Warwickshire, [stopped funding](#) dyslexia screening assessments. Other local authorities (LAs) followed suit. This meant that families or individuals, like Joe, had to pay for an assessment if they wanted a formal diagnosis.

Joe talked us through his road to diagnosis. “Going through diagnosis was the worst thing I’ve tackled on my journey with dyslexia, for two reasons:

- a) It was mentally draining and
- b) The assessors had to treat me like I didn’t have dyslexia, but I knew they thought I did. So I was thinking ‘what if I don’t have dyslexia? What if I’m just slow?’ and that would be awful! That would be even worse than having dyslexia! I didn’t really know how to deal with that.”

“I was in my PGCE year in the run up to the assessment, so the pressure was on and it was either ‘pass or fail’ - luckily I passed. It took me about 4 months to save up for the assessment - the university or LA wouldn’t fund it **but I knew it was important so I had to find about £300 to go through with it.**”

Twinkl Digest asked what specialist advice Joe was given when he received his diagnosis. He recalled the conversation with the specialist, “they asked me ‘What do you need?’ I said I needed time to process what they had told me and what they were asking me to do. I’d just lived my life before this, I didn’t know it was different from other people’s lives.”

“When they first told me, I cried. I thought that meant I couldn’t be a teacher and I couldn’t follow the career path I’d chosen. Then I realised - I’m going for a masters right now! I’ve obviously got something wrong but I’ve dealt with it in the past. If I’d found out about the dyslexia when I was 14, there is no way I’d be where I am today - I would have given up”.

“The older generation still appear to think that dyslexia means stupid. There is still a huge taboo around being open about a dyslexia diagnosis - which is a shame. That does seem to be improving though.

People need to realise that dyslexia is so broad. It’s processing, hearing, phonological awareness, auditory dyslexia, temporal processing - it’s not just because I read slowly”.

Strategies

“I’m really open about my diagnosis, I tell the staff at school because I know I have nothing to apologise for.”

Joe told us his most used strategies as an adult:

“I ask extra questions, ask for more time to process things and I always put things in my calendar. I write everything down because my working memory is non-existent.

I live in constant fear that I’ll miss a deadline or misunderstand a task or do something wrong”.

“There have been a lot of times I’ve had a ‘naughty’ student in my class who has said ‘I can’t do this, I’m dyslexic’, and I say ‘yes you can, and you will!’. Regardless of any diagnosis, regardless of what it says on that piece of paper, regardless of how quickly you process things - it might take you 5 minutes, it might take you a week, you will do it!”.

Positives

When asked what positive influences dyslexia has had on his life, Joe told Twinkl Digest, “I love telling students my story, and letting people know that dyslexia isn’t a personality trait. Dyslexia is a way of thinking, and everyone has their own way of thinking. Just because you are dyslexic doesn’t mean that is your life. You have to control dyslexia, you can’t let it control you. I tell my students that and that it is going to be OK.”

“Helping children to realise that their life isn’t over because of dyslexia. I love telling them stories about dyslexic people. Like Einstein, what if it was meant to be an ‘S’ not a ‘2’?”

Did you know it’s thought that Shakespeare was dyslexic? I love to think that he wasn’t actually creating his own language, he just spelt everything wrong!”

Final thought

Twinkl Digest asked Joe for a final thought - what do you want people to know about dyslexia?

“It is so important to raise awareness of dyslexia and in particular auditory dyslexia. The more I read and research dyslexia the more I learn. Dyslexia can’t be defined by one word, it is a book. It affects everyone differently. If someone is dyslexic, you need to talk to them, have conversations with them, write things down about what their dyslexia means.

It’s not a ‘one size fits all’ diagnosis”.

Huge thanks to Joe for sharing his story with Twinkl Digest, we think you’re incredible!

You can follow Joe’s journey on his [blog](#) ‘Dyslexic Teachur’ and listen to him speak on this [episode](#) of Teacher Talk Radio.



We thank the Hampshire Dyslexia Association for permission to share with you poems written by two of their former pupils – Jake and Tina.

The first poem was written by Tina who now lives in Canada. She said: *“My only disability is living in a world that doesn’t understand the dyslectic mind!”*

Jake wrote the second poem. He first went to Africa as a volunteer teacher without any teaching experience. He then helped build a school in a remote village where there had been a mud hut on poles previously. Currently back in UK, he has a job with Books2Africa based in Canterbury <https://books2africa.org/about/>

Tina's poem . . .

Freaks from Freakville

I hope you're amused by the words that you read.
It's a story of freaks! A whole Different Breed.
Where do they live?
Why, they live all around us!
They drive cars and airplanes and ride on the bus.
Some build space ships, they're movie stars too, Presidents, teachers what can we do?
Lawyers, doctors and folks with degrees, all Freaks from Freakville Just wait you'll see.

A long time ago when I went to school I was a strange little fish in an unhappy pool!
I tried to swim like the rest of the sea but I knew deep inside this just wasn't me.
Off to the doctor shop to test out my brain.
You know I thought they thought I was insane.
My IQ is broken It's running too high.
But I am not hyperactive nor am I Shy.
I'm clever and funny and utterly bold.
I could have been rich. If I just fit the mould

Now there are three Freaks in Freakville, as you can see.
All just as weird and wonderful as their Mum, Me
We have heaps of trouble telling the time
Like numbers and letters they're out of our mind
Waiting to flip them and flop them and then turn them around and do it again
Spelling - don't go there how can we be wrong?
When we know all the music to every new song!
All our forwards are backwards.
So that reading's a chore.
But we can tell incredible stories for hours or more

Now you don't have pictures but we still have text
It's what makes us look like we are complete nervous wrecks!
Take the word bad what do you see?
That is of course if you're not Dyslexic like me
I learn with my eyes
And it's not a surprise to find out intelligence is not compromised
Yet the part of our minds that helps use to read Is traveling around at unbelievable speed.

