



Pearson

The Handy Little Guide to...

Dyslexia

A practical guide to supporting students with dyslexia in a classroom





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Common misconceptions about dyslexia:

Myth!



Individuals with dyslexia cannot perform well in school.

Fact!



Many individuals with dyslexia are high-achievers and perform very well in school. They can be successful not only if they are highly motivated and work exceptionally hard, but also if they are provided with the necessary classroom conditions to allow them to demonstrate their potential and knowledge.

Myth!



Dyslexia is more frequent among boys than girls.

Fact!



The prevalence of dyslexia is **similar among boys and girls but boys** are more frequently identified as having dyslexia, while girls often remain unidentified because they develop successful coping strategies (e.g. they tend to be quieter, they choose to sit at the back of the room, they tend to be less disruptive or even try to become invisible).

Myth!



Individuals with dyslexia always experience serious problems with reading.

Fact!



Effective instruction helps individuals with dyslexia to learn to read accurately. **Some dyslexic individuals therefore develop successful reading strategies** and become good readers. However, other individuals with dyslexia may continue to read slowly and not automatically.

Myth!



Dyslexia can be cured or helped by special treatment, for example fish oil capsules, vitamins, massage therapy, coloured lenses, vision exercises, eye occlusion, balancing exercises, or brain reorientation procedures.

Fact!



Despite sensational media reports, **none** of these apparently miraculous cures have been scientifically proven to be effective.

Myth!



Children with dyslexia are lazy. They should try harder.

Fact!



Individuals with dyslexia demonstrate **unusual brain function** patterns when reading, and despite being intelligent, motivated, well taught and hardworking, they often experience difficulties with print processing and consequently with extracting meaning from a text. Appropriate intervention and the provision of suitable classroom conditions can help them overcome these difficulties.

Myth!



If a child finds learning to read and spell challenging, he/she is dyslexic.

Fact!



Dyslexia is by no means the only cause of literacy difficulties. **Not all reading and spelling difficulties are of a dyslexic nature**, but they may result for example from vision or hearing impairments, inaccurate instruction or environmental negligence. In addition, dyslexia does not cause difficulties only in reading, so if a child is dyslexic, he will show other warning signs as well.

Myth!
→

Dyslexia is more frequent among those socially disadvantaged.

Fact!
→

Dyslexia and social status are not related. Dyslexia is of genetic origin; it is not caused by poverty, poor access to education or environmental negligence. However, these factors may aggravate the effects of dyslexia and can have a negative impact on employability.

Myth!
→

Smart people cannot be dyslexic.

Fact!
→

Dyslexia and intelligence are not related. Dyslexia occurs at all levels of intelligence. Individuals with dyslexia can be extremely bright, highly gifted and creative.

Myth!
→

Dyslexia can be outgrown.

Fact!
→

Children do not grow out of dyslexia. It is a lifetime condition; however, early and effective intervention can minimise its negative effects.

Myth!
→

Dyslexia does not run in families.

Fact!
→

Dyslexia **can be** inherited.

Myth!
→

Dyslexia is caused by visual perception problems.

Fact!
→

Dyslexia is **not** a visual perception problem.

Myth!
→

Dyslexia cannot be identified until school age.

Fact!
→

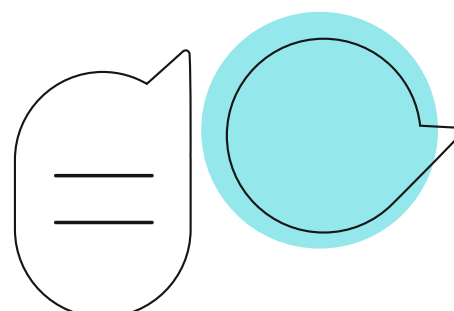
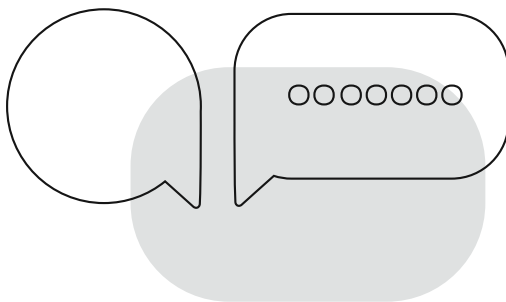
The potential for an individual to develop the signs of dyslexia can be identified in babies and kindergarten children **well before they begin formal schooling**. The sooner this potential is identified, the quicker it is possible to provide the necessary help and support.

Myth!
→

Dyslexia is a disease.

Fact!
→

Dyslexia **is not a disease** and it cannot be cured; it is a **learning difference** whose effects can be reduced through adequate, regular and intensive educational intervention and hard work.



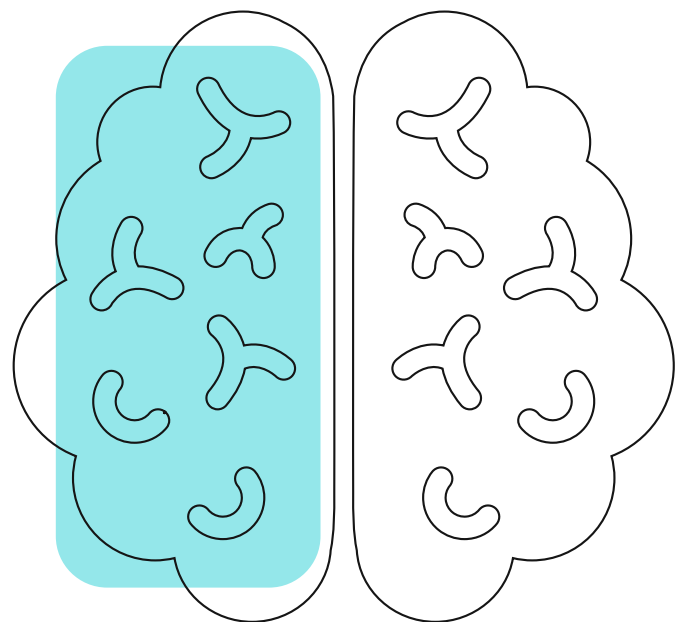
What is dyslexia?

- Dyslexia does not refer to any reading problem, it is a **developmental condition with a neurological origin** and behavioural signs of different severity.
- Dyslexia is a type of specific learning difference which primarily manifests itself in **difficulties with reading and spelling**, but its signs are not limited to problems with written language. Literacy problems can be accompanied by problems in other areas of cognitive functioning (e.g. poor concentration, short attention span, difficulty in internalising knowledge and automatising skills and poor fine and gross motor skills).
- **Environmental/cultural influences and individual differences** (e.g. age, motivation, personality, social support, home environment, provision of teaching, cultural attitudes, socio-economic factors, instructional methods, the nature of language or orthographic systems) do not cause dyslexia but can reduce or intensify its signs.
- **Difficulties** experienced by learners with dyslexia **are frequently unexpected** in relation to their age and cognitive abilities. They are therefore surprising, especially when students receive effective classroom instruction on literacy skills.
- Regardless of reading and spelling difficulties, dyslexic students might do well in other subjects and demonstrate different talents.
- Dyslexic difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and poor spelling and decoding abilities may result in **problems with reading comprehension and reduced reading experience**, which, in turn, limits the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

Main reason for dyslexia

Reduced phonological awareness – poorer ability to identify, differentiate and manipulate sounds and to learn how sounds correspond to letters.

