

Dyslexia

**Navigating the Gifts and
Challenges of Living with Dyslexia
at School, Home, and Work**

A GUIDEBOOK



The Dyslexia Guidebook is a publication of Landmark School—
educating students with dyslexia and harnessing the power of learning differently.

What is Dyslexia?

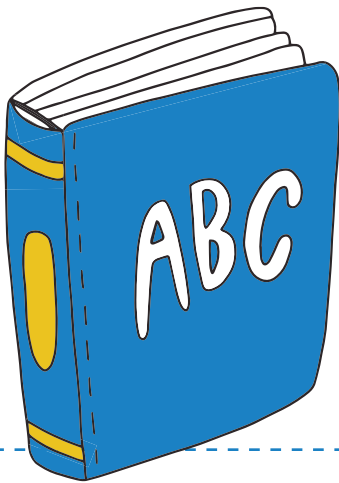
Dyslexia is a common difference in the way the brain is wired to learn to read, write, and spell.

by Kimberly Hildebrandt



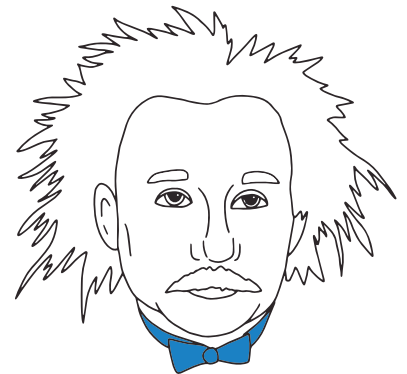
© 2023 by Landmark School
Contributors: Kimberly Hildebrandt, Robert Kahn,
Chrissy Kenney, Susan Tomases
Designed by Melanie deForest-Malloy
Illustrations by Olivia Malloy

Although the characteristics and degree of dyslexia vary, **PEOPLE WITH DYSLEXIA GENERALLY HAVE TROUBLE MATCHING THE SOUNDS OF LANGUAGE TO THEIR SYMBOLS.** This makes reading challenging, along with other essential literacy skills, such as writing and spelling.



The human brain develops speech naturally, **BUT WE ARE NOT "WIRED" TO READ.** Our brains must construct this ability. While people with dyslexia don't "grow out of it," with proper instruction, especially when provided early in life, people with dyslexia can learn to read.¹

Dyslexia has no bearing on intelligence. And although these individuals learn differently, **THEY OFTEN EXCEL IN ANALYTICAL THINKING, COMPLEX PROBLEM-SOLVING, INNOVATING, CREATIVITY, AND MORE.**



MORE ABOUT DYSLEXIA

Frequently Asked Questions
International Dyslexia Association



What Is Dyslexia?
The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity



¹ We Were Never Born to Read
Falling Walls



Signs of Dyslexia

Dyslexia looks different for everyone, but here are some common signs, some of which may be recognized in children as young as three years old.²

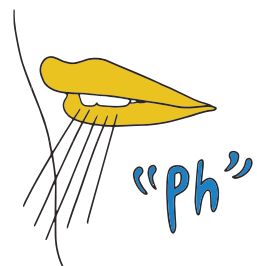
PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

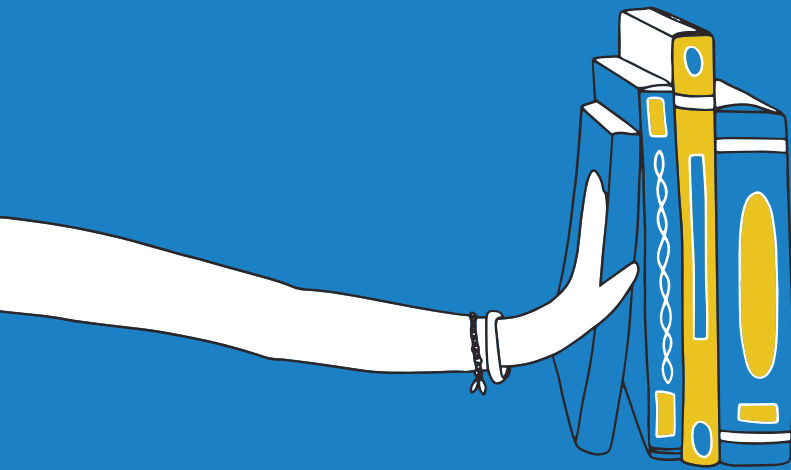
Difficulty recognizing sounds in words, such as:

- * **segmenting words** into their parts
(e.g. *cowboy* broken into *cow-boy*)
- * **blending individual sounds** into larger words
(e.g. /b/ /a/ /t/ into *bat*)
- * **manipulating sounds**
(e.g. *what's bat* without the /b/ at the beginning?)
- * difficulty **recognizing rhyme**

DECODING

Difficulty matching letter names to their sounds (e.g. the letters "ph" make the sound /f/) or, in older children, sounding out unfamiliar words.





OTHER SIGNS IN OLDER CHILDREN

Sometimes dyslexia is not recognized until a child is older, when peers are already reading. Additional signs of dyslexia may include⁴:

- * **Frustration**, such as avoiding reading, or complaining that reading is too hard
- * **Slow and laborious reading** (poor reading fluency)
- * **Spelling/writing** that is unusually difficult to decipher
- * **Difficulty understanding** or remembering what one reads or summarizing a story
- * Having trouble understanding idioms or puns or **not “getting the joke”**
- * Frequently **making the same mistakes**

OTHER SIGNS IN ADULTS

There are many adults who read through these signs and realize “Oh! This was me!”

While many adults with dyslexia have found strategies to help them be successful, some may still struggle with reading and writing. They may be knowledgeable about a topic and able to express their ideas verbally, but not be able to write them down.³

THESE STRUGGLES, WHEN NOT IDENTIFIED AND REMEDIATED, CAN LEAD TO ANXIETY AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM.

Even as an adult, if you suspect you have dyslexia, getting identified can be freeing and help you find support and more effective strategies to help with reading, writing, processing language, and learning.

READ MORE!

