



## What does dyslexia mean for me?

Everyone is different and so are all dyslexic people. Dyslexia affects people in different ways.

Dyslexia is nothing to be ashamed of. Many people see their dyslexia as an advantage.

### Explaining my dyslexia to others

Dyslexic people often say it is difficult to explain their dyslexia to others.

These are some of the things they say:

- 'It's like looking for something in a library when all the books have fallen off the shelves!'
- 'It's not a disease, it's just the way I am.'
- 'My brain is wired differently and sometimes there are blocks on the wiring, so I have to take different routes to find information. A bit like taking the A 1 when the M1 is blocked due to a traffic jam.'
- 'It's as though my computer crashes when I am given too much information!'
- 'I know what it is I want to say but I can never find the right words.'
- 'I see things from a different angle. Problems are often easy to solve and I don't understand why others struggle with them.'
- 'It feels like no-one else thinks about things in the same way that I do.'
- 'Solving problems or doing tasks is the easy part. Explaining how I did it is the difficulty!'
- 'I have all the right ideas but when I write them down, they do not make sense anymore.'

When talking to employers and tutors you may need to be more specific. Be honest about everything you find difficult but emphasise ways you have found to get around these problems, for example;

- 'My spelling is poor, **but** I use a spellchecker and for an important document I ask a colleague to proof read.'
- 'I find a series of instructions difficult to follow **but** if I have time to make notes or a written list I can get on with the job.'

### Understanding the way I think

Dyslexic people hear and see normally but have difficulty remembering what they hear and see. This is called processing information. Brain scan experiments have shown that dyslexic people use different areas of the brain to process information.

A psychologist's report (if you have had an assessment) should be able to identify your individual strengths and weaknesses.

We all absorb information in different ways. Some people learn best through listening, some by seeing and others by doing. There are also combinations of these. Understanding how you absorb and process information is useful in the workplace or during study.

We all have our own learning styles. This is the way we process information best. If you can identify your learning style you can improve the way you work.

There are three main learning styles;

- Auditory - using sounds and words
- Visual - using your own images, imaging pictures in your mind
- Kinaesthetic - being active in your learning, doing, touching, practising things.

There can be any combination of these, for example, auditory/visual or auditory/kinaesthetic. All three styles together are known as meta-cognitive learning.

Look at these lists of activities related to each area of learning. Think of your learning experience. Try to identify activities which you know would suit you best. This can provide a rough guide to your learning style.

Auditory	Visual	Kinaesthetic
Audio tape	Computer based learning	Interactive CD RaMS
Lectures	Photographs	Computer based learning
Radio	Pictures	Visits
Dictation	Videos & TV	Field trips
Video conferencing	OHP presentations	Activity based learning
Discussion	Diagrams	Rehearsing and performing

Your dyslexia may cause you personal difficulties as well as the more obvious task related problems. You may not be very self-confident. It is important that you are able to accept the areas you have strengths and those where you have weaknesses. Try not to worry if you cannot do a task, everyone has weaknesses.

It is best to be honest with yourself and those around you. It is alright to admit that you do not understand something or cannot do a task. Take responsibility for what you can and cannot do. Do not always believe the fault belongs to another person. Try not to blame your dyslexia. You may have to work harder and in a different way at times. Dyslexia is the reason you work the way you do, not an excuse.

Having a positive and honest attitude will gain you much respect.

For more information contact the BDA.

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