

For more information or free advice and guidance contact:



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## Information for Students



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# What is Dyslexia?

The aim of this leaflet is to provide useful information and suggestions for people in education or training.

The word 'dyslexia' comes from the Greek meaning 'difficulty with words' and is a difference in the way the brain processes language.

Dyslexia varies in different people, but can mean **difficulties** with:

- Reading
- Spelling
- Writing
- Organisational skills
- Short-term memory
- Numeracy skills

Dyslexia tends to run in families and is NOT related to intelligence or to a person's background.

However, along with the difficulties, real **strengths** can be identified, including:

- Problem solving skills
- Enhanced creativity
- Strong visual thinking
- Intuitive
- Verbally articulate
- Spatially talented

People with dyslexia do not all have the same way of thinking, but there are common patterns.

Dyslexia is sometimes diagnosed in children soon after they start school. But quite often it is not recognised until much later in life.

There is no cure for dyslexia. With the right kind of support, dyslexics can overcome their difficulties and achieve great things.



# Getting Help...

It is estimated that at least 10 - 20% of the population are affected by dyslexia; with 4% being severely affected.

Someone with dyslexia may struggle with reading, writing, spelling and numeracy despite having a good understanding of a subject. Their written work will not reflect what they are able to say orally. This disparity is often a good indicator of dyslexia.

This difficulty with work at school or college can lead to frustration, stress and anxiety and this can lead to further difficulties with exams and assessments.

If experiencing difficulties it may help to :

- Discuss your concerns with the school, college or training provider.
- Request a screening for dyslexia. A screening will look at difficulties and the likelihood of dyslexia but is not a diagnosis.
- Have a visual screening test to check whether tinted overlays will help with your ease of reading.
- Arrange a free advice session at Dyslexia Cornwall to identify 'reasonable adjustments' that will help improve your study skills.
- Discuss your entitlement to special arrangements for assignments, tests and examinations.
- If required, arrange a full diagnostic assessment. This involves a series of diagnostic tests to diagnose dyslexia and other potential learning difficulties.



# Top Tips...

Here are a few suggestions that may help with both studying and preparation for exams.



## Spelling

When writing, do not stop and think about how a particular word is spelt; To prevent forgetting what you are writing about :

- Write what you can of the word you want to use
- Fill in a couple of question marks and put a cross in the margin.
- Come back to the word afterwards and find out the spelling using an online dictionary.

Assistive technology can help with spelling. For example:

- Dragon Dictation: a free app you can download on your phone
- Voice activated, intelligent personal assistants on mobile phones and Google.

## Reading

To improve reading comprehension:

- Read and reread the text.
- Read the introduction and the summary before reading the main text.
- Use text to speech software
- Use audiobooks
- Use the SQ3R reading strategy. formed from its letters: Skim, Question, Read, Recite and Review.



For more information: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dhcSP\\_MyJg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dhcSP_MyJg)

## Planning essays and assignments

Before you start writing:

- Think about everything you want to include.
- Plan and write down your ideas using mind maps, PowerPoint, sticky notes or specialist software
- Expand your ideas
- Sort your ideas into an order that makes sense.



Then, start writing the assignment.

## Grammar and punctuation

Reduce distractions by using noise cancelling headphones when you are working. For explanations, tutorials and guidance on grammar and punctuation:

[www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/exercises/grammar/grammar\\_tutorial/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/exercises/grammar/grammar_tutorial/)

## Schedule regular breaks

Decide how long you will work before taking a break. After every 50 minutes work you do need to take at least a 10 minute break.

## Write down assignments and homework

Make a note of your assignment. Be creative: use your phone to dictate details of the assignment or take a photo of the board.

## Set up reminders on your phone

It is good practice to set reminders on your phone for important tasks, deadlines and social events. Remember to allow enough time to get things prepared.

## Use alternative methods to record information

There are many creative ways of recording information including:

- Mind maps
- Bullet points
- Verbal recording
- Video recordings

# Assignments, Tests and Exams

Students may be eligible for special arrangements whilst studying on further and higher education courses.

## Special Arrangements

If a student is diagnosed as dyslexic, and has a slow processing speed, they may be allowed:

- Extra time (up to 25%) for exams and assessments.
- A reader or the use of person to take dictation
- The use of a word processor

If extra time is granted it is necessary to decide how this will be used most effectively. For example:



- Extra time to plan an answer
- Extra time to read and understand the questions
- Extra time to proof read answers

This needs to then be put into normal working practice during the educational course.

