

# Dyslexia Friendly Accommodations

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From Neil Mackay of Action Dyslexia <http://www.actiondyslexia.co.uk/>

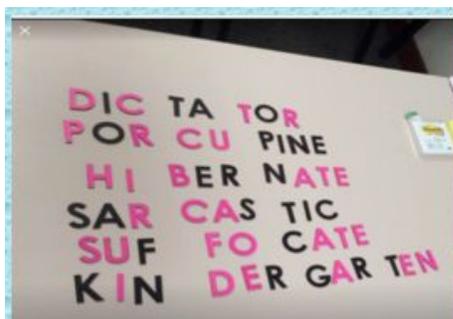
## 1. Students who cannot seem to remember from one moment to the next:

Most students will bring back most of the learning to the next lesson when every lesson is broken into bite size chunks. Specifically

- Start with a review of the previous lesson
- End with a reprise of the learning of that lesson
- Have at least two “learning checks” in between – quizzes, one sentence summaries, “tell your neighbour” etc. – see Mike Gershon’s resources – <https://mikegershon.com/resources/> and also TES Resources for more ideas

Also, the more of lesson 1 is built into lesson 2 and so on, the more learning will be consolidated. Taught is not learnt – especially for dyslexic students!

## 2. Students who can “talk” a subject, using jargon words correctly, but who struggle to spell at the same high level. N.B. “Look, cover, write, check” (LCWC) does not work because it is effectively mono-sensory!

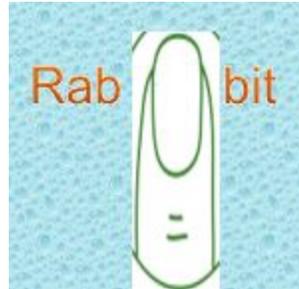


We are talking serious words here (with thanks to Bill Hansberry)

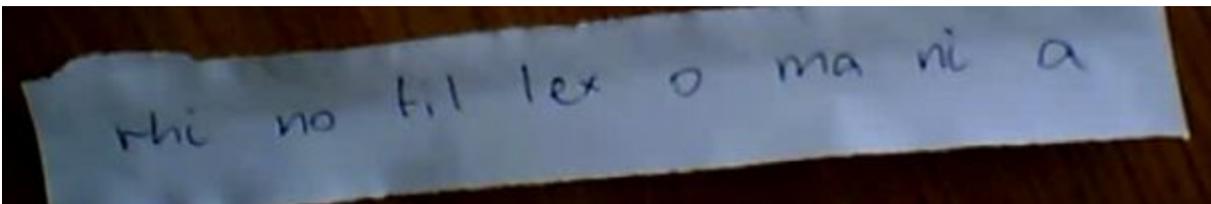
Spelling is tricky, arguably almost impossible, if a student cannot match sounds to letters and put them together to blend the sounds into the words required. Once words get more complex it is essential to harness the power of syllables – the ‘beats’ within a word – by clapping, tapping or “chinning” (hand under chin when sounding out).

Simple rules for syllables include:

- Only one sound or beat per syllable
- Contains at least one vowel or has a vowel sound – “hap/py”, “free/dom”
- Where there is a double consonant – “happy” – make sure both consonants are voiced.  
If the student only hears “rab-it” s/he will only put in one ‘b’



This takes practice but the investment is worth it. I use strips of paper for students to write words in syllables with finger spaces.



Then we tear and muddle, “syllable talking” the word as we re-build. We repeat this a few times and then – and only then, do we LCWC.

