

# Understanding Dyslexia



## Key indicators

- ✓ Difficulties with **reading and spelling**
- ✓ Letter and number **reversals** (b/d)
- ✓ Frequent letter **omissions** and **incorrect order** in words
- ✓ General **lack of concentration**
- ✓ Difficulties with following a set of **instructions**
- ✓ Slow, deliberate and often untidy, **handwriting**
- ✓ **Using fingers** or drawings to make calculations
- ✓ **Recording** thoughts and ideas **erratically** – no sequencing
- ✓ **Clumsy** with poor motor skills
- ✓ Impaired sense of direction and **confuses left and right**
- ✓ **Low self-esteem** and confidence
- ✓ Has really great ideas and imagination but has **difficulty recording** them

If a student appears to show signs of **more than half** of these indicators then then it is **likely that they are dyslexic**.

## General Strategies

- **Use a ruler** under a line of text when you are reading with them
- **Coloured overlays** over text or printing/copying worksheets onto coloured paper (many students struggle with the glare of black text on white paper)
- Split words up into **separate chunks** when reading and spelling (form/u/la) and relate to other words they know
- **Count the syllables** of words they are spelling to help remember all the 'parts' of the word (sys-tem-atic-all-y)
- **Underline** key words and phrases in a text or put **boxes around text** to separate information
- Use **different colours** when recording work and underlining or adding calculations
- Use revision cards to 'contain' information or important facts
- Give one instruction at a time **step-by-step** and ask them to repeat them to you
- Use sans-serif fonts that are easier to read (this one is **century gothic** but others recommended by the Dyslexia Association include **Arial, Calibri, Comic Sans (primary only), Verdana, Tahoma and Trebuchet**)
- Take advantage of their **highly visual brains** with **lots of demonstrations**
- **Hands on activities** where possible
- **Try humour!** It has been said that dyslexic students remember what they have learned when it has prompted **some kind of emotional response**
- Help them to organise their thinking with **clear and structured methods** – they do have a tendency to scribble random ideas or calculations down in no particular order sometimes