

DYSLEXIA RESOURCES

Hidden in Plain Sight: An Educator's Guide to Dyslexia



One of an educator's most gratifying experiences is seeing a student succeed. However, sometimes educators encounter an intelligent, hardworking student who consistently struggles with reading. This student is likely battling the most common cause of difficulties in reading, writing, and spelling: dyslexia.

What is Dyslexia?

The International Dyslexia Association defines dyslexia as "A language-based learning disability. Dyslexia refers to a cluster of symptoms, which result in people having difficulties with specific language skills, particularly reading. Students with dyslexia usually experience difficulties with other language skills such as spelling, writing and pronouncing words."

Dyslexia can be Difficult to Recognize

Between 15-20% of American students have dyslexia. That's one in every five students! Chances are you have one or more of these students in your classroom. Dyslexia often goes undetected because students find ways to compensate for or hide their reading difficulties. It can easily be mistaken for a behavioral issue; what appears to be laziness or acting out might be a student struggling with reading.

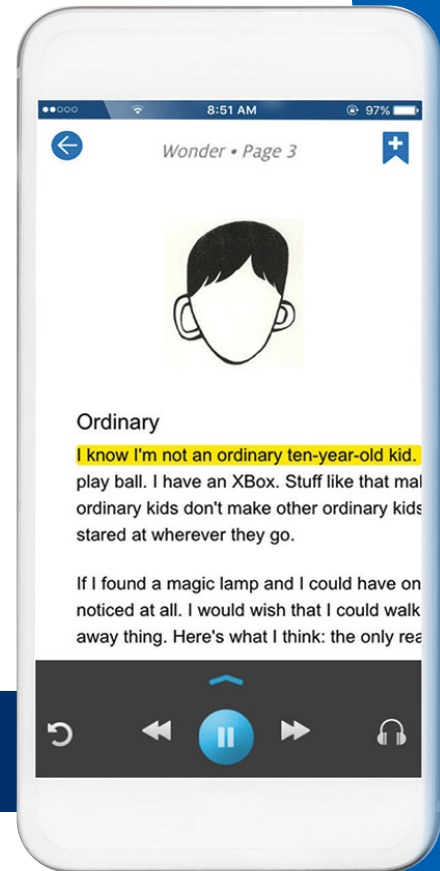
“ **Dyslexia is a different brain organization that needs different teaching methods.** ”

—*Dr. Marianne Wolf, Director, Center for Dyslexia, Diverse Learners and Social Justice, UCLA*

Simple Tools and Tips to Address Dyslexic Students Needs in the Classroom

Students with dyslexia will begin to regain their confidence if you can remove certain everyday obstacles that make them feel like they are failing as students. Consider the following:

- **Don't make students read in front of the class.** Since students with dyslexia struggle to decode, having to read aloud puts extra pressure on them and might make them reluctant to read at all.
- **Give students extra time for classwork and tests.** Students with dyslexia will likely need more time than others to read and comprehend assignments and tests.
- **Read questions aloud to ensure comprehension.** Students with dyslexia can better understand directions and questions when they can see and hear the information at the same time.
- **Provide examples of what the work should look like.** If expectations for classwork and homework are clearly communicated and demonstrated, students with dyslexia can better meet them.
- **Don't take points off for incorrect spelling.** Spelling words the way they sound is common for students with dyslexia, as is reversing letters. If the answer is correct, overlook spelling "mistakes."



Audiobooks Can Be a Game-Changer!

Students who struggle to read—especially those with dyslexia—often fall behind their peers because they lack the ability to access grade-level content. Audiobooks can bridge the gap between what a student can read and what they can comprehend by providing access to content in a multisensory format that students can easily absorb. Benefits of audiobooks include:

- ✓ Improved comprehension because students can hear and read the text simultaneously.
- ✓ Better word recognition, increased reading rates, and improved overall vocabulary.
- ✓ Increased confidence and self-esteem, which contribute to academic success.

Seven Common Signs of Dyslexia

You can use your daily experience in the classroom and knowledge of your students to recognize the signs often hiding in plain sight.

- 1. An inability to recognize words accurately.** You show a student a picture of rabbits with the caption "rabbits," and they respond, "bunnies."
- 2. They can't read a sentence smoothly.** You may notice your student skipping small words in a sentence. For example, if you asked her to read the previous sentence, she would do so as "may skip small words sentence."
- 3. Poor spelling.** It should raise a red flag if a student consistently uses irregular capitalization, omits vowels, and changes phonetic spelling. For example, "said" becomes "sed" when written out.
- 4. Difficulty decoding words.** Decoding is a fundamental reading skill that many students—not just those with dyslexia—struggle with. Nonetheless, take note if the student has difficulty matching letters to sounds to read words accurately and fluently.
- 5. Below-average rhyming skills.** You may notice that a student has a hard time rhyming. Students with dyslexia struggle with hearing the component sounds in words and often do not appreciate the subtleties of rhymes. You may also notice that they may read in a monotone style.
- 6. Acting out during reading time.** If a student becomes easily distracted, starts bothering classmates, or desires to leave the classroom, they may be trying to avoid reading.
- 7. Reading ability far below their intelligence level.** Dyslexia is not connected to intelligence in any way. In fact, you may notice that a student who struggles with reading excels in other subject areas.

“ We know the benefits of reading. You become a better reader by reading. You become a better writer by reading. You become a better mathematician by reading... ”

—Yukima Vannoy, Supervisor of Secondary ELA, East Orange School District



Achieve Maximum Impact with Learning Ally

At Learning Ally, we believe all students should have equal opportunities to learn and succeed. Our mission is to help address the literacy crisis in the US by providing reading solutions and resources aligned with the science of reading. Our suite of solutions deliver quick wins in reading comprehension and improvement across the PreK-12 grade bands.

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Accelerates reading development through rich and engaging text sets of human-narrated stories, set above students' decoding ability, which builds increased comprehension for PreK-2 students.

LEARNING ALLY AUDIOBOOK SOLUTION® (K-12TH GRADE)

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PROFESSIONAL LEARNING (PREK-12)

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