

What is Dyslexia?



Dyslexia is likely to be a combination of both abilities and difficulties. It is called a SpLD. The reason it is called specific is because it only impacts on certain areas of an individual, rather than being a general learning difference that has an impact on all areas of someone's performance.

- **It occurs independent of ability and socio-economic background:** There is no connection between dyslexia and intelligence. Dyslexia occurs across all sectors of society.
- **A different way of processing information:** Research tells us that dyslexia stems from differences in the way that the brain processes certain sorts of information, particularly, it is thought, language-based information. The key point here is that it is these physiological differences in the brain that lead to the challenges that dyslexic individuals experience, it is not lack of ability, poor parenting, or poor education. There is an underlying cause. We are really only just starting to understand a bit more about the brain and the complex nature of how it works, so there is a lot more research to be done on this area.
- **Every individual is likely to be different:** As human beings we are all different. Whilst there may be some commonalities associated with dyslexia, each individual is likely to be different. People are shaped not just by their dyslexia but by personality, experiences, parents, environment and numerous other factors. Therefore, it is not possible to either provide a template of what dyslexia is, nor, is it possible to provide a full proof template of support. Each individual should be treated as an individual.
- **Dyslexia quite often co-occurs with other SpLDs:** It is not unusual for dyslexia to co-occur with other SpLDs such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Dyspraxia/Developmental Coordination Disorder, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Dyscalculia (difficulty with maths), or Speech, Language and Communication difficulties.
- **Incidence Rate and heritability:** It is estimated 10 percent of the population are dyslexic; this rises to 15 percent when co-occurrence is included. Statistically, this makes dyslexia the highest incidence SpLD. Dyslexia is genetic in origin and therefore is inheritable.

Source: *The Human Cost of Dyslexia* - April 2019