²Early Markers of Dyslexia
Landmark360



³What Is Dyslexia?
DyslexiaUK

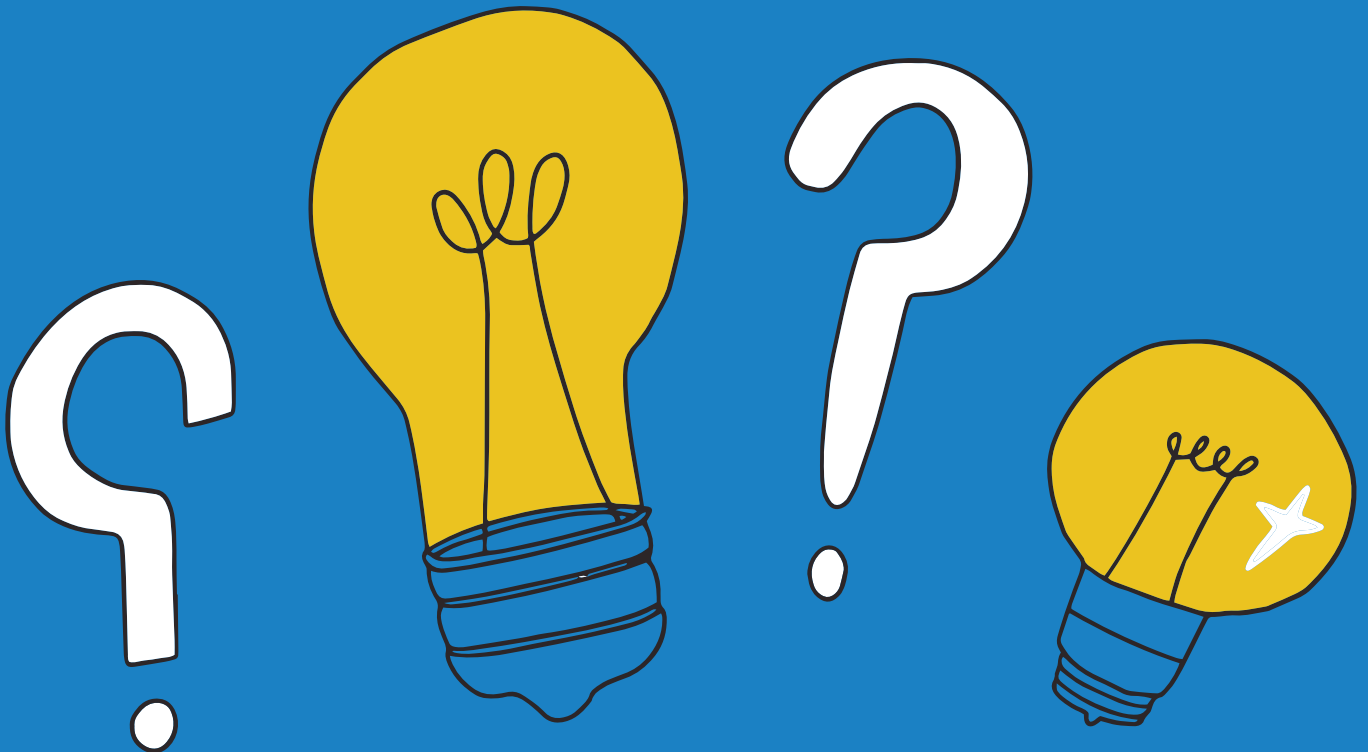


⁴Signs of dyslexia at different ages
Understood.org



Facts and Myths

There are many misconceptions about dyslexia. Take a look at some myths and facts.



MYTH: People with dyslexia are not smart.

FACT: Dyslexia is not related to intelligence. People with dyslexia have a wide range of cognitive abilities.

MYTH: People with dyslexia won't find success in life.

FACT: It is true that a world built on reading can make the path for those with dyslexia harder, but people with dyslexia have unique skills that make them the future of our world's workforce. (pg. 18) People with dyslexia are often advanced in visualizing, communicating, connecting, exploring, and imagining.⁵

MYTH: People with dyslexia have poor eyesight or read backward.

FACT: Dyslexia is not a visual problem.

MYTH: Just because my child has dyslexia doesn't mean I do.

FACT: Dyslexia is strongly heritable, occurring in up to 50% of individuals who have a first-degree relative with dyslexia.⁶

MYTH: People with dyslexia just need to work harder.

FACT: People with dyslexia are often working twice as hard to compensate for their reading difficulties.

MYTH: You have to wait until late elementary school before being diagnosed with dyslexia.

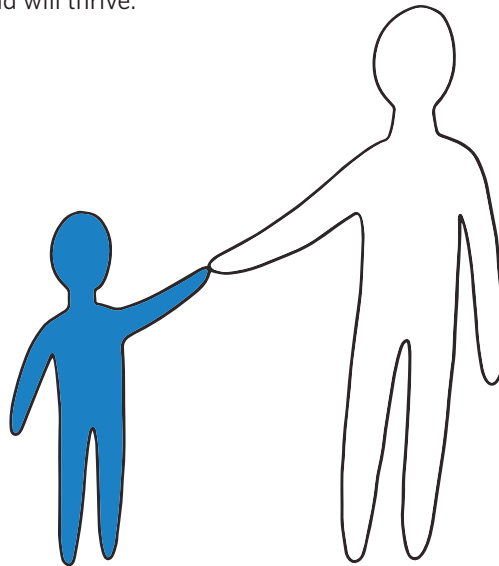
FACT: There are signs of dyslexia as early as age 3, before a child begins to learn to read, and screening can happen in kindergarten to determine if a child is at risk for dyslexia.⁶

MYTH: Dyslexia isn't that important as it doesn't affect me.

FACT: Most experts estimate that 20% of people have dyslexia, representing 80–90% of all those with learning disabilities. Chances are very likely that you know someone with dyslexia.⁷

MYTH: People with dyslexia can be cured.

FACT: People with dyslexia do not need a cure. With the right teaching approaches and strategies, people with dyslexia can learn to effectively read and write and will thrive.