“ *Dyslexia does not refer to a reading problem.* ”



SLDs (specific learning disabilities) associated with dyslexia

Dyspraxia, which involves problems with motor coordination – with planning and executing movements. (This may result in difficulties with handwriting, sports or uttering sounds in spontaneous speech).

ADHD – attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, which may involve inattention (e.g. difficulty paying attention to details and following instructions, forgetfulness, losing things or getting easily distracted), **hyperactivity** (e.g. fidgeting, restlessness or excessive talking), and **impulsivity** (e.g. impatience, poor self-control or interrupting others).

Dyscalculia, which involves mathematical difficulties; struggling with learning number concepts (e.g. trouble expressing dates).

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain. These differences can include delayed developmental milestones, difficulties with verbal and nonverbal communication, and challenges with social interaction and establishing social relations.

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is not the same as dyslexia. Dyslexia is not a disorder of receptive or expressive language. Children with DLD often have reading and spelling deficits.

Signs of dyslexia

Dyslexic difficulties can have **different degrees of severity** from subtle, through mild to severe.

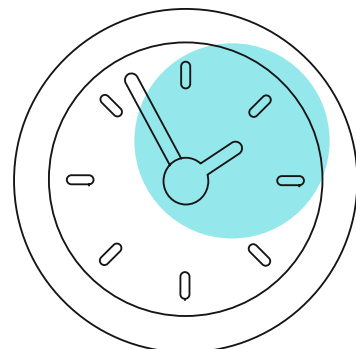
The most prevalent manifestation of dyslexia is **reading and spelling difficulties**, but signs of dyslexia are not limited to literacy-related problems. They may also concern other areas of cognitive functioning.

Signs differ across individuals and not all can be observed in every dyslexic individual. Individuals with dyslexia may display very **different combinations of strengths and weaknesses**.

Once diagnosed, a **person will remain dyslexic**. Even if they manage to overcome their reading and spelling problems through adequate instruction and hard work, their overall learning difference is not likely to disappear and will affect them throughout their lives.

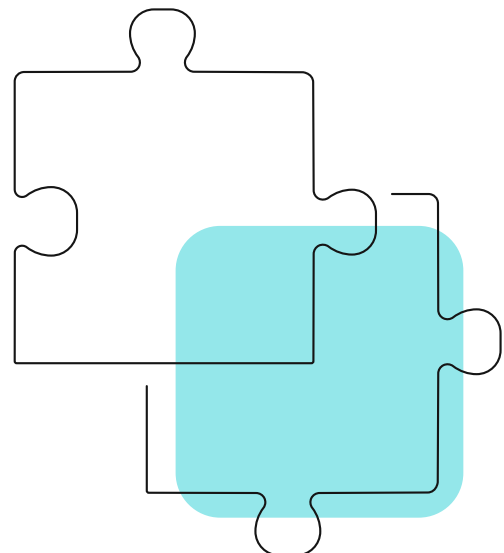
Important

Dyslexia exists from birth and can manifest itself differently over the lifetime of an individual. The signs of dyslexia can change with age.



Signs of dyslexia include...

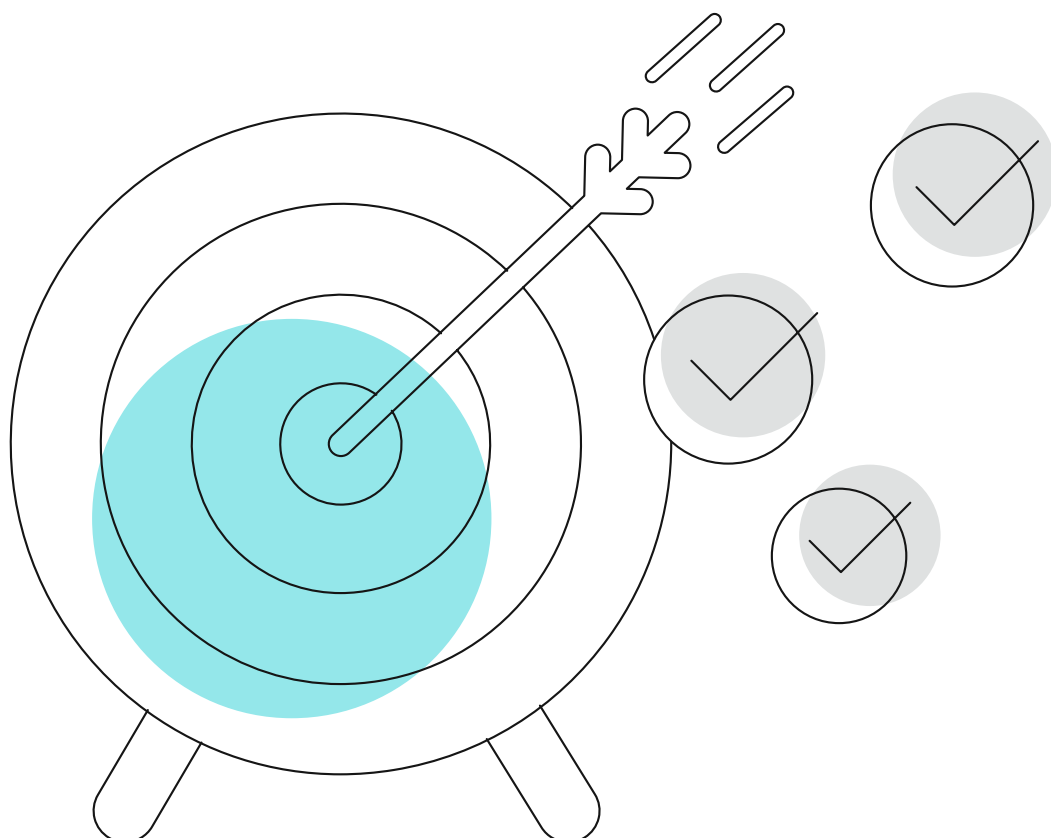
- **Reduced phonological processing** – difficulties in learning, remembering and distinguishing the sounds of L2, especially those which do not exist in the learner's L1; difficulties in breaking down words into sounds and repeating sounds, words, phrases or sentences in L2.
- Difficulties in **speed and accuracy of processing orally presented information** (speech perception, understanding longer spoken texts) **and in speech production** (slow speech, problems with articulation) – both resulting from poor phonological processing and poor phonological short-term memory.
- Difficulties in acquiring **grapheme-phoneme conversion rules** (sound-letter relations); difficulties in recognising spoken words in writing.
- Difficulties in **comprehending spoken language**, especially when it is spoken quickly and in responding immediately.
- Slow word retrieval.
- Difficulties in **acquiring various aspects of L2** – memorising words (e.g. mixing up words with similar pronunciation or meaning); understanding and applying grammatical concepts and rules (e.g. forming plurals and possessives, word-order); organising thoughts, ordering ideas and producing longer written texts.
- Smaller **range of vocabulary**.
- **Reading difficulties** which are caused by slow and/or inaccurate word-recognition resulting from problems in segmenting words into sounds (poor **phonological processing**) and problems in smooth conversion of letters into sounds (**grapheme-phoneme correspondences**). Dyslexic learners can be slow readers, or they can read inaccurately, or their reading can be both slow and inaccurate.
- **Spelling difficulties** – inaccurate spelling results from the reduced ability to segment spoken words into sounds and then to convert sounds into letters (or letter combinations); difficulties in recognising common spelling patterns across words.
- **Reduced attention span**, problems with sustaining attention and concentration, slowed down processing; difficulties in keeping up with the class.
- **Poor serial processing** (ability to remember verbal material in the order presented).
- **Reduced internalisation** of new knowledge and automatising of new skills.
- Reduced **working memory capacity**.
- Difficulties with **implicit learning**.
- Poor **organisation and time-management skills**.
- Poor **balance and gross motor skills** (e.g. difficulty riding a bike).
- **Poor handwriting** (resulting from poor fine motor skills).
- **Mathematical learning difficulties** – dyscalculia (e.g. with arithmetic or memorising multiplication tables).



