

# Dyslexia - Secondary Teacher Fact Sheet

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## The DSM-5 is the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition, American Psychiatric Association

The DSM-5 includes dyslexia as a Specific Reading Disorder - "Dyslexia is an alternative term used to refer to a pattern of learning difficulties characterized by problems with accurate or fluent word recognition, poor decoding, and poor spelling abilities.(p.67, DSM-5) (APA), 2013

Dyslexia is not curable and is a lifelong disability. It can be remediated with appropriate intervention but some difficulties may still persist.

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"Anti-discrimination law covers a wide range of disabilities and health problems. These include the following:

a learning or cognitive disability such as dyslexia;"

*Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW.*

## Disability Standards for Education Act 2005

"Perhaps the most significant feature of the Education Standards is the introduction of a positive **obligation on education providers to make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities.[355] The Standards also impose an obligation on education providers to consult with affected students or their associates in relation to such adjustments.[356]"**

*Australian Human Rights Commission*

## Mental Health

The great majority of children with dyslexia will experience a secondary issue as a result of their educational experiences.

Anxiety , learned helplessness, depression, behavioural issues and self esteem issues need to be considered.

Always refer adolescents to a medical practitioner if concerned about mental health.

## Remediation

"Intensive and skilful instruction in basic word reading skills can have a significant impact on the comprehension ability of students in fifth grade and beyond ."  
*International Dyslexia Association fact sheet - Adolescents and Adults with Dyslexia*

"Teach students...

- to identify and break words into syllable types.
- to read multisyllabic words by blending the parts together.
- to recognise irregular words that do not follow predictable patterns.
- the meanings of common prefixes, suffixes, inflectional endings, and roots.
- how to break words into word parts and to combine word parts to create words based on their roots, bases, or other features.
- how and when to use structural analysis to decode unknown words."

*International Dyslexia Association fact sheet - Adolescents and Adults with Dyslexia*

## Accommodations for Assessment Tasks

"Teachers may need to make adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment practices for some students with special education needs, so that they are able to demonstrate what they know and can do in relation to syllabus outcomes and content. The types of adjustments made will vary based on the needs of individual students.

- adjustments to assessment activities, eg rephrasing questions or using simplified language, fewer questions or alternative formats for questions.

alternative formats for responses, eg written point form or notes, scaffolded structured responses, short objective questions or multimedia presentations." *Australian Curriculum advice on assessments*

## Classroom Adjustments

<b>Dyslexia affects Reading</b>	<b>Reasonable adjustment</b>
Slow, laboured, inaccurate reading. Becomes visibly tired while reading.	Only ask the student to read aloud if student is comfortable. Allow use of audio books. Allow use of assistive technology such as a c-pen and text to speech software. Limit amount of reading.
Poor reading comprehension.	Allow verbal comprehension assessment. Provide outlines, summaries, vocabulary words and preview questions. Reduce amount to be read.
<b>Dyslexia affects Spelling</b>	<b>Reasonable adjustment</b>
Continually misspells words. Misspells even when copying from the board.	Allow use of assistive technology where appropriate such as predictive spelling and word processor. Teach the rules and structure of the English Language.
<b>Dyslexia affects writing</b>	<b>Adjustments</b>

<p>Poor, nearly illegible handwriting. Leaves out spacing and punctuation. Unusual pencil grip, grips too tightly, poor posture when writing. Writing is a slow, laboured, non-automatic task. Difficulty with organisation of thoughts on paper.</p>	<p>Allow use of assistive technology such as snatype, screen shots, predictive spelling and word processor. Allow extra time to complete tasks. Do not expect large amounts of writing. Avoid copying notes from the board. Give student opportunities to express knowledge verbally. Give student scaffolds and writing frames.</p>
<p><b>Dyslexia affects organisation</b></p>	<p><b>Adjustments</b></p>
<p>Learning any task that has a series of steps which must be completed in a specific order can be difficult. Dyslexia causes sequencing difficulties. Dyslexia causes difficulties with organisation.</p>	<p>Break large tasks into steps. Make instructions short, simple and clear. Ask children to repeat instructions back to make sure they have understood. Use visual aids. Make allowances for poor memory in terms of handing in notes and in general school organisation. Sit student with a peer helper.</p>



## Homework

"It is generally agreed that teachers should assign homework that takes into account the needs of the students. This is especially the case of children with learning disabilities in mainstream schools. Research has shown that tasks which may be simple for some students may take a student with a learning disability a considerable amount of time to comprehend and complete." *Parliament of Victoria homework inquiry*

"Homework that is manageable for students will provide some flexibility and options to allow for different student circumstances." *Homework Guidelines NSW Department of Education And Communities.*

- adjustments to the assessment process, eg additional time, rest breaks, quieter;
- conditions, or the use of a reader and/or scribe or specific technology.

*Further information see*

<https://dekkerdyslexia.wordpress.com/2018/02/16/teaching-dyslexia-sorting-through-the-facts/>

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