MORE ABOUT DYSLEXIA

⁵We're Here to Redefine Dyslexia
Made By Dyslexia



⁶It's a Myth That Young Children Cannot Be Screened for Dyslexia
Landmark360

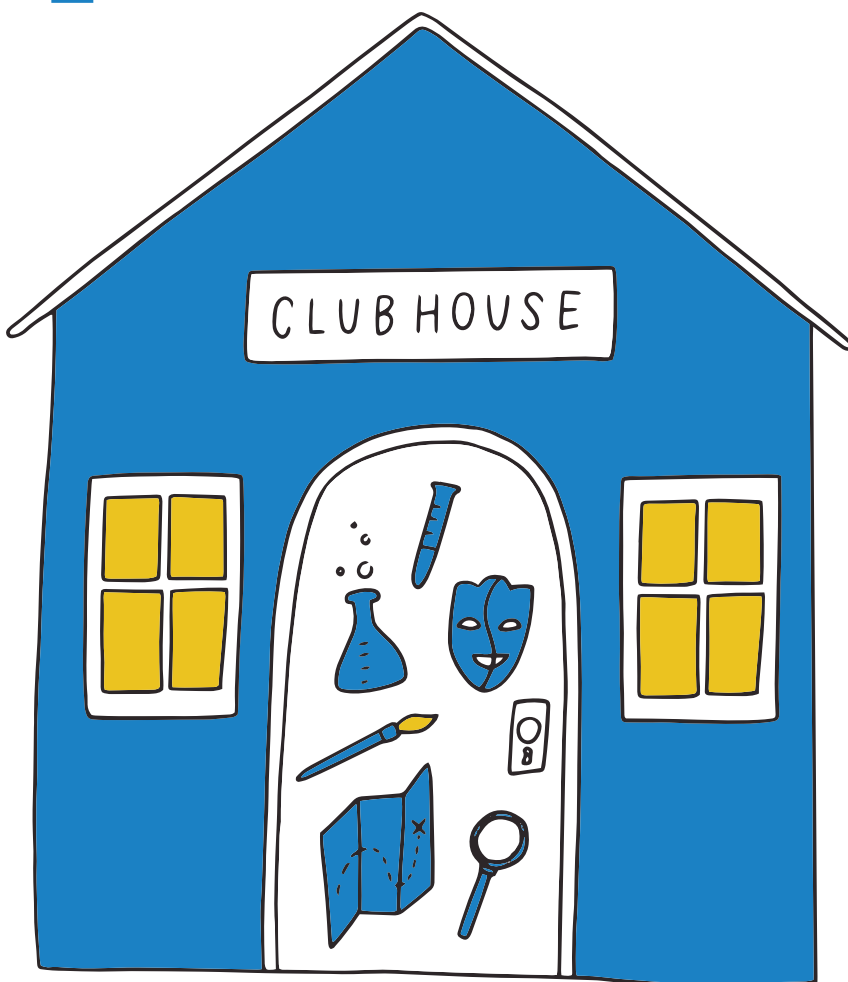


⁷Dyslexia FAQ
The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity

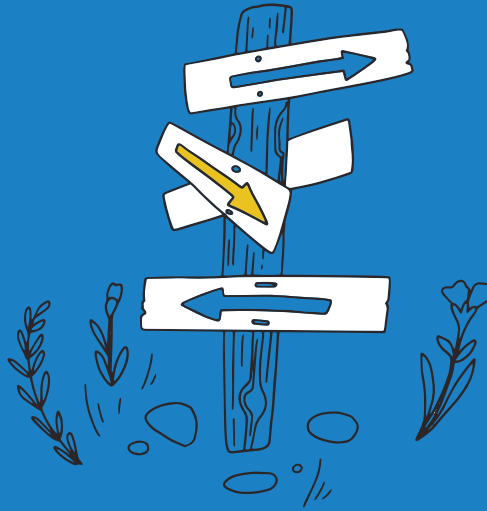


So What Now?

If you think you or a loved one may have dyslexia, you're in good company! You belong to a group of people who are smart and creative communicators, explorers, and connectors.



School systems and workplaces are not always geared for people with dyslexia, so there are some things that you can do:



GET DIAGNOSED

Having a diagnosis can open important accommodations for people with dyslexia, which fall under the category of Specific Learning Disability (SLD). Work with your doctor, teachers, and, if needed, an independent psychologist.

* Learn more about how to request an evaluation at school:



6 Steps to Request a Free School Evaluation



Psychoeducational and Neuropsychological Evaluations Explained

TALK ABOUT IT

If your child has dyslexia, don't be reluctant to talk with them about it.

* Here are some tips:



The Best Way to Explain Learning Disabilities to Your Child

PERSIST

Finding the right interventions to help your child requires patience. Don't give up! Take the time to learn the best ways to support and empower your child. There is a movement to redefine dyslexia.

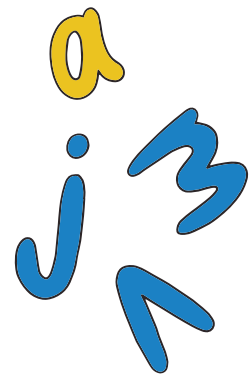
* Learn more about it:



Made By Dyslexia

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- * **Dyslexia is a difficulty learning to read, write, and spell.**
- * **The earlier a student gets intervention, the better the outcome.**
- * **Dyslexia is the most common learning disability, affecting about 20% of people.⁷**
- * **People with dyslexia are smart, often with above-average intelligence.**

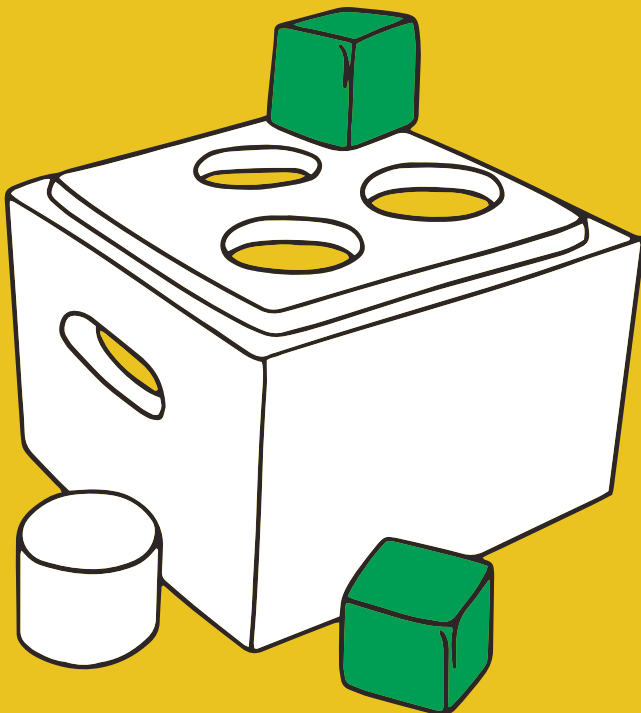


Dyslexia

AT SCHOOL

Seeking specific support at each step of your child's educational career can lead to a more productive and enriching school experience.

by Rob Kahn



The International Dyslexia Association's definition refers to dyslexia as a learning disability because it can make it very difficult for a student to succeed academically in the typical instructional environment.

For people with dyslexia, the school years often present challenges. Any delay in acquiring or employing literacy skills sets students with dyslexia apart in an environment where processing language is the basis for nearly every expectation and interaction.

Whatever the stage of schooling, the reason the school years can be difficult is the same "reason" that square pegs and round holes don't play well together. Neither one is right or wrong, better or worse.

They just aren't designed to work with each other. The more we learn about the strengths and challenges of having dyslexia, the more the disconnect between school and real life becomes apparent.

See *School is Not Real* by Josh Clark for more on this.



The fight to even the playing field for all learners is two-fold: While we engage with the educational system in response to neurodiversity and real-world demographics, we also have to examine how to give those students with dyslexia tools to survive and thrive. It is not zero-sum: A useful assumption is that everyone involved wants all students to succeed.