Did you know?

Signs of dyslexia and intensity of reading and spelling problems experienced by a given individual depend also on the nature of the orthographic system of a language in which they learn to read. Signs of dyslexia may differ across the languages an individual is studying.

- Languages with consistent orthographies (e.g. Spanish or Italian) tend to be more learner-friendly. They use **simple sound-letter relations** – a given letter or a letter cluster is usually pronounced in the same way, similarly, a given sound is virtually always spelled in the same way.
- Languages with **non-transparent orthographic systems** (e.g. English or French) may cause greater difficulties for dyslexic students when learning to read and spell in these languages. They use unpredictable and complex sound-letter relations (e.g. multi-letter graphemes, multiple spelling choices and irregularities), which means that a given letter or a letter cluster can have several distinct pronunciations and that a given sound can be noted down with multiple spelling choices.
- The choice of a foreign language to study can be determined by motivational factors. Dyslexic learners may still prefer to study English, despite its orthographic complexity, because of its international character.



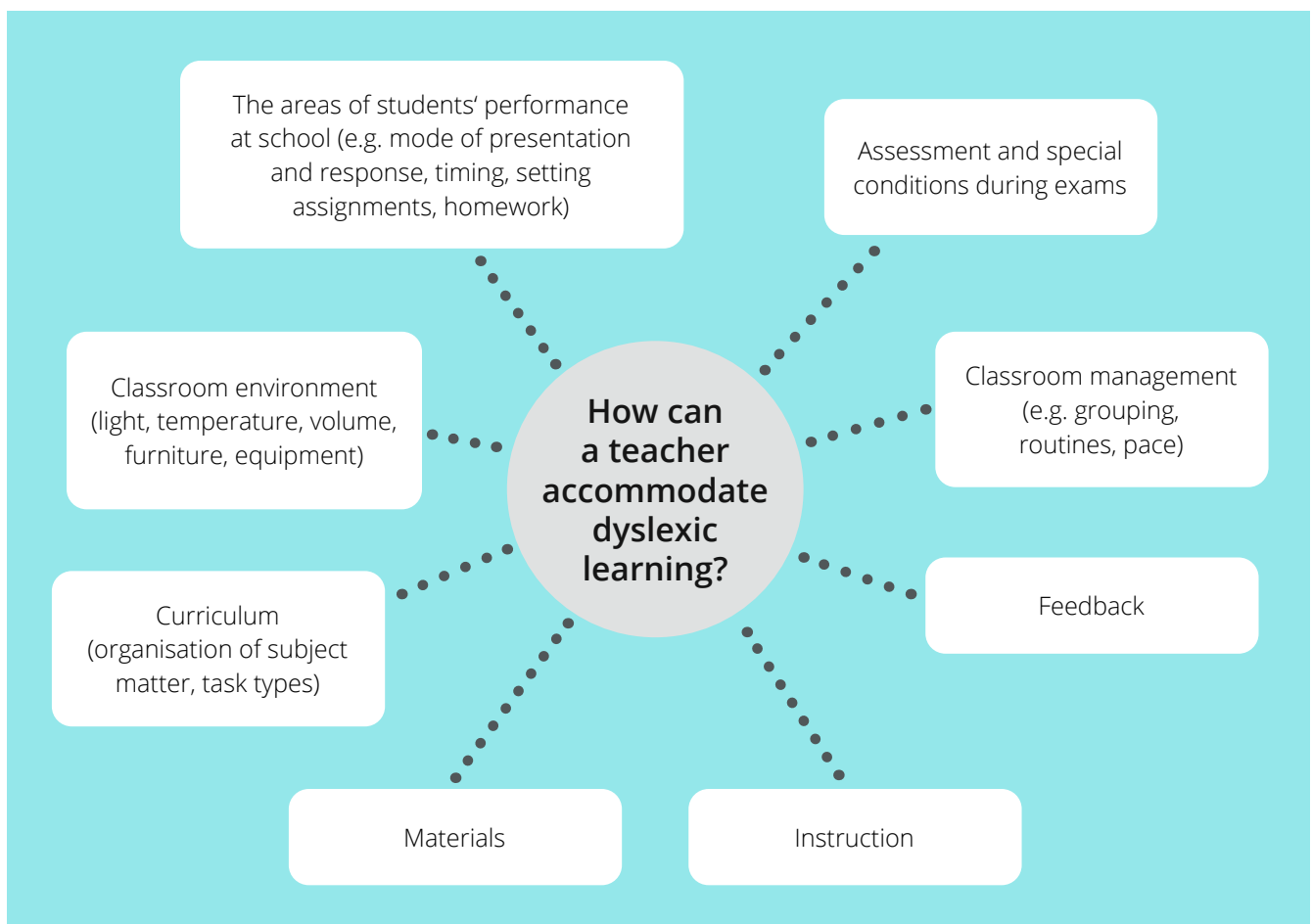
Accommodating dyslexic learning differences in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom

Special **accommodation (enabling solutions and arrangements)** offered by teachers to dyslexic learners in order to respond to their special educational needs will enable them to show their potential, to develop and to demonstrate attainment.

Adjusting, altering and differentiating teaching practices by teachers will help to ensure the active participation of students with dyslexia in classroom activities. This is not to lower the requirements but to teach dyslexic learners in the way they learn best and allow them to demonstrate their potential. Some learners with dyslexia who experience the most severe difficulties will still require individualised, small group or one-to-one special instruction to overcome their learning problems.

Important

Such accommodation should not change the expectations for performance or provide unfair advantage, but make it possible for learners with dyslexia to prove their knowledge and to complete the same assignments as other learners, despite the difficulties they encounter.



Best practices to help learners with dyslexia overcome difficulties:

Teaching tools

- **Differentiate materials** (e.g. allocate different parts of a text or sections in the book to different learners), tasks, expectation and support based upon students' abilities.
- Divide material into digestible, logically sequenced (from easier to more difficult) chunks.
- **Reduce copying from a board or screen**; instead prepare handouts with well-organised notes, summaries, crucial points and conclusions of the lesson; highlight salient points with larger font.
- Avoid pages cluttered with information and serif fonts.
- Accept the use of spellcheckers, dictionaries and laptops for editing, note-taking and typing in class instead of hand writing. Their overall learning difference is not likely to disappear and will affect them throughout their lives.

Try this in class

Use assistive **technological support** (e.g. specialised computer software, text-to-speech or speech-to-text aids with a microphone and headset, and voice output systems that read back texts displayed on a computer screen).

