50 Interesting Facts About Dyslexia
by angie

What is Dyslexia?

- Dyslexia is a learning disability that includes difficulty in the use and processing of linguistic and symbolic codes, alphabetic letters representing speech sounds or numeric representing numbers or quantities.
- The first description of dyslexia appeared in 1896 by Dr. W. Pringle Morgan in Sussex, England, this is what he wrote: “Percy F.,... aged 14,... has always been a bright and intelligent boy, quick at games, and in no way inferior to others of his age. His great difficulty has been—and is now—his inability to learn to read.”
- The word dyslexia is derived from the Greek word ‘dys’ (meaning poor or inadequate) plus ‘lexis’ (words or language). Implying only an inadequacy in language tasks.
- Dyslexia is not the result of neurological damage, but the product of neurological development.
- Dyslexia varies from mild to severe.
- Dyslexia does not reflect an overall defect in language, but, rather, a localized weakness within the phonologic module of the brain. This module is the functional part of the brain where the sounds of language are put together to form words and where words are broken down into sounds.
- Dyslexia is a unique mindset that is often gifted and productive but learns differently than other minds.

Prevalence of Dyslexia

- Dyslexia affects nearly 10% of the population.
- Dyslexia is by far the most common learning disability.
- According to NIH research, of those who are placed in special education for a learning disability, around 80% of those have dyslexia.
- A study at Yale found that the numbers of girls and boys who have dyslexia are about the same.
- Dyslexia commonly runs in families.
- Children don't outgrow dyslexia.
- Some of the most brilliant minds of our time have been known to have dyslexia: Albert Einstein, Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, Winston Churchill, Benjamin Franklin, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and John Lennon, to mention only a few.
- There are people with dyslexia in many types of highly respected careers such as: Tom Cruise, Danny Glover, Cher, Magic Johnson, Carl Lewis, Bruce Jenner, and General George Patton.
- “Given the high prevalence of reading difficulties, it is more likely for your child to have a reading problem than almost any other physical problem for which he is being checked.” - Overcoming Dyslexia by Sally Shaywitz, M.D.
Dyslexic Gifts

- Dyslexics often enjoy and excel at solving puzzles.
- Dyslexics have excellent comprehension of the stories read or told them.
- Most dyslexics often have a better sense of spatial relationships and **better use of their right brain**.
- Dyslexics have **excellent thinking skills** in the areas of conceptualization, reason, imagination, and abstraction.
- Dyslexics have a strong ability to see concepts with a "**big picture**" perspective.
- Dyslexics are adept to excellence in areas not dependent on reading.
- Dyslexics typically have a large spoken vocabulary for their age.
- Dyslexics tend to be **more curious, creative, and intuitive than average**.
- Dyslexics’ special mode of thought easily produces the gift of mastery.
- Dyslexia is **not related to low intelligence**.

Symptoms of Dyslexia

- **Dyslexia can affect** spoken language, written language and language comprehension.
- Dyslexics have **trouble breaking down unfamiliar words into letter-sound segments**. As a result, **reading is slow and filled with errors**.
- Dyslexics **require extra time and effort** to process language information.
- Dyslexics often need to be taught to look at words linearly, left-to-right.
- Dyslexics have difficulty in learning (and remembering) the names of letters.
- Dyslexics often fail to understand that words come apart; for example, that "batboy" can be pulled apart into "bat" and "boy" and, later on, that the word "bat" can be broken down still further and sounded out as 'b' 'aaa' 't'
- Dyslexics often have a **difficult time learning to associate letters with sounds**, such as being unable to connect the letter b with the /b/ sound.
- Dyslexics will sometimes make reading errors that show no connection to the sounds of the letters; for example, the word "big" is read as "goat."
- Dyslexics often struggle to read small "sight" words such as "that," "an," "in."
- Dyslexics often substitute words with the same meaning for words in the text they can’t pronounce, such as "car" for "automobile."
- Dyslexics often **omit parts of words when reading**.
- Dyslexics often have difficulty remembering dates, names, telephone numbers, and random lists.
- Dyslexics often have an extreme difficulty learning a foreign language.

Dyslexia Research Findings

- Despite popular belief, **dyslexics do not see letters backwards**. They often have difficulty naming and writing letters, and in fact, writing letters backwards is something that many kids do when they’re first learning to write, whether they have dyslexia or not.
- Many individuals with dyslexia have proven to **see things three dimensionally**, which can effect how they look at words.
- Often dyslexics are thought to be reading backwards because of what is called the "**Recency Effect**." In which they pronounce the word using the most recent sound first, like "tap" for "pat."
• Research has shown strong correlations between dyslexia symptoms and deficits in short-term memory and executive functioning.
• Dr. Glenda Thorne stated, "Dyslexia is not a deficit in the visual processing system; however, it is a language processing problem. The hallmark characteristic of dyslexia is a breakdown in what is called phoneme awareness."
• Yale researchers have shown when people with dyslexia try to read the front part of the brain is over-stimulated while crucial portions in the center and back are under-stimulated.

Solutions for Dyslexia

• Research has proven that explicit, systematic phonics can actually help 'rewire' the brain and help dyslexic students learn to read.
• The use of the Orton-Gillingham approach can significantly compensate for the language learning and processing problems that arise from dyslexia.
• Dyslexics score significantly higher on test when they are given additional time and given the test orally.
• Dyslexics do best when directions are two steps or fewer. They often get confused and frustrated with a long list of “to dos” or directions.
• The more important, consistent, frequent, multi-sensory, and emotionally reinforcing information is presented, the easier and more enduring language learning becomes for dyslexics.

SOURCES

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Overcoming Dyslexia by Sally Shaywitz, M.D