Let's organize the typical school journey into stages, and talk about essentials for navigating the school experience.

THE EARLY YEARS

Family members and caregivers play a key role in the preschool years. Experts agree that early identification is the path to acquiring basic literacy skills, and getting a diagnosis is the key to accessing effective remediation and accommodations when needed.

Resources such as the Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity, Reading Rockets, and many others have helpful information on what to look for at an early age.

Suspect Dyslexia: Act Early

Pre-K Getting Ready to Read and Write



Early assessment with science-based screening tools is growing. As of July 28, 2022, 29 states and the District of Columbia have passed laws or implemented new policies related to evidence-based reading instruction. Information on Massachusetts's policy and laws around literacy screening can be found at: **Early Literacy Universal Assessment** and **Massachusetts Dyslexia Guidelines**.



ELEMENTARY THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL

For students with dyslexia, it's not primarily about content and curriculum but rather about access and the rules of engagement. The more that curriculum and assessment depend on literacy skills and traditional norms of presentation and testing, the greater the risk that students with dyslexia will be marginalized and not well served.

There is no longer a debate that a science-based, structured language approach to teaching reading is the most effective method for students with dyslexia. Parents and students can use a variety of sources to keep informed about and evaluate the approaches to literacy acquisition practiced in their school.

HOW TO TEACH READING

A-Z of Teaching Reading
The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity



Providing support for your child with dyslexia at home
Reading Rockets



If we look at the two sides of the challenge—equipping the dyslexic brain for school while trying to shape school to be inclusive of all brains, we can identify key priorities for parents and students:

- ✦ **Specific focus** on literacy skills as a primary goal along with content
- ✦ **Appropriate modifications** in class and on assignments
- ✦ **Interfacing with instructors** who are informed about dyslexia and are also patient and flexible
- ✦ **Communication** for families to school personnel in a supportive, non-adversarial channel; students to teachers from the standpoint of self-knowledge and advocacy.

Retooling educational systems, like any systemic change, will take time and sustained advocacy. Informed students and parents/guardians can use local and national resources (Decoding Dyslexia, International Dyslexia Association [IDA], National Center for Learning Disabilities [NCLD], The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity Advocacy Toolkit) to work both sides of the equation: ensuring successful experiences for their children by staying involved, looking at assessment results, asking questions, while also exploring advocacy groups to push for equitable change for all types of learners.

Top priorities for educational policy makers and teachers at these levels are to institute effective training for identification and remediation (e.g., Landmark Outreach, LETRS) to ensure teachers have access to training during paid hours. Research has linked dyslexia to school failure and higher rates of incarceration for nearly 80 years.

When their personality, strengths, and hopes are a mismatch with the expectations of the school environment, students with dyslexia are caught in a bind. They are always playing “defense” and trying to cope with demands while not having time or space to share their strengths. It can be a no-win situation if they are not provided with the basic tools needed to succeed. As students get older and assume increasing responsibility for their personal journey, schools and families are faced with a metacognitive challenge: while students learn, they also need to learn *how* they learn. When an educational setting matches student needs, such as Landmark School, you begin to hear families say things like, “I have my child back.”

POST-SECONDARY

Self-Knowledge Leading to Self-Advocacy

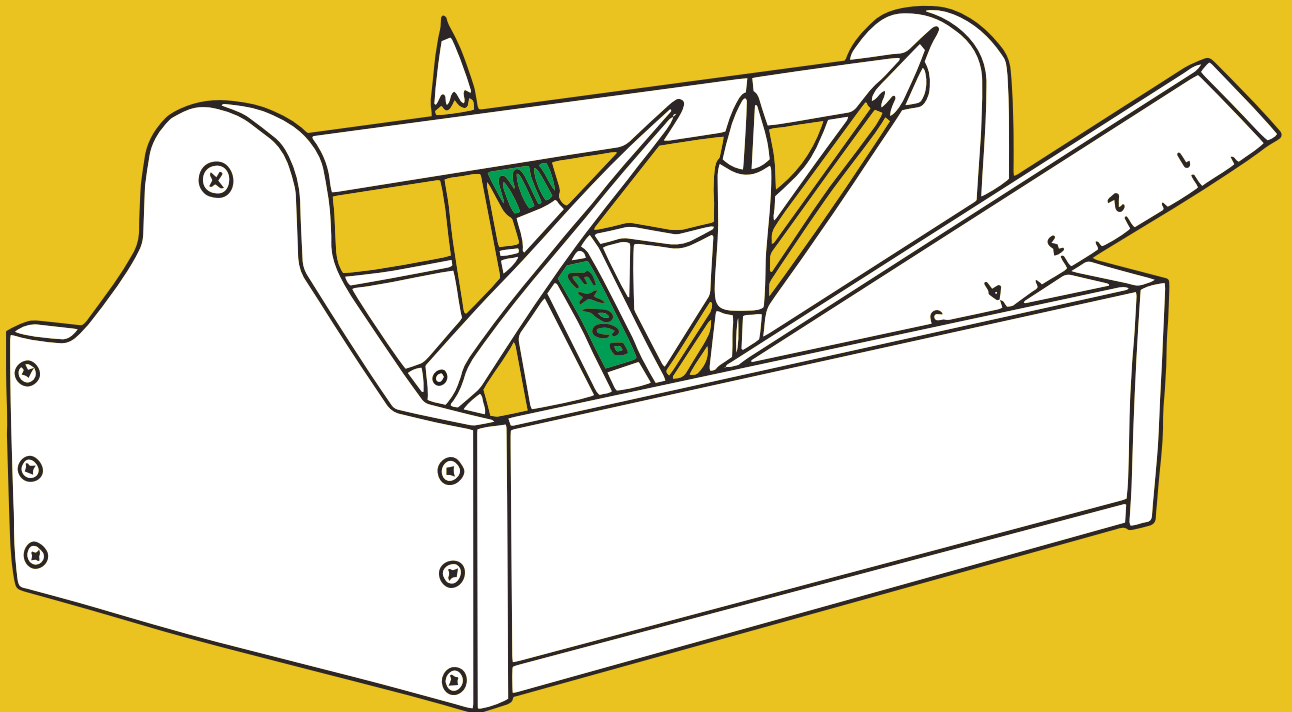
Remediation during the later school years has a threefold goal: provide the literacy skills needed, restore self-confidence and a sense of competence, and instill a game plan that supports the student’s learning profile for future success.