Day-To-Day Teaching Methods

- Use a **multi-sensory structured language learning approach** (MSL) for presentation and consolidation of language.
- Provide frequent **repetition and revision** of material.
- Set **achievable** goals.
- Make **explicit connections** between what students already know and new information.
- Use **step-by-step instruction**.
- Help to sustain **concentration**.
- Avoid **reading aloud** in front of the whole class. Instead, allow students to record themselves reading aloud at home.
- **Do not disqualify written work** because of poor handwriting or poor spelling.

Remember

When correcting written work, **concentrate only on certain aspects** (e.g. only the use of grammatical structures), **do not highlight or circle spelling mistakes** (as this leads to consolidating the erroneous forms) but cross misspelled words and provide correct spelling above or next to them so that dyslexic students focus on and integrate correct forms.

- Allow **oral** instead of written performance.
- **Summarise content** in figures, charts, tables, graphs or illustrations.
- Encourage students to organise and represent content in **mindmaps and spidergrams**.
- Provide training in **learning strategies**.

Classroom Management

- Maintain **daily classroom routines** – this helps students with dyslexia to know and do what is expected of them at a given time.
- Give more **time** for completing tasks and assignments.
- Signal when you would like students to respond orally, allocate **enough time for preparation**, provide questions and issues you want to discuss in a lesson in advance, rather than call on students for spontaneous responses.
- Provide regular **consultation and feedback**.
- Compare what students have learned **with their previous achievements** rather than with the attainments of their peers.
- **Praise effort** and achievement frequently but only when deserved.
- Foster a positive self-image.
- During tests and group work nominate a student to read the material aloud, and/or a scribe, to do the writing part for dyslexic learners.
- **Vary the test conditions** – provide a separate, distraction-free room, give more time to complete the test, use alternative test modes (e.g. take-home tests) and task types.

“ Praise effort and achievement frequently but only when deserved. ”



Recommended teaching methodology

The Multi-sensory structured language learning (MSL) approach is recommended for dyslexic students and it involves:

Highly **structured teaching** (from simple to more complex)

Direct, **explicit teaching** and clear explanation and demonstration of the rules in every aspect of L2

Training in learning strategies

Drills, frameworks and models

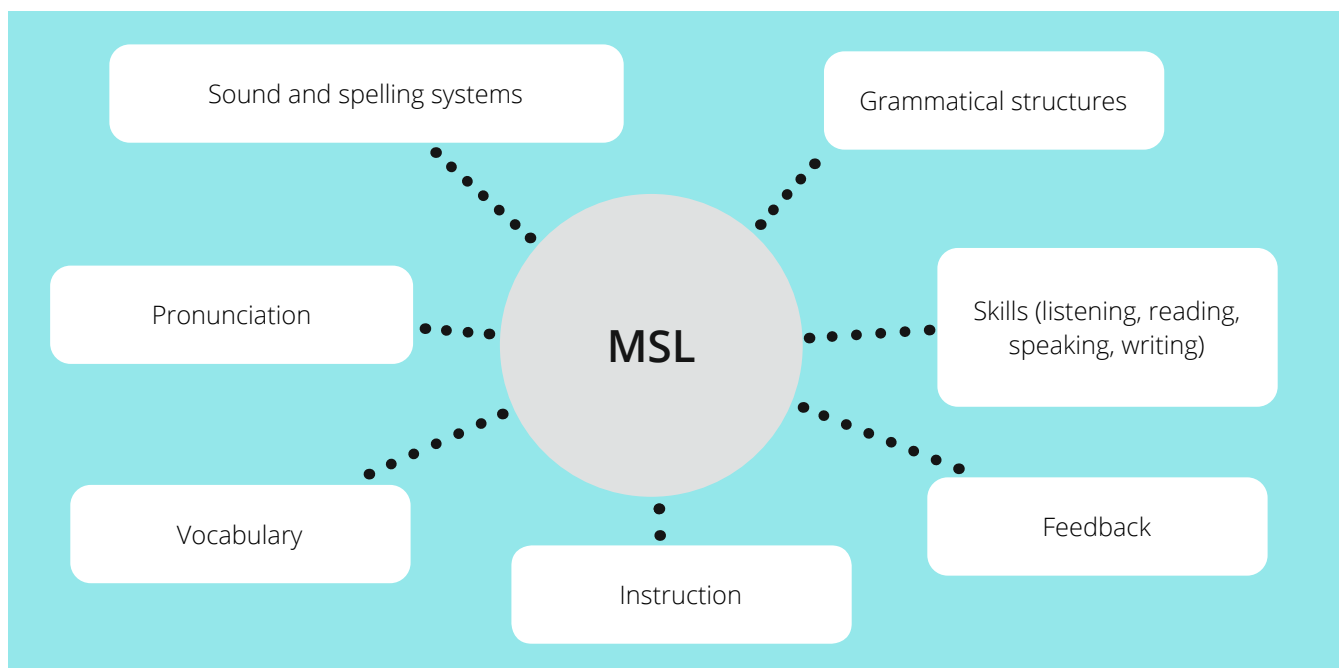
Small cumulative steps

Multi-sensory activities

Frequent **repetition**, ample **practice** and revision

“ *Activate multiple sensory pathways in your students.* ”

Use the multi-sensory structured language learning (MSL) approach to teach:



Activate multiple sensory pathways – auditory, visual, tactile and kinaesthetic. Make sure your students with dyslexia learn what a letter or a word looks like, how it sounds, how the speech organs are used to pronounce it, and what hand moves are needed to write it.

Developing phonological and orthographic awareness

Did you know?

Phonological awareness is the knowledge that spoken words are made of tiny segments – sounds. It is the ability to identify, distinguish and manipulate the sound structure of words. It is crucial for fast and accurate reading and spelling.

Make sure that your students with dyslexia:

- can identify **phonological units** of different sizes – words, syllables, onsets, rimes, and finally, individual sounds,
- learn how to **break apart and put these units together** to form words. These abilities form the basis for the successful mapping of the sounds to the appropriate letters – spelling.

Multi-sensory activities will:

- **make oral activities more concrete** and the word sound structure easier to understand through visual and auditory cues such as tokens, boxes, markers, counters, pictures, gestures, clapping, and tapping to represent words, syllables, onsets, rimes or individual sounds,
- help your students with dyslexia develop **phonological awareness** (e.g. differentiating sounds, dividing words into syllables and sounds and adding or removing sounds to form new words),
- teach how sounds correspond to letters (**orthographic awareness**), which is especially important if the orthographic systems of L1 and L2 differ, and if the relationship between sounds and letters in L2 is complicated.



What causes difficulties when learning to spell and read in English?

- a single sound can be represented by more than one letter (e.g. *bright*),
- a single sound may be represented by different letters or letter combinations in different words (e.g. *might*, *try*, *time*),
- a given letter or combination of letters may represent more than one sound (e.g. *bread*, *meal*),
- there are exceptions and irregular words that need to be rote-learned.

To help your dyslexic students to spell correctly in English:

- use **multi-sensory techniques** and teaching aids: colour-coding, flash cards, cards for reading and tracing drills, spelling choice stickers, graphic models of words, word slides and flip cards,
- combine **multi-sensory techniques and direct teaching** of productive spelling patterns and spelling rules, especially with regard to sounds that have several possible spelling choices (e.g. *train*, *say*, *place*),
- **teach syllable analysis through onsets and rimes** and present words in sets classified according to the rimes they share (e.g. *cat*, *hat*, *rat*, *bat*),
- provide **ample practice and repetition** opportunities in order to consolidate spelling (e.g. games, dominoes, bingo).

