



Definitions of Dyslexia

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Some of the confusion around dyslexia stems from the lack of a single, universally accepted definition or description. The definitions listed here are the three most widely used, so comparing them side-by-side and considering their purposes and applications can enhance understanding.

| Source | Definition |
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| International Dyslexia Association (IDA, 2002) | <p>Dyslexia</p> <p>Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.</p> <p>The International Dyslexia Association definition is the most widely used among educators and advocates, and it is encoded into law in many states.</p> |
| IDEA (2004) | <p>Specific Learning Disability</p> <p>A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• May manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations.• Disorders include such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. <p>IDEA, or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, is the law governing special education in public schools. This definition is used to identify students as eligible for special education services.</p> |
| DSM-5 (2013) | <p>Specific Learning Disorder</p> <p>A neurodevelopmental disorder of biological origin manifested in learning difficulties and problems in acquiring academic skills (reading, writing, or math) markedly below age level and manifested in the early school years, lasting for at least 6 months; not attributed to intellectual disabilities, developmental disorders, or neurological or motor disorders. There are four diagnostic criteria; impaired domains and subskills should be listed. See pg. 66-67 of DSM-5</p> <p>315.00 (F81.0) With impairment in reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Word reading accuracyReading rate or fluencyReading comprehension <p>Note: Dyslexia is an alternative term used to refer to a pattern of learning difficulties characterized by problems with accurate or fluent word recognition, poor decoding, and poor spelling abilities. If dyslexia is used to specify this particular pattern of difficulties, it is important also to specify any additional difficulties that are present, such as difficulties with reading comprehension and math reasoning.</p> <p>The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) provides guidelines for diagnosis. This is the definition used by physicians and many psychologists.</p> |