Here’s what we’ve learned from our own students and families at Landmark School:

- ✦ Be clear and realistic about the next step after high school.
- ✦ Make the student an active partner in determining the right fit for the immediate future.
- ✦ Be open to alternatives when exploring the path that feels right, which may be a gap year or a vocation.
- ✦ If the immediate next step is college, seek out schools known for their student services and validate what you learn by visits and information from alumni.

Strategies and self-advocacy should be essential take-aways from high school. The strategies that work come from a student’s own understanding of their learning profile. The self-advocacy skills help in forming trusted relationships, two-way communication, and use of accommodations.





TECHNOLOGY FOR HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE, AND BEYOND

In the formative years when literacy skills are being built, tech work-arounds can actually be a drawback. While they may allow access to content, if they bypass acquiring a toolbox for literacy, then they are not sustainable as a strategy. However, once in college, students with dyslexia generally find technology skills to be absolutely essential, combined with organizational and executive functioning assists to make time management and self-monitoring productive. Landmark alumni have mentioned products with integrated suites of features such as Capti Voice, Read&Write Gold, and apps such as Notability and Recorder Plus for their utility—and there are many others. But the key is the underlying self-advocacy and metacognitive awareness that students take away from their school years.

This translates into the ability to determine what works best for each individual in their particular post-secondary or graduate setting. For example, Olivia Hearn '22 noted: "If you read your notes to someone like you are teaching them, you can retain the information better," and Ethan Cadorette '22 added that basic organizational habits have become critical scaffolding in college: "I still use an organizer for all my work to stay on top of assignments. You can forget assignments very easily and the teacher

won't always remind you. I put all dates of exams from the syllabus into my calendar. You are on your own for a lot of the work you do in college unless you seek out the help, which I recommend you do if you feel it's beneficial."

It's not the bells and whistles that define what works, but rather the metacognitive understanding of the person using the tech assist. As alumna Ashley Holmes '13 points out: "The tool that I use the most at work is the read aloud function in Word. It helps me proofread important content. The computer has to read exactly what I write and sometimes it does not make sense. I am able to hear the mistake and make the necessary changes. If I proofread my work without an audio assistant I would read what I want to say, not what I wrote."

For individuals with dyslexia, greater acknowledgement and validation in the last few years have led to positive change, but there is much to do—particularly in schools.

- * **For the pre-school and early years:** continue to push for early identification and linguistically based approaches.
- * **During elementary and secondary school:** increase teacher training initiatives and accommodations.
- * **In the post-secondary world:** use technology and curriculum that not only facilitates learning but also incorporates the valuable perspectives of neurodiversity.

Dyslexia

AT HOME

A supportive home life can lead to more success for students with dyslexia and can foster strong relationships and increased confidence.

by **Chrissy Kenney**



Managing your child's learning disability at home may at times feel frustrating. It can be hard to understand why certain everyday skills are challenging for someone with dyslexia or another language-based learning disability (LBLD). But for all people, regardless of learning styles or challenges, the way we interact with the world, process information, interpret social cues, and problem solve—extends beyond the classroom to who we are at home, with friends and family, and elsewhere. It makes us who we are.

We've compiled some helpful tips with strategies that might make accomplishing certain tasks at home and in social relationships more successful.

TACKLING HOMEWORK

- * Work with your child to break assignments into smaller, digestible chunks.
- * Together create a motivating chart to track progress to goal.
- * Reward successful effort of homework with a fun activity (i.e., outdoor time, family game night, a visit to a local attraction or friend's house).

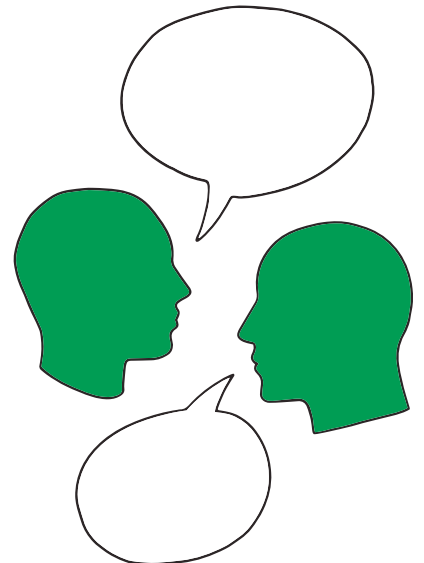


HANDLING HOUSEWORK

- * Create a chore chart to help your child visually see the tasks they need to complete.
- * Use wait time. After you've provided an instruction, allow several seconds to pass in silence to give your child time to process the information.
- * Use visual cues to reinforce directions when possible.
- * Provide positive reinforcement along the way.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

- * For children of all ages, role-playing common social situations, such as spending time at a new friend's house or having a large family dinner, can help them understand appropriate behaviors in those settings.
- * Watch scenes on TV or in movies that model positive social behavior and talk about them with your child to help them implement the behaviors in their own lives.
- * Don't throw the video game controller away! Multiplayer online games can be a refuge for students who struggle with connecting in-person with their peers. Setting playing time limits and monitoring for online bullying are important to keep your child on track.



One Family's Story

Landmark High School junior Naomi Welles doesn't complete any task casually. In third grade Naomi explained to her mom, "My mind works differently than most kids. Others think linear and straightforward, but I see and think more in a sphere."

Ask her to throw a baseball, and you might expect her to simply wind up and release her grip on the ball. For Naomi, it's not quite that simple. "I first need to understand the right angle to throw the ball. I think about how much wind might be blowing. Should I use my core or twist my body to gain momentum?" Naomi reflected.

Naomi turns the task into a math problem, a language she can easily understand. She is conscientious and puts much thought into all of her decisions. Naomi also attributes her ability to problem solve by combining her love of math and intense imagination to the very challenge her family feared might hold her back: her dyslexia.

"Dyslexia has helped me become who I am. It has made me so much stronger than I would be otherwise. Growing up, when I struggled, my mom would always tell me, 'Naomi, you're learning the most important lesson in life: to work hard,'" Naomi shared.

Today, Naomi is ambitious with a passion for learning, but her path to Landmark was challenging. She feels that at Landmark she is learning more about how she thinks about her disability and that she is getting the tools and help she needs to realize her full potential.

Naomi's mother, Jessica, also has dyslexia. Jessica is from Sweden and attended an international school in Spain. As a young student, she used many coping skills. She was able to easily pick up foreign languages and often served as a translator between teachers and students, in English, Swedish, and Spanish. When it came to reading, she would deflect with humor by being the entertainer of the class. She was also a strong athlete, which helped build her confidence.

Jessica believes in exposing children to different types of learning early—teaching her daughters how to read



Naomi (left) with two of her three siblings

"We are all dyslexic here.

YOU DON'T NEED TO HIDE ANYMORE.