“ Provide ample practice and repetition opportunities. ”

Dividing words into onsets and rimes



b

bat



c

at

cat

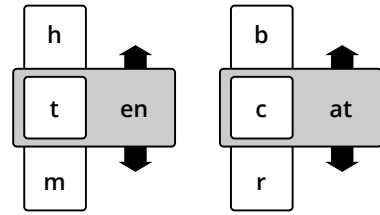
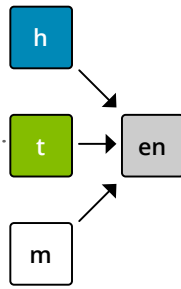


r

rat

Picture cards, onset and rime cards

Onset and rime cards and word slides



Flash cards, word slides and other movable teaching aids

Word slides

Dividing words into sounds

Picture cards, tokens, letter cards

Spelling choices for individual sounds

Long vowels

Word slides

r **fl ight** br s l n sl t

t	th
gr	n
s	m
sp	ch
sw	t
f ee l	
sl	p
w	k
ch	se
n	d
qu	n
sp	d

n **ee** d

cl **ea** n

l **i** f **e**

sk **y**
r **igh** t

Flip cards

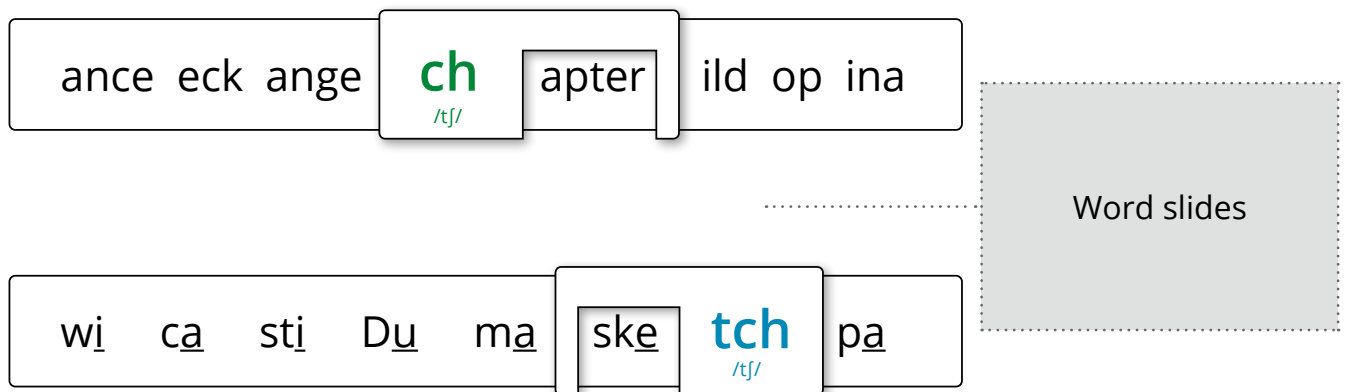
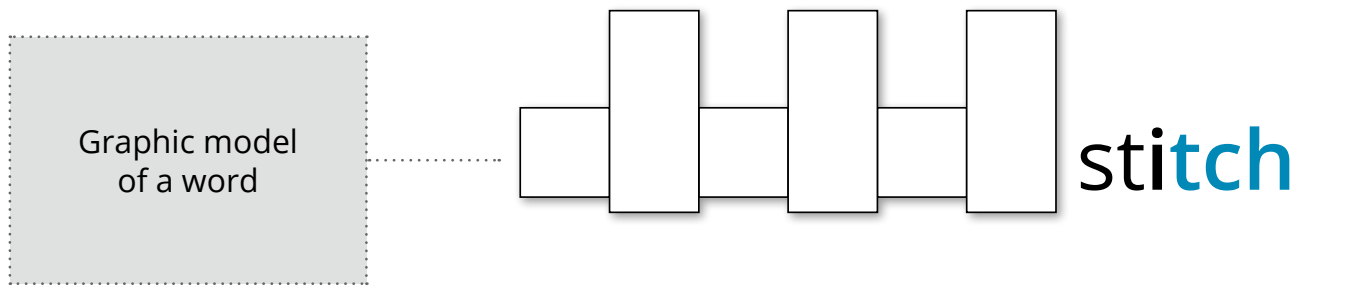
Flip cards

l **i** f **e** h **o** l **e**

t **u** b **e** t **a** k **e**

Spelling choices for individual sounds

/tʃ/ sound



Cards for reading and tracing drills, spelling choice stickers, bingo, dominoes

bea	<input type="checkbox"/>	ch
sti	<input type="checkbox"/>	tch
<input type="checkbox"/>	op	ch

BINGO			
catch	teach	cheap	chest
beach	match	chop	punch
fetch	child	lunch	charm
sketch	check	reach	stitch

church	bench	bench	sketch	sketch	chain	chain	peach
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10 Tips for effective vocabulary teaching

1. **Reduce** the number of new words introduced in a lesson (maximum 6-8).
2. **Do not overwhelm students with information** about new words during one lesson – teach basic meaning and phonological form first (pronunciation), then spelling, and when students correctly associate the spoken form with meaning, add further information (e.g. spelling, less frequent meaning, collocations etc.).
3. **Teach the words in context** but directly and explicitly as students with dyslexia may find it difficult to learn implicitly and to infer meaning (e.g. from reading or listening text).
4. **Recycle, repeat, revise frequently**; provide plenty of practice opportunities.
5. Make a short (few-minute long) vocabulary practice activity part of a lesson routine, also **provide periodic reviews**.
6. Encourage students to **keep a record of new words** and revise outside the classroom.
7. **Avoid** teaching similar sounding words and words with similar meaning in one lesson.
8. **Teach spelling and word-formation rules** – this helps students with dyslexia to firstly observe and learn regularities and patterns and then to recognise words.
9. **Present and practise words in groups**, for example, words that have different onsets but share a rime like *cat, hat, rat, bat* (this shows students that they can form new words by changing the initial consonant or consonant cluster) or word families like *fresh, refresh, freshly, freshness, refresher*.
10. **Use multi-sensory techniques** for presenting and consolidating words.



Important

Learning new words is particularly challenging for students with dyslexia as this requires remembering and integrating information associated with a new word such as meaning, spoken and written form, word's grammatical behaviour, derivations, collocations, connotations, register. This information should be divided into **digestible pieces, introduced at intervals and practised regularly**.

