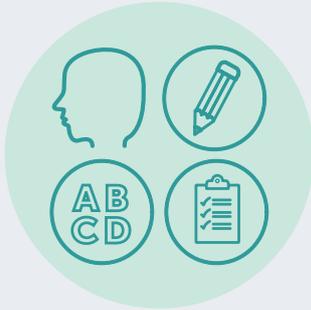


# ABOUT DYSLEXIA FACT SHEET



The International Dyslexia Association (2002) defines dyslexia as 'a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterised by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities.'

Dyslexia is considered to be a subset of a specific learning disorder (SLD) with impairment in reading. These difficulties do not arise due to intellectual disabilities, uncorrected vision or hearing, or lack of proficiency in the language of academic instruction, or inadequate educational instruction.

See the online practice guides for full references and to find out more:

[edi.sa.edu.au/practiceguidance](http://edi.sa.edu.au/practiceguidance)

## Understanding dyslexia

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability affecting:

- phonological processing:
  - difficulty with discriminating and processing individual phonemes in words for blending and segmenting
- orthographic processing:
  - persistent difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition or both
  - difficulty with decoding and spelling
- working memory may also be affected:
  - working memory difficulties impact an individual's ability to retrieve words instantaneously
  - difficulties with organisation and planning.

## Impact of dyslexia on learning

The 3 components of dyslexia (phonological processing, orthographic processing and working memory difficulties) will present different challenges across a learner's lifetime and contexts.

At different stages, learners might:

- demonstrate poor phonological awareness skills, with difficulty identifying rhyming words, or hearing syllables in words
- have unexpected difficulty blending and reading words
- have difficulty getting thoughts onto paper, with written work often not reflecting verbal ability.
- have well-developed oral language skills but show specific speech problems like mispronouncing words ('blankelet' for 'blanket') or mix up sounds in words ('pasgetti' for 'spaghetti')
- have difficulty remembering phonemes (sounds) that correspond to graphemes (letters).

## Strengths of learners with dyslexia

The strengths of learners with dyslexia can be in:

- general knowledge
- reasoning
- understanding concepts
- empathy
- having good interpersonal skills
- language comprehension and vocabulary.

(Shaywitz and Shaywitz 2020)



**Government  
of South Australia**

Department for Education

# DYSLEXIA ADJUSTMENTS



## EXAMPLES OF ADJUSTMENTS



### Environmental adjustments

- Reduce unnecessary and distracting visual stimulation.
- Consider seating arrangements or table configurations at group time. For example, put students with higher needs closer to the teacher.
- Scaffold organisational skills, for example provide extra organisation time at the end of the lesson.



### Process adjustments

- Provide explicit, direct instruction, teaching new content in a planned and sequenced way.
- Present content, skills and tasks in small steps.
- Provide multisensory learning with visual (see it, read it), auditory (hear it) and kinaesthetic-tactile (say it, tap it, write it) elements.
- Use assistive technology such as recordings and audio books.



### Cognitive load adjustments

- Use instructional routines that follow explicit, direct instructional principles.
- Deliver multi-step instructions one or two at a time.
- Organise larger assignments into manageable units with regular teacher check-in.
- Provide extra time to complete assignments and provide tools such as assistive technology and graphic organisers.



### Organisational adjustments

- Provide scaffolds such as:
  - routines in the classroom to support classroom management
  - books, folders and timetables colour-coded for learning area
  - instructional routines for explicit direct instruction.
- Keep instructions clear and brief.
- If using learning platforms such as FrogLearn, Daymap, Seqta, explicitly teach students how to use them.



### Product adjustments

- Design assessments to reflect the purpose of the task.
- Offer scaffolds to help with writing such as sentence starters and writing frames, mnemonics, mind mapping, vocabulary charts, lists.
- Offer alternatives to writing such as graphic organisers, oral responses and manipulatives.
- Consider assessing subject matter without using exams or tests. Use alternatives like oral reports, discussion, dot points, or graphic organisers.