If you ever feel alone,
just come and get me."

—CLASSMATE OF NAOMI WELLES '24

when they were young toddlers. Reading was an important part of their family life. Naomi's passion for books and storytelling could have been hindered by her dyslexia, but her younger sister Annika's love for reading helped them grow closer. They were a perfect team. Annika would often handle the reading and writing-related tasks. Naomi oversaw anything math related. Naomi used this as a strategy to navigate the world around her, but Annika was only available at home—not at school.

Naomi was formally diagnosed with dyslexia and dysgraphia in third grade. Even though the family went so far as to move towns to get Naomi the appropriate school support, her teachers struggled to understand why such a smart and hardworking student wasn't progressing in reading and writing.

"It's a struggle to accept that your child has dyslexia, especially when you know firsthand the painful path ahead and challenges that come along with it," Jessica said.

When local public school, public online school, and

private tutoring didn't address Naomi's academic needs, Jessica and her husband, David, fiercely advocated on behalf of Naomi, which eventually led to her enrollment at Landmark High School. And because the family lives so far from campus, they made the difficult decision to have Naomi board, which was worth it in the long run.

While Naomi loves her classes, the social aspect of Landmark has perhaps benefited her the most. As a young student, the discrepancy between her ability to break down the written language and her powerful mind formed a wedge between her and her classmates. This was only reinforced by the numerous pull-out sessions that additionally separated her from the rest of her classmates. She felt isolated and singled out. Her self-esteem took a toll.

Today, Naomi loves attending a school where students' learning differences are celebrated and their educational needs are met with an individualized program.

Naomi was understandably guarded upon arriving at Landmark, having experienced some prior bullying and isolation. A coping skill she had used was to hide and try to not be seen. When a classmate at Landmark

noticed that Naomi seemed disengaged, he offered his friendship and some well-received advice: "We are all dyslexic here. You don't need to hide anymore. If you ever feel alone, just come and get me."

This advice has stuck with Naomi. When asked about the wedge dyslexia created in her social life, she said, "That barrier is gone, and I am slowly learning to trust teachers and peers." At Landmark today, Naomi is navigating this new experience one step at a time, trying out many different clubs and after-school activities. So far, she has participated in dance, track and field, cross country, climbing club, chorus, the sailing team, and various service projects. And she's thrilled with every opportunity she gets to give tours of Landmark to potential students and families.

After Landmark, Naomi plans to attend college, and her list of potential careers is about 100 deep. We know one truth with certainty: Naomi will put a great deal of thought into what she decides to pursue next, and she will work incredibly hard to accomplish it.

Upon reflection, Naomi offered: "Dyslexia has taught me how to work 10 times harder than others. When I'm older, that's going to help me."

Many would argue it already has.

STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH DYSLEXIA AT HOME FROM THE WELLES FAMILY

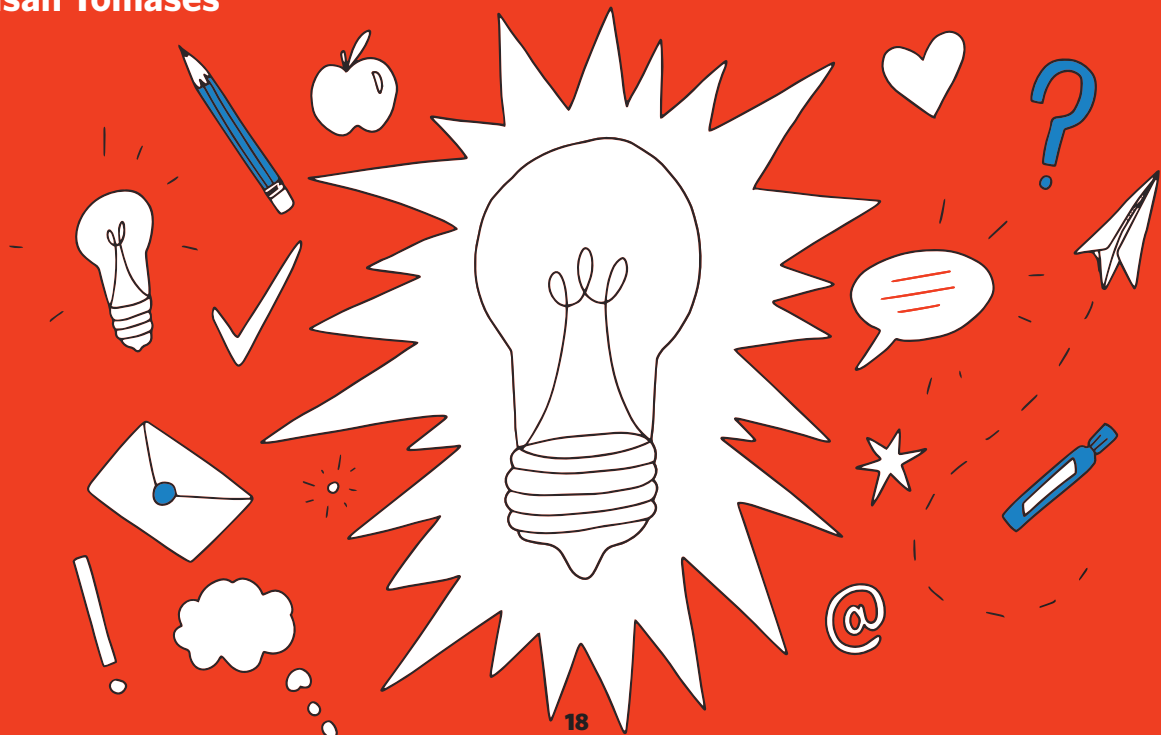
- * Use hands-on activities, like building, to illustrate important skills.
- * Craft and post visual charts to keep tasks organized.
- * Turn problems into games to increase motivation.
- * Use multimodal approaches (listen to and read a book at the same time).
- * Utilize apps such as Snap & Read or other assistive technology not to bypass skill development but to enhance workflow.
- * Identify tools that might supplement your child's remediation, such as audiobooks on LBLD-focused apps like Learning Ally.
- * Create a "distraction-free" homework space.
- * Cultivate strengths, such as athletics or the arts.
- * Work with your student to develop a strong sense of self-awareness.

Dyslexia

AT WORK

The world view of hiring people with dyslexia is slowly changing with opportunities for these "out-of-the-box" thinkers starting to open. Finding the right fit is the key to success.

by Susan Tomases



REFRAMING THE NARRATIVE ABOUT DYSLEXIA IN THE WORKPLACE

For those of us in the workforce, having a LinkedIn profile feels pretty typical. So when LinkedIn added Dyslexic Thinking in the spring of 2022 as one of many skills that users could select to describe their work attributes and reframe the narrative, it was a significant departure from the norm. What's even more amazing is that once they began to promote this opportunity to their users, they had over 10,000 people apply this skill within the first hour. Polls suggest that 97% of people view dyslexia negatively. When LinkedIn added Dyslexic Thinking as a skill in the platform, positive sentiment toward dyslexia rose by 1,562% on social media.¹ Bloomberg calls LinkedIn's decision, "a breakthrough in acknowledging dyslexia in the workplace."