Help your students learn words more effectively:

Form words from wooden, sponge or plastic letters,

Trace on different surfaces such as sandpaper or wood,

Make models from clay,

Finger tap or clap to count the number of syllables or sounds in words,

Use mnemonics, mindmaps, movement and drawing,

Use colour-coded cards, tokens and movable teaching aids (e.g. flip cards or word slides) in sound awareness, spelling, word formation and grammar activities to represent:

- phonological (sound) units (words, syllables, onsets, rimes, individual sounds),
- spelling choices (e.g. 'ch', '-ch' or '-tch' for the /tʃ/ sounds – such as in *check*, *beach*, *witch* or 'igh', 'y' or 'i-e' for the /ai/ sound – such as in *night*, *sky*, *mile*),
- prefixes and suffixes (e.g. *employ***ed**, **un***employment*, *employ***er**),
- parts of speech (e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives),
- parts of a sentence (e.g. subject, verb, object).

educate
education
educated
uneducated
educating
educator
educators
educational

employ
employed
unemployed
employment
unemployment
employee
employer

fresh
refresh
refreshments
freshly
freshman
freshness
refresher

Word formation chart

Word formation movable teaching aids

inter *view* *ed*

un *employ* *ee*

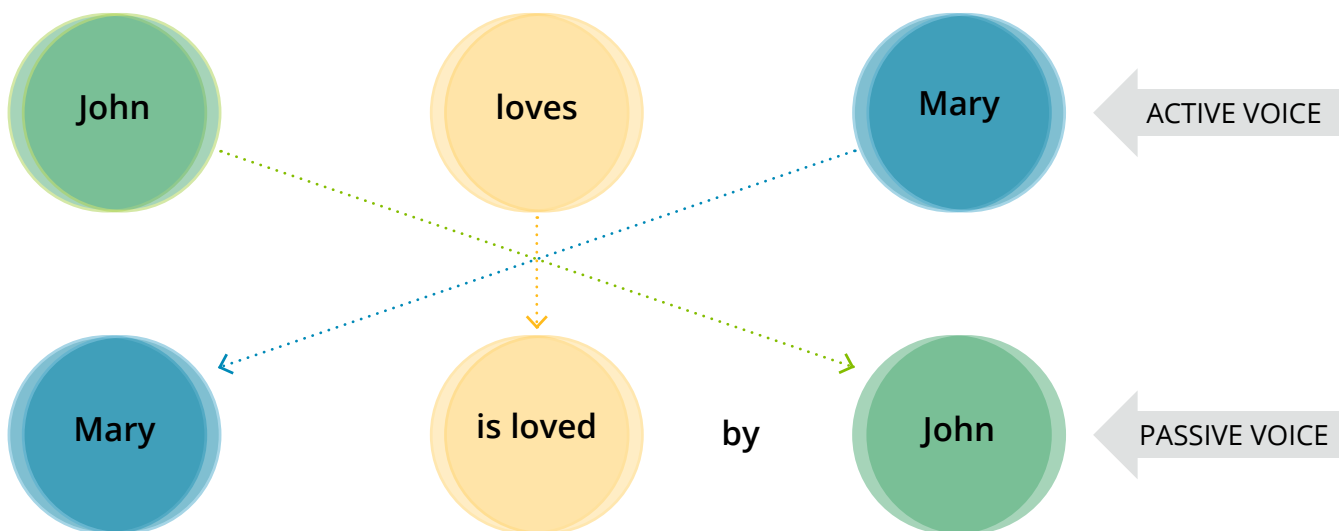
re *fresh* *ments*
ly
man

un *employ* *ment*

employ *er*

10 Tips for effective grammar teaching

1. Direct attention to the **features of grammatical systems** and point out grammar structures in order to help learners notice them and focus on them.
2. Teach **grammar in context** (stress the communicative functions of grammatical structures) but teach the rules **explicitly** and **directly**.
3. **Provide clear explanations, sentence frames and models**, as learners with dyslexia may find it troublesome to deduce grammatical regularities from language input.
4. Build on students' existing knowledge, teach easier and simpler structures first and make sure they are **integrated** and **internalised** before you teach new structures.
5. Reduce the use of complicated terminology and avoid abstract linguistic concepts.
6. Use **shape and colour-coding** to represent parts of sentences (e.g. subject – **green**, verb – **yellow**, object – **blue**; you can also use Lego blocks or Cuisenaire* rods to illustrate word order) and parts of speech (e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives) in presenting and consolidating grammatical structures thereby enabling students to grasp grammar rules without using linguistic terminology.



* Cuisenaire rods are a versatile collection of rectangular rods of 10 colors, each color corresponding to a different length. They can be used as a classroom resource to visually represent various areas of language for example, as representations of concepts such as verb forms and word order.

Learn more:

www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/cuisenaire-rods-language-classroom

www.onestopenglish.com/support/methodology/teaching-materials/using-cuisenaire-rods-with-young-learners/155710.article

<http://john.mullen.pagesperso-orange.fr/cuisenaire.htm>

7. Provide ample **discrete practice of grammatical patterns** during which students with dyslexia remember and internalise them and become able to retrieve them when needed. This controlled practice phase should precede the stage where students are encouraged to use the language to express meaning more freely.
8. The controlled practice stage requires **recycling and revising** but it should remain fun rather than simple repetition.
9. **Incorporate games** (e.g. board games and playing cards – like Snap), crafts, surveys (simple repetitive activities but with a clear communicative focus), movement and multisensory techniques into grammar practice activities and create opportunities for multiple repetition and reproduction of grammatical material – this will lead to **internalisation** and **automatisation**.
10. Provide **oral practice** before moving on to writing activities; in written tasks avoid multiple choice exercises where students choose the correct answer from several options available – this can be confusing for them.

“ *The controlled practice stage requires recycling and revising but it should remain fun rather than simple repetition.* ”



Teaching Language skills



Reading

Reading is especially difficult for learners with dyslexia. Successful reading firstly involves skillful decoding (recognising sound-letter relations and words) and processing of morphological and syntactic information, and then understanding and evaluating the content of the text.

Help learners with decoding to ensure they gain access to the information conveyed in the text.

- Intensive work on **word-level reading** will make the **text-level reading** easier for dyslexic students; practice in sound-letter relationships and word recognition should be provided regularly.
- Explicit training on **reading strategies** (e.g. building prediction, identifying topic sentences and key ideas) helps dyslexic learners cope with the reading task.
- Texts should be **interesting to the learners** and not contain too many unknown words and structures.
- **Pre-reading activities** are especially important as they provide the necessary support before the reading starts. Activate students' background knowledge, make them form expectations as to what the text will be about, give them a purpose for reading (e.g. searching for specific information) so that they can focus their attention while reading.
- **Pre-teach** (directly and explicitly) key vocabulary items (6-8 maximum; highlight them in the text) along with new grammatical structures.

- If students have difficulty understanding the text, read it to them first.
- **Do not ask students with dyslexia to read aloud** (unless they want to) and do not expect them to understand the text at the same time (this can be a very demotivating, time-consuming, unproductive and humiliating experience).

Remember

Text length should be increased gradually; longer texts can be divided into shorter pieces to reduce the challenge. Make the reading task short and focused, check understanding after each short reading phase – discuss answers with the students, ask them to prepare illustrations, do a role-play or act out a story, also ask them to fill charts or diagrams with information from the text.

Multiple choice and gap-fill types of exercises may be confusing and challenging for dyslexic students; substitute some written tasks with oral exercises.

Teaching Language skills



Listening

- **Choose listening texts carefully.** They should not contain too many similar sounding words as your students will have difficulty discriminating similar sounds. Increase text length, difficulty and speed gradually.
- **Divide listening** into shorter pieces to help learners concentrate on the stream of speech they are listening to and keep the information in their working memory.
- Give an opportunity to listen for the first time without asking students to complete any tasks so they can concentrate on the content and understand the gist; check understanding.
- Do not ask students to listen and write at the same time. Note-taking is troublesome as it is hard for them to divide attention between listening and writing.
- Substitute written tasks with oral exercises; use similar task types as with reading.
- Make sure they **understand written instructions** to listening tasks.
- As with reading, activating background knowledge, pre-teaching listening strategies, new vocabulary items and grammatical structures helps students to understand the listening text.