The better prepared a dyslexic student, the less stress will be experienced during their studies.

Check with the college or school in plenty of time in case an assessment to diagnose dyslexia is needed.

# Disabled Students Allowance

Dyslexic students in Higher Education, can apply for a Disabled Students Allowance (DSA).

Full-time and part-time students, studying at least 50% of a full-time degree course and post-graduate students are now eligible for this allowance. (Also students studying a degree through the Open University).

Anyone claiming DSA must have a dyslexia assessment to diagnose their dyslexia.

The DSA may include equipment (eg.IT hardware and appropriate software), an annual non-medical helper's allowance, (including funding for ICT training, proof-reading) and an annual general allowance for books and resources.



For further information contact GOV.UK by using the following link

**[www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/overview](http://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/overview)**

*Note: DSA may be changing and there are proposals to reduce the provision. The government will only fund those whose dyslexia (or other Specific Learning Difficulty) is considered to be more complex.*

# Useful Resources and Contacts

## Assistive Technology

Assistive technologies can help with everyday literacy and organisation tasks. They include software you install on an electronic device or a specialised hardware device. Many software companies will provide free trials online, so you can try out a program before you buy it.

For more information [www.bdatech.org](http://www.bdatech.org)

## Visual Thinking Techniques

Oliver West has created a unique portfolio of visual thinking techniques for learning and personal development.

For more information read “**In Search of Words: Footnotes Visual Thinking Techniques**” – 1 Dec 2007 by Oliver P.B. West



## Time Management

The Pomodoro Technique promotes taking short scheduled breaks whilst working to a deadline. It helps prioritise time and to manage distractions. For more information:

[www.focusboosterapp.com/the-pomodoro-technique](http://www.focusboosterapp.com/the-pomodoro-technique)

## Visual Stress

Coloured overlays can reduce movements and distortion of text, headaches and sore eyes. Download free specialist software and access coloured overlays on your computer screen.

## The Codpast

Information for students and adults regarding dyslexia.

<https://thecodpast.org/>

## Dystalk

A site showing videos of talks about Dyslexia and related specific learning difficulties. Some of the talks mention children, but they are still relevant.

[www.dystalk.com](http://www.dystalk.com)

## The British Dyslexia Association

Many useful information sheets and the website has the facility to read out text.

**National Helpline: 0333 405 4567**

[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)

## Dyslexia Action

Information about dyslexia, teaching qualifications and courses, resources and other useful information.

**Telephone: 01784 22 23 04**

[www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk)



For a full list useful resources and contacts visit  
[www.dyslexiacornwall.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiacornwall.org.uk)

# How we can help...



Dyslexia Cornwall offers access to a range of services that can help with your studies.

## Information and Advice Services

We offer a FREE confidential information and advice service.

Our information and advice services are carried out by our highly experienced dyslexia advisers.

## Dyslexia Helpline

We offer a confidential telephone Helpline service which provides information and advice on dyslexia and related subjects.

Our Helpline is run by volunteers who are experienced and qualified dyslexia advisers.

This is a FREE service.

Our Helpline is sometimes very busy. If you get no reply, please leave a message on the answerphone.

Helpline: **01872 27 48 27**



## Dyslexia Screening

Dyslexia screenings give an indication as to whether you are likely to be dyslexic. **Dyslexia screenings cannot diagnose dyslexia.**

We provide a free signposting service to organisations offering dyslexia screenings. They take up to 60 minutes to complete.

## Dyslexia Assessments

Assessments involve a series of tests to determine whether you are dyslexic or have other specific learning difficulties. **Dyslexia assessments can diagnose dyslexia.**

We provide a free signposting service to organisations offering dyslexia assessments.

The assessments should be carried out by fully qualified assessors registered with the Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS) or British Psychological Society.

The assessments can take up to 4 hours to complete.

## Visual Stress Assessment

Visual stress assessments help to identify if coloured lenses or overlays can improve your ease and speed of reading. We provide a free signposting service to opticians who offer visual stress assessments.



## Tuition and Mentoring Support

We can signpost to specialist one to one tuition and mentoring services that are tailored to the needs of the individual. Mentoring is carried out by experienced dyslexia specialists registered with Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS).

For a full list of services and charges visit  
[www.dyslexiacornwall.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiacornwall.org.uk)