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS US

The common belief that having dyslexia is disabling is based on cultural assumptions, often related to school performance. A research study conducted at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom argues that the form of cognition represented by developmental dyslexia plays an essential role in enabling humans to adapt. The study posits that the work world is an ever-changing environment that now looks at many of the strengths of people with dyslexia and recognizes them as potential advantages.

"Additional studies of creative ability also show evidence of a heightened ability to connect and carry out unusual combinations of ideas (Cancer et al., 2016), as well as heightened ability in tasks requiring novelty, insight, and more innovative styles of thinking (Everatt et al., 1999)."²

In a study published in the November 2022 issue of Risk & Insurance, the author notes that, "Numerous scientific studies suggest that dyslexic people have creative capabilities and critical thinking skills as compared to non-dyslexic individuals. Their other traits on par with or better than non-dyslexics' include empathy, sensitivity, and awareness of other people's emotions. Altogether, these varied qualities are associated with exceptional problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership—skills in high demand in the specialty insurance market."³

Ernst & Young conducted research where they mapped the top 10 trending and top 10 declining competencies against typical capabilities of people with dyslexia. They found that of the skills that people with dyslexia struggle with, spelling and reading skills as well as time management could be supported by technology. There will be increased demand for strengths like leadership and social influence, creativity, initiative, and analytical thinking.

Justine Campbell, Ernst & Young's, UK and Ireland managing partner of Talent said, "Attracting neurodiverse talent, including individuals with dyslexia, provides an opportunity for organizations to harness the fullest range of skills and perspectives. Our business looks to diversity of thought to remain competitive, continuously innovate, and drive better business performance."⁴

"Attracting neurodiverse talent, including individuals with dyslexia, provides an opportunity for organizations to

HARNESS THE FULLEST RANGE OF SKILLS AND PERSPECTIVES."

—JUSTINE CAMPBELL,
ERNST & YOUNG'S, UK AND IRELAND
MANAGING PARTNER OF TALENT



UNIQUE STRENGTHS OF MANY PEOPLE WITH DYSLEXIA:

- * Analytical and critical thinking
- * Complex problem solving
- * Empathy/sensitivity
- * Innovation
- * Learning strategies
- * Leadership
- * Persistence
- * Resilience
- * Team player

ENTREPRENEURIAL ADVANTAGE

According to Julie Hogan, professor of Entrepreneurship at the Cass Business School in London, 35% of American entrepreneurs have dyslexia.⁵ Innovation, persistence, and perseverance are common traits of some of the most successful self-starting people in a range of professions from education to healthcare, finance, biotech, and everything in between. “People with dyslexia are often highly creative thinkers, likely because in compensating for or overcoming the challenges of dyslexia we develop a strategic intelligence, as well as a stubborn persistence. It is no surprise to me that entrepreneurs exhibit higher rates of dyslexia than the general population. We’re wired to approach challenges in new ways, to work around obstacles, and to solve problems,” says Elliot Weissbluth, HEC Paris Business School visiting lecturer and founder and former chair of Hightower Advisors.⁶

ADVICE FROM ELLIOT WEISSBLUTH:

- * Take your time.
- * Be purposely attentive.
- * Keep a journal to reflect back on.
- * Reject the myth of multitasking—it doesn’t work for most of us.
- * Recognize your strengths and develop them rather than improve a weakness.

REALITY CHECK

None of what we’ve shared so far in this article is meant to sugar coat the challenges of having dyslexia at school, home, or work. Anyone with a learning disability will tell you that they have to work twice as hard, are often ashamed of their learning style, can be overly focused on their shortcomings rather than their strengths, and can suffer from low self-esteem.

CHALLENGES FOR PEOPLE WITH DYSLEXIA IN THE WORKPLACE CAN SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE:

- * Slower processing speed
- * Poor working memory
- * Stress, anxiety, poor self-esteem, and fear of being judged
- * Concentration
- * Following complex instructions
- * Spelling
- * Using fast-paced project management and social media tools

ALUMNI ADVICE



JAKE ANDREWS '07

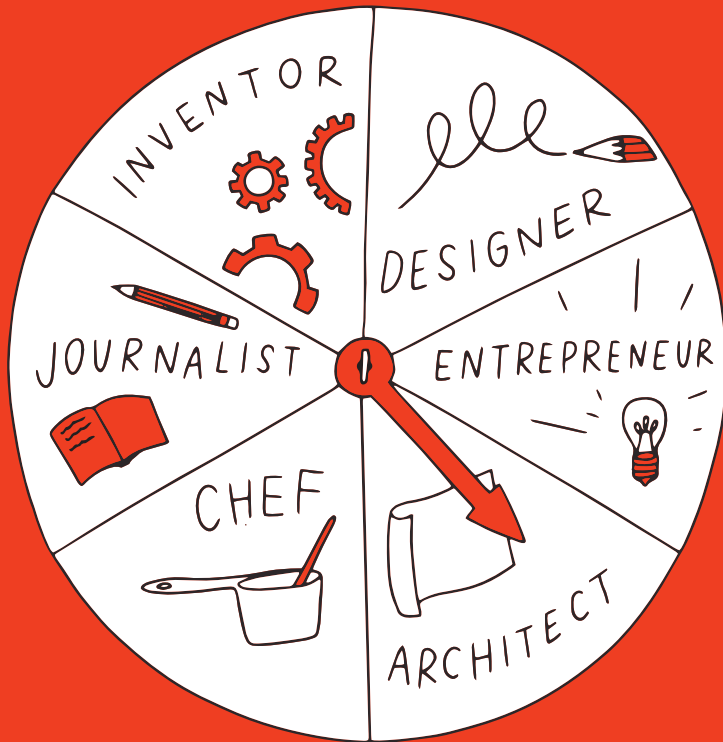
“When you work on your own, you need to be self-sufficient and get the job done. I learned that when I hit a roadblock I stop, take 10 minutes, compose myself, and try to find a way to work through the problem. There’s always a solution, you just have to be in the right state of mind to figure it out.”

HILLAH CULLMAN '01

Every year I reread the book *The First 90 Days: Proven Strategies for Getting Up to Speed Faster and Smarter*, and then I create a month-by-month road map of everything that needs to get done in that year.