Try this in class

Use visual prompts and illustrations to help students understand the listening text.

“ *Students with dyslexia should not be asked to listen and write at the same time.* ”



Teaching Language skills



Speaking

- Encourage learners with dyslexia to **participate in communicative activities** and produce spoken language starting with simple, short answers and then gradually encourage them to deliver longer stretches of spoken discourse.
- Encourage the use of **electronic online dictionaries** which offer the pronunciations of words.
- Explicitly teach the rules, structures and models of communicative situations and planning strategies.
- **Pre-teach** vocabulary and grammatical structures.
- Give time for rehearsal of the communicative task so that students can repeat and improve and better remember their talk.
- Allow the use of **modern technology** for oral presentations (e.g. Power Point, preparing podcasts or webcasts).

Did you know?

Students with dyslexia experience fewer problems in speaking in comparison to other skills. Their major problem with speaking activities is **fast retrieval** of words from memory, **correct pronunciation**, constructing well-structured **longer pieces of speech**, as well as **anxiety**.

“

Provide frequent practice.

”



Teaching Language skills

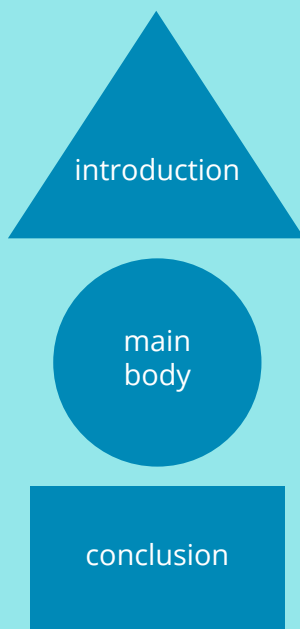


Writing

- Start with **sentence level writing** and completing missing parts of information in short written tasks. Move gradually towards more demanding tasks.
- Explicitly **teach planning** and **text organisation strategies**.
- Use brainstorming and mind mapping, provide outlines, models, frames and templates of texts (e.g. formal letters).
- Explicitly **teach self-checking** and **self-correcting strategies** (e.g. the use of checklists and guidelines).
- Use **cards of different shapes** (or colour-coded cards) which indicate parts of the paragraph (e.g. topic sentence – blue, supporting example – green) or text (e.g. introduction – triangle, main body – circle, conclusion – rectangle) to help students organise their thoughts by manipulating the cards.

Important

Writing longer texts may be challenging for students with dyslexia due to their handwriting and spelling difficulties along with problems in organising and sequencing thoughts and ideas in order to compose a coherent text.



- **Make writing activities meaningful**, encourage the use of communication technology for writing e-mails, text messaging, chatting, blogs.
- Encourage the use of computers, spellcheckers and electronic dictionaries.
- **Pre-teach** vocabulary and grammatical structures.
- **Provide support** and scaffolding throughout the process of writing.

Pearson Australia

What's in the Dyslexia Toolkit?



This toolkit includes resources designed to help you screen and identify risk for dyslexia, and intervene and monitor progress of children with dyslexia.

What is a User Level?

When you register with Pearson Clinical Assessment, you will be assigned an individual User Level. Your User Level is based on your profession and qualifications and is assigned to you upon submission of your registration. This determines what assessments you can order from Pearson Clinical Assessment.

A = No qualifications necessary

B = Special Educator/Allied Health*

* Please note postgraduate training in advanced statistics, research methods and psychometric assessment use are required for this accreditation.

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Screening and comprehensive academic achievement assessment

Step 1



Dyslexia Index scores for the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, third edition (WIAT-III)

User Level B:

Use the WIAT-III Dyslexia Index Scores to screen your struggling learners, determine their risk of dyslexia and need for more comprehensive academic, language or cognitive testing.

Step 2



Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, Australia and New Zealand Standardised, third edition – (WIAT-III)

User Level B:

Use the WIAT-III to identify a struggling learner's current academic performance compared to peers, analyse their reading, spelling and maths skills, use this data to plan and execute appropriate evidence-based intervention (see intervention section below), and monitor progress through said intervention.



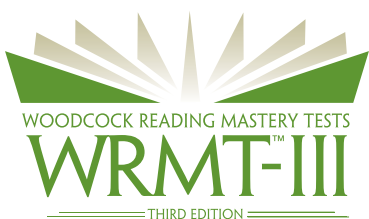
Step 2A



Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests, third edition (WRMT-III)

User Level B:

Dive deeper into the strengths and differences of a struggling learner's reading skills and corroborate WIAT-III results using the WRMT-III.



Screening Oral Language and Intellectual Functioning

Step 3

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, fifth Edition (PPVT-5) - Assess receptive vocabulary



User Level B:

Determine vocabulary ability compared to peers with the PPVT-5, intervene when necessary (see intervention section below), and use results to determine whether a more comprehensive vocabulary, or speech and language assessment with a speech pathologist is justified.

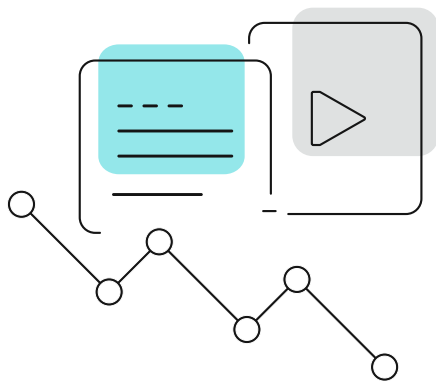
Step 4

Ravens 2 (nonverbal estimate of intellectual functioning)



User Level B:

Screen for nonverbal cognitive ability with the Ravens 2, and use results from all of the above assessment, intervention and progress monitoring to determine whether a more comprehensive educational assessment with a psychologist is justified.



Intervention Tools

For User Level A:

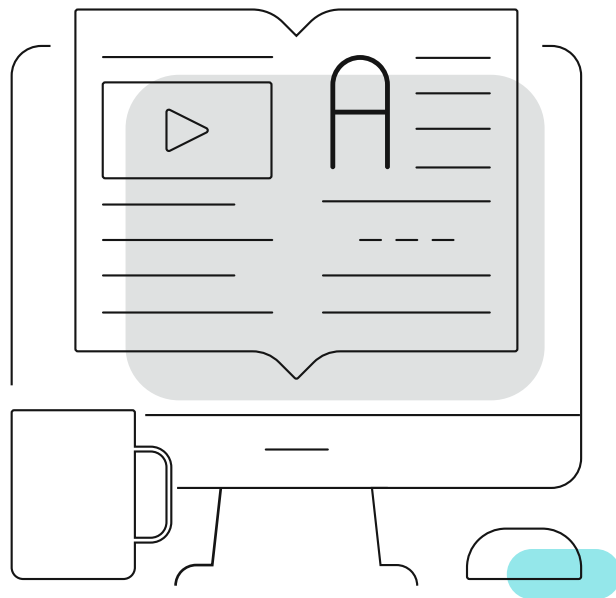
- [Toe By Toe](#)

Webinars: Toe by Toe - A highly structured, multi-sensory reading manual for teachers and parents (ft. Frank Cowling).

