

I'm Dyslexic

I'm smart and creative, but my reading and spelling aren't great – this is not due to lack of effort but a neurological difference.

10 ways for teachers to help in class

1. Please don't ask me to read or write in front of the whole class.

I am good at thinking and expressing my ideas when talking, but there is a big difference in what I can write down. If I write on the board in front of my friends it might be humiliating. Although I can read, I will misread some words and this can be embarrassing in front of a whole class. If it is unavoidable to read to an audience, such as an assembly, please give me plenty of notice so I can practise.

2. When I have something long to read I may need to hear it instead.

Provide an audio book: I will need headphones in class.

On a computer: Install 'Natural Reader' (free). It will read aloud what is on the screen.

On an iPad: Turn on speech. Go to - settings - accessibility - speech - read selection - highlight content.

On a worksheet: Use the App 'Claro Reader Plus'. Take a photo of the worksheet and it will read it aloud.

3. Help me to write.

Prep – Year 2: 'Clicker Sentences' App, or let me dictate to you while you write down some of my ideas.

All ages: Voice recognition is built in. Press the microphone icon next to the emoticon icon on the Mac/iPad.

Secondary: Voice recognition software 'Dragon Naturally Speaking' not the free App, the full software!

4. Spelling doesn't equal intelligence!

Please mark my ideas, not my spelling. When correcting my written work, please don't mark all of my spelling errors. If I have misspelt a few key or common words, please correct those 1 or 2 words, and neatly write the correct spelling for me to see. Investigate the intelligent spellchecker 'Ginger Software'.

5. Help me remember.

Help me to use my diary, consider letting me take a video of you explaining instructions or investigate a 'Livescribe Pen' to help me take notes. 'Notability' and 'Explain Everything' are powerful Apps.

6. Help me be as organised as I can be.

Teach me to use folders or Google docs, and mind maps. Colour code equipment and the timetable with me.

7. Let me take a photo of the board.

Copying from the board can be too slow and inaccurate. Please let me take a photo and help me to file it in the right folder or print it and paste it into my notes. You could also give me a copy of your notes.

8. I will probably need extra time.

I am much slower at reading and writing than my peers. I will need (and am legally entitled to) extra time to complete work and for tests or exams.

9. Thanks, but special fonts don't help much.

Dyslexia is not primarily a visual issue. For all students, just make sure notes are clear and big enough (12-point). Use bold to highlight and please make an effort to write clearly on the board.

10. Consider a time limit for homework.

Homework that involves reading and writing will take me much longer than other students. Consider setting a time limit, so I can do, what I can up to the required time limit.