But the cool thing about all these strange goings-on
Is that it makes us creative and different and strong.
For now and forever I hope you agree, To:
STOP DISSING MY ABILITIES
And see the real ME

Jake's poem . . .

Dyslexia and Me

I had a dream...

How many more famous than I have said those words?

I had a dream that...

I would sail round the world single handed
I would fly to the moon
I would build the tallest ship
I would dam the biggest river
I would invent a cure for AIDS

Then they told me I was dyslexic

They told me I was illiterate

They told me I was unteachable

They didn't tell me it would be 10 years of hard slog

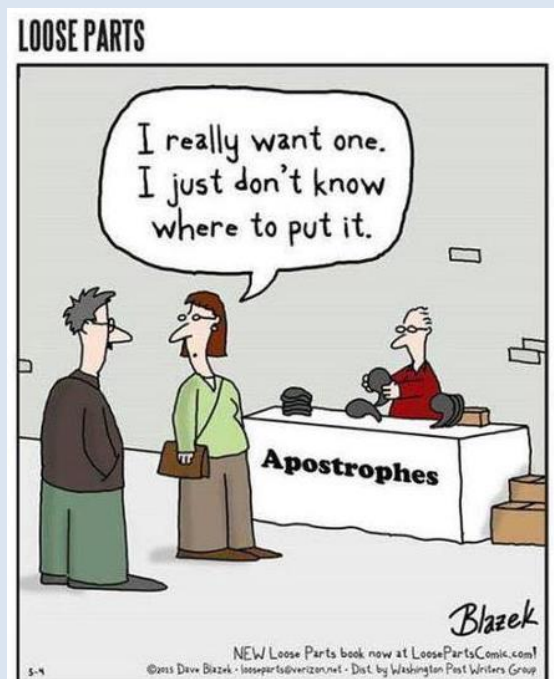
They didn't tell me I would retake each exam 3 times

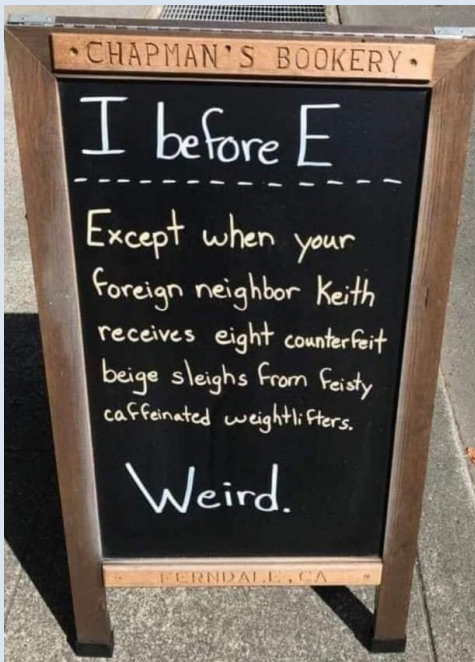
They didn't tell me I was inventive, intuitive, empathetic, artistic
or visionary

They didn't tell me that these little kids would be
able to achieve their dreams because I didn't
fly to the moon

And finally . . .

They Read Differently	They are not lazy	They might need extra help outside of school	They can be disorganized	They need to socialize
They can not overcome dyslexia by reading more		It impacts their self-esteem	They don't "see" the world backward	They need "ear reading"
20 Things Parents of Children with Dyslexia Will Understand				
They have average to above average intelligence	They are exhausted by detail	They should not be "lumped" together as one	They can add great value to an organization	They need technology
They see what others do not	They will need accommodations in school, at all levels	They will be dyslexic for life	They can be frustrated with their learning difference	They need technology
				They are visual thinkers





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 Details - see our [flyer](#)



DID YOU KNOW THESE THINGS HAD NAMES?

1. The space between your eyebrows is called a glabella.
 2. The way it smells after the rain is called petrichor.
 3. The plastic or metallic coating at the end of your shoelaces is called an aglet.
 4. The rumbling of stomach is actually called a wamble.
 5. The cry of a new born baby is called a vagitus.
 6. The prongs on a fork are called tines.
 7. The sheen or light that you see when you close your eyes and press your hands on them is called phosphenes.
 8. The tiny plastic table placed in the middle of a pizza box is called a box tent.
 9. The day after tomorrow is called overmorrow.
 10. Your tiny toe or finger is called minimus.
 11. The wired cage that holds the cork in a bottle of champagne is called an agraffe.
 12. The 'na na na' and 'la la la', which don't really have any meaning in the lyrics of any song, are called vocables.
 13. When you combine an exclamation mark with a question mark (like this ?!), it is referred to as an interrobang.
 14. The space between your nostrils is called columella nasi.
 15. The armhole in clothes, where the sleeves are sewn, is called armscyce.
 16. The condition of finding it difficult to get out of the bed in the morning is called dysania.
 17. Illegible hand-writing is called griffonage.
 18. The dot over an "i" or a "j" is called tittle.
 19. That utterly sick feeling you get after eating or drinking too much is called crapulence.
 20. The metallic device used to measure your feet at the shoe store is called Bannock device.
- HOW MANY OF THE ABOVE DID YOU ALREADY KNOW?



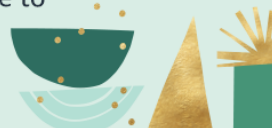
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