 [Watch now](#)

Learning from home: Supporting carers and teachers to help their students reach their reading potential with Toe by Toe special guest Sue Austin.

 [Watch now](#)



For User Level A:

- [Bridge of Vocabulary 2](#)

Explicit, evidence-based vocabulary intervention activities tied to academic standards.

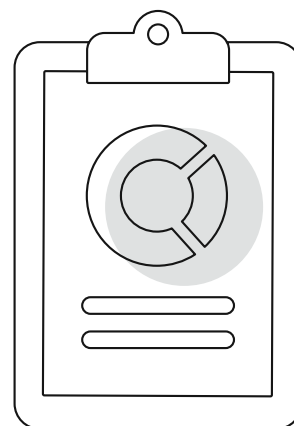
Progress Monitoring Tools

Growth Scale Values (GSVs)

Useful for comparing an individual's performance on a subtest or composite area relative to their own past performance.

GSV analyses and charts are available in optional extra Q-global scoring for the **WIAT-III**, **WRMT-III** and other academic achievement assessments.

Talk to our special education consultant to find out more about using Q-Global for scoring and GSV's to monitor progress.



Get accredited to use Pearson's User Level B tools and best support your struggling learners

We know that identifying the needs of learners can be a challenge and specialist help can be hard to come by.

That's why we've created our Addressing the Barriers to Learning in Education (ABLE) **two-day accreditation training** to upskill teachers, special educators and learning support staff, helping you take the next step in understanding and addressing the barriers that your learners face.

Once you've completed the training, you'll be **accredited** to use Pearson's **User Level B** assessments, including our Dyslexia Toolkit.

Learn more:

pearsonacademy.com.au/supporting-your-struggling-learners



Checklist

We've also created a checklist to help you identify and screen dyslexia with your students

A checklist to help identify and screen for dyslexia. As this is a template, you can print and use.

- Summary of dyslexia assessment template

	Skills/Ability/indicator	IDA Key indicator	Test/Source	Low/below average	Average	High/above average	At risk (Y) / Not at risk (N)	N/A or Not observed
Symptom of difficulty	Treatment response							
	Alphabet writing							
	Letter knowledge and phonics	X						
	Decoding pseudowords	X						
	Word reading	X						
	Reading fluency	X						
	Spelling	X						
	Written expression	X						
	Listening comprehension is stronger than reading comprehension							
Correlates	Phonological processing							
	Rapid automatic naming							
	Auditory verbal working memory							
	Processing speed							
	Long term storage and retrieval							
	Associative memory (Learning efficiency)							
	Orthographic processing							
Risk factors	Dyslexic screening results							
	Family history							
	History of language impairment							
	Receptive vocabulary	X						
Possible strengths	Fluid reasoning							
	Oral language: Listening, speaking, vocabulary, grammar							
	Math: calculation, problem solving, fluency							

 = not valid

Checklist

This is a list of comprehensive tools you can use.

- **Comprehensive assessment content coverage**

This table lists the key skill areas recommended for dyslexia assessment by the International Dyslexia Association, as well as secondary areas that are important to consider, and the relevant measures provided by the **WRMT-III** and **WIAT-III**. The measures listed include subtests, subtest component scores, supplemental scores, and error analysis classifications.

Key areas for dyslexia assessment	WRMT-III Years F-12 Ages 4-25	WIAT-III Years F-12 Ages 4-40
Phonics/letter knowledge	Letter identification	Early reading skills analysis (SA): Naming letters; Letter sound correspondence
Decoding pseudowords	Word attack	Pseudoword decoding
Word reading	Word ID	Word reading
Reading fluency	Oral reading fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral reading fluency • Pseudoword decoding speed • Word reading speed
Spelling		Spelling
Written expression: Sentence and paragraph level		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence composition • Essay composition
Receptive vocabulary	Word comprehension	Receptive vocabulary
Rapid naming	Rapid automatic naming	
Phonological awareness	Phonological awareness	Early reading skills SA: Phonological awareness
Auditory working memory (phonological memory)		
Secondary areas	WRMT-III Years F-12 Ages 4-25	WIAT-III Years F-12 Ages 4-40
Reading comprehension	Passage comprehension	Reading comprehension
Listening comprehension	Listening comprehensive	Oral discourse comprehension
Orthographic processing		
Grammatical ability		Oral expression

Disclaimer: *Identifying individuals with dyslexia is a multi-step, collaborative process. No single test or criteria can give a conclusive diagnosis on its own. Supporting individuals who are academically at-risk or who have dyslexia is not a “quick fix” and may require layers of effort from simple accommodations to special education intervention. Formal evaluations and diagnosis of dyslexia and other learning disabilities, including interpretation of any test results, should only be made by appropriately qualified clinicians and medical professionals.*



Support student wellbeing

Improve learning by applying the
Response to Intervention framework

Up to **30%**
of Australian students
are struggling with their school work.*

Early identification of student needs can have a life long impact on their education.

• (Skues & Cunningham, 2011)

Response to Intervention (RTI)



5% of students

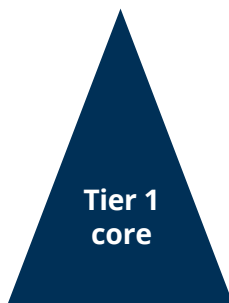
may not respond well to learning support and have additional needs identifiable by a specialist (e.g. psychologist, speech pathologist, occupational therapist).



Not all students need an immediate referral to a specialist

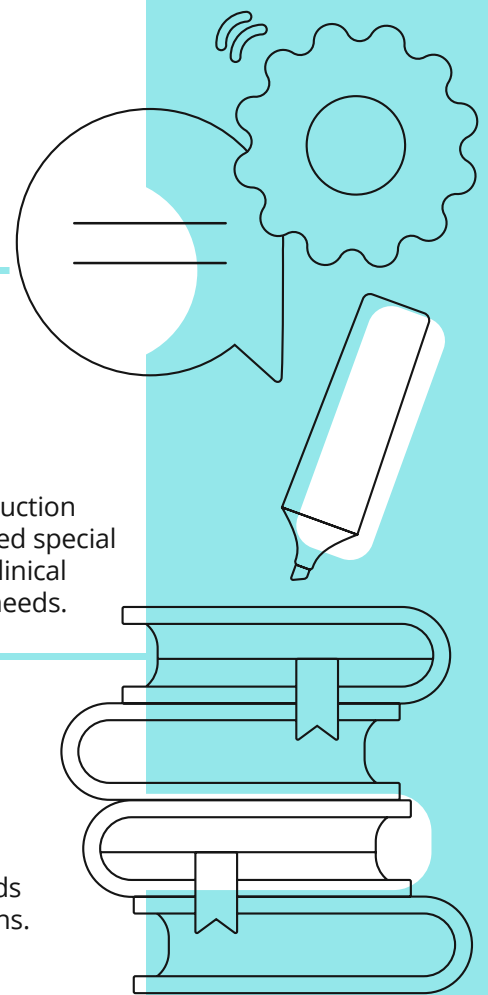
15% of students

respond to the targeted, small group instruction and support in one or more areas. Qualified special education professionals can use specific clinical assessments to identify those additional needs.



80% of all students

respond to 'best practice' teaching methods and whole-class/whole-school interventions.



Learn more about the range of User Level B special education assessments and training at our [Special Education Hub](#)