

Dyslexia Defined

The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) defines dyslexia in the following way:

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

Put simply, dyslexia is an inherited learning disability that runs in families. Dyslexia literally means “difficulty with language.” Dyslexia varies in severity and symptom from one person to the next and can affect reading, spelling, writing, word retrieval, articulation, directionality, and the ability to remember rote facts.

Secondary problems may develop if the dyslexia is left untreated or if the dyslexia is more severe. Some of these problems include difficulty with reading comprehension, vocabulary, and written expression. Additionally, secondary conditions such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or speech and language impairments are often coexisting.

Characteristics of Dyslexia

Please be aware that symptoms of dyslexia will not be exactly the same from one person to the next. Some people will have more symptoms while others will have less. Dyslexia can be diagnosed as mild, moderate, severe, or profound. To add to this, symptoms will look different depending the age of the person affected.

Research as shown there are three main characteristics that most individuals with dyslexia have:

1. Difficulty sounding out unknown words
2. Slow and inaccurate reading fluency (reading out-loud)
3. Poor spelling

There are many other symptoms of dyslexia. Please request our free resource guide, [“Characteristics of Dyslexia”](#) to see a more comprehensive list.

Recommended Books

Many experts give long, exhausting reading lists. Our recommendation is different. If you’re just starting to learn about dyslexia, there are two books we recommend:

1. Shaywitz, Sally. E., *Overcoming Dyslexia* (2020 edition)
2. Hasbrouck, Jan, 2020. *Conquering Dyslexia: A guide to early detection and intervention for teachers and families.*