

37 Common Characteristics of Dyslexia

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Most people with dyslexia or ADD will exhibit at least 10 of the following traits and/or behaviors.

GENERAL		
\Box Appears bright, highly intelligent, and articulate but unable to read, write, or spell at grade level.		
☐ Labeled lazy, dumb, careless, immature, "not trying hard enough," or "behavior problem."		
$\ \square$ Isn't "behind enough" or "bad enough" to be helped in the school setting.		
$\hfill \square$ High IQ, yet may not test well academically; tests well orally, but not written.		
☐ Feels stupid; has poor self-esteem; hides or covers up weaknesses with ingenious compensatory strategies; easily frustrated and emotional about school reading or testing.		
☐ Talented in art, drama, music, sports, mechanics, story-telling, sales, business, designing, building, or engineering.		
☐ Seems to "zone out" or daydream often; gets lost easily or loses track of time. Difficulty sustaining attention; seems "hyper" or "daydreamer."		
$\hfill\Box$ Learns best through hands-on experience, demonstrations, experimentation, observation, and visual aids.		
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HEARING AND SPEECH

	Has extended hearing; hears things not said or apparent to others; easily distracted by sounds.	
	Difficulty putting thoughts into words; speaks in halting phrases; leaves sentences incomplete; stutters under stress; mispronounces long words, or transposes phrases, words, and syllables when speaking.	
WRITING AND MOTOR SKILLS		
	Trouble with writing or copying; pencil grip is unusual; handwriting varies or is illegible.	
	Clumsy, uncoordinated, poor at ball or team sports; difficulties with fine and/or gross motor skills and tasks; prone to motion-sickness.	
	Can be ambidextrous, and often confuses left/right, over/under.	
MATH AND TIME MANAGEMENT		
	Has difficulty telling time, managing time, learning sequenced information or tasks, or being on time.	
	Computing math shows dependence on finger counting and other tricks; knows answers, but can't do it on paper.	
	Can count, but has difficulty counting objects and dealing with money.	
	Can do arithmetic, but fails word problems; cannot grasp algebra or higher math.	
MEMORY AND COGNITION		
	Excellent long-term memory for experiences, locations, and faces.	
	Poor memory for sequences, facts and information that has not been experienced.	
	Thinks primarily with images and feeling, not sounds or words (little internal dialogue).	



BEHAVIOR, HEALTH, DEVELOPMENT AND PERSONALITY

Extremely disorderly or compulsively orderly.
Can be class clown, trouble-maker, or too quiet.
Had unusually early or late developmental stages (talking, crawling, walking, tying shoes).
Prone to ear infections; sensitive to foods, additives, and chemical products.
Can be an extra deep or light sleeper; bedwetting beyond appropriate age.
Unusually high or low tolerance for pain.
Strong sense of justice; emotionally sensitive; strives for perfection.
Mistakes and symptoms increase dramatically with confusion, time pressure, emotional stress, or poor health.