### **3. Students who demonstrate higher level thinking/answer complex abstract questions correctly after watching a DVD/hearing a passage but who struggle to demonstrate the same level of reasoning ability after reading.**

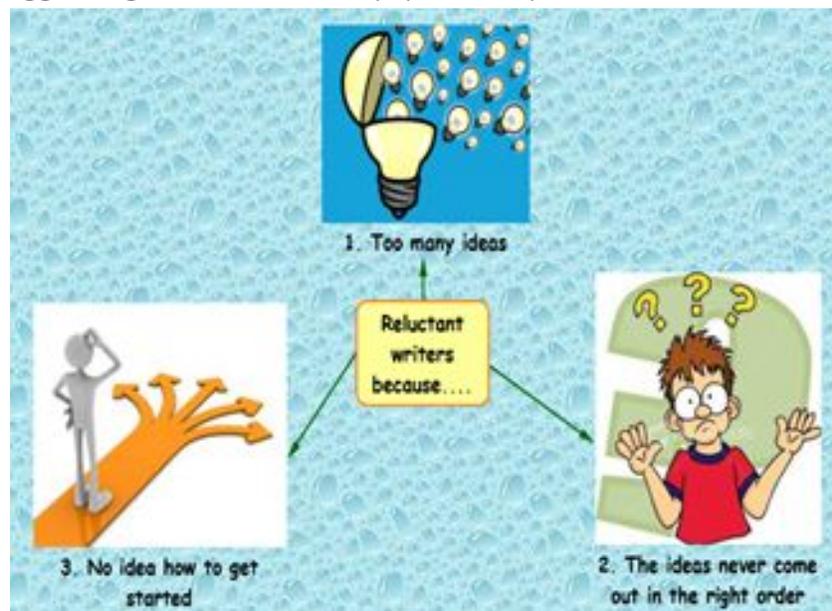
This comes down to issues with working memory and speed of processing, especially if a student has been taught using 3 cuing type approaches – in this case too much time and mental energy will be spent using inefficient guessing strategies rather than breaking the word down into sounds.

In the busy classroom try Paired Reading:

Pair a slightly stronger and slightly weaker reader. Both read a passage/questions out loud AS ONE VOICE – it should sound like choral speaking. The stronger reader “reads over” any problems, carrying on if the partner cannot read a word but slows down, pointing at the words until both are back in unison – definitely no teaching, saying “red it again, sound it out etc.” Comprehension is about flow (this is what minimizes issues with memory and processing) and as the stronger partner cues tricky words the weaker reader will begin to flow and focus on meaning rather than decoding. This also works well to stretch more efficient readers, especially those who read better than they think.

**4. Students who can “talk” a great story, articulate a coherent narrative, be effectively in role for TV interview” explain the sequence and outcome of an experiment in Science etc. but who struggle to write it down at the same level of effectiveness.**

There are generally three reasons why dyslexic students in particular and reluctant writers in general – struggle to get ideas down on paper. They are:



The solutions are:

- **Too many ideas** – do a “sticky note” brainstorm, preferably in mixed ability writing groups. Dyslexic students blossom because they can think without boundaries while someone else worries about how to spell/write
- **Ordering/sequencing problems** – Dyslexic students are rarely “beginning, middle, end” thinkers – they have eclectic minds and tend to think “around” a topic. When a topic is presented on sticky notes – say an experiment or the planning for an article on plastic pollution – students can do a concrete “select and order” using the sticky **notes, in** order to sequence ideas. The sequence can then be formalized into a mind map, story board, flow chart etc. and value added afterwards
- **No idea how to get started** – responds to four simple strategies:
  - i. Students must “talk” the plan before writing – flowing the sticky notes into sentences and adding value on the way – no writing at this stage please!
  - ii. Give a couple of possible starter phrases – to be used, modified, ignored as students see fit
  - iii. When students get stuck in the middle of a piece try this mantra:
    - “What do you want to say?”
    - “Can I write it in for you?”
    - “What do you want to say next?” – write half the sentence for her/him and then leave them to it. They will usually get back into the flow

Please, please write it for them at this point rather than say “You have said it, now write it” – it is hard enough to get “unstuck” as it is without worrying about how to spell.

Also, if a student says “How do you spell...” please either give it immediately or offer to write it in. Sounding out etc. destroys flow and never forget that dictionaries only work for students who can already spell.

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