There are a lot of apps out there that are your friend and will keep you honest. I use my Outlook calendar as a reminder tool for me and my colleagues. If you can color code the initiatives on the calendar, even better!

Everyone should have a subscription to Grammarly.



POPULAR CAREERS FOR PEOPLE WITH DYSLEXIA

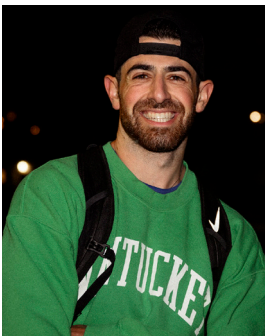
POPULAR CAREERS FOR PEOPLE WITH DYSLEXIA

Kate Griggs, founder of the advocacy group Made By Dyslexia said, **"WE NEED TO CHANGE THE WORLD'S PERCEPTION OF DYSLEXIA FROM A DISABILITY INTO A VALUED DIFFERENCE."**

With skills such as 'big picture' thinking, strong problem solving, three-dimensional, spatial awareness, and visualization skills, people with dyslexia often gravitate to media, communications, and creative industries. For example notable architects with dyslexia include: Norman Foster (Apple headquarters), Jørn Utzon (Sydney Opera House), Lord Richard Rogers (Pompidou Centre in Paris)."

This may be easier said than done, however. Finding the right fit often takes extra time, but people with dyslexia are used to that and often have the determination to push through in ways that traditional learners do not. Of course, exploring and experimenting with a variety of careers and talking to a trusted friend or hiring a coach to help you zero in on finding careers that match your strengths are helpful steps.

ALUMNI ADVICE



DYLAN SHRIER '15

- * Question everything, network, take risks, hustle, and believe in yourself.
- * Since I am slow at processing and sometimes understanding information, I ask a million questions to learn more quickly and make my workflow easier.
- * In the creative design industry, you have to hustle early in your career. You start out at

the bottom, and you slowly make your way up. If you stay positive, do your job, work your tail off, and maintain your connections, doors will open for you.

- * The most important thing is to believe in yourself. The real world is overwhelming, but by focusing on your strengths and toolkit from what Landmark and college have taught you, it will make you prepared and confident to take on anything ahead.

HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY

Suzanne Crossman and Kevin Roberts in Landmark's Transition and Guidance department said, "Consider careers that take advantage of your strengths, and don't listen to the voices asking you to conform to societal norms." Most people with dyslexia do not want to divulge their dyslexia to their employers. However, when asked if someone with dyslexia should share this in the interview process, Suzanne offers, "Consider your strengths and articulate those to any prospective employer. You are interviewing them as much as they are interviewing you. If the job and the employer don't appreciate what you can offer, maybe that's not where you want to work." Kevin adds, "Having dyslexia often means that you have the grit, determination, and ability to overcome adversity. Use these qualities to help boost your confidence and don't apologize for your learning style."

"Having dyslexia often means that you have the grit, determination, and **ABILITY TO OVERCOME ADVERSITY.**"

—KEVIN ROBERTS,
LANDMARK GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

WHAT EMPLOYERS SHOULD CONSIDER

There are many ways that employers can provide simple supports to help their curious and creative employees⁸:

- * Focus on what the employee can do, rather than what they can't.
- * Provide additional time to complete tasks.
- * Encourage employees with dyslexia to break projects down into manageable chunks.
- * Foster a culture of creativity, visualization, and group problem solving.
- * Offer text-to-speech tools on electronics, recording devices, etc.
- * Articulate understanding and patience to employees with dyslexia.
- * Foster an environment where employees feel comfortable disclosing their dyslexia.
- * Provide disability and inclusion awareness training.
- * Give employees opportunities to communicate verbally, graphically, and in writing.
- * Provide positive feedback.
- * Listen, learn, and remain open minded to the strengths of all employees, especially those with dyslexia.
- * Provide opportunities for employees who think and problem solve differently to share their thinking and creativity.





WELL-KNOWN ENTREPRENEURS WHO HAVE DYSLEXIA⁷:

Max Ash '23, Landmark School alumnus and inventor of *The Mug With a Hoop*

Richard Branson, business mogul

Barbara Corcoran, real estate mogul

Ben Foss, inventor of the Intel Reader, mobile text to speech reader

Reyn Geyer, inventor of the Nerf ball and many other items

Stan Gloss, co-founder of BioTeam

Daymond John, founder of FUBU and many other companies

Tommy Hilfiger, fashion designer

Ingvar Kamprad, founder of IKEA

David Neeleman, founder of JetBlue

Paul Orfalea, founder of Kinkos

Charles Schwab, founder of multinational investment firm

Diane Swonk, economist and author

¹Made by Dyslexia. (2022, July 7). Dyslexic thinking campaign film. YouTube. Retrieved January 23, 2023

²Taylor, H., & Vestergaard, M. D. (2022). Developmental Dyslexia: Disorder or Specialization in Exploration? *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13.

³Hiring in the Specialty Insurance Field? People with Dyslexia Can Be an Asset. (2022, November 10). *Risk & Insurance*.

⁴The value of dyslexia Dyslexic capability and organisations of the future Acknowledgements and information. (n.d.).

⁵New Research Reveals Many Entrepreneurs Are Dyslexic. (n.d.). www.amanet.org.

⁶Dyslexia: Learning Disability or Entrepreneurial Advantage? (n.d.). www.landmarkschool.org.

⁷Entrepreneurs Who Learn and Think Differently. (n.d.). www.understood.org. Retrieved November 9, 2022

⁸Dyslexia in the workplace: Daily challenges. (n.d.). www.understood.org.

MAX ASH '23, INVENTOR OF MAX'IS CREATIONS®

Since second grade, Landmark alumnus Max Ash has been committed to three things: school, golf, and his brainchild and business, MAX'IS Creations. We recently asked Max about his experience as an innovator and entrepreneur and here's what he said.

LANTERN: *What has been the most valuable lesson you have learned from founding and helping to run your business?*

MAX: The most meaningful lesson for me has been realizing that the ability to find the best-fit people to work with is challenging but essential. Since I was so young, I started MAX'IS Creations® slowly, and I would recommend being patient with the process.

LANTERN: *What do you plan to do after leaving Landmark?*

MAX: I am planning to study astronomy in college along with playing competitive golf. After I graduate, I will attempt to make it onto the PGA Tour. When I settle down, I hope to work at NASA/SpaceX.

LANTERN: *What are some ways that your learning style has been an advantage to you in running MAX'IS Creations®?*

MAX: Dyslexia helps me think differently and innovatively. My business's success has enabled me to support organizations that directly impact other people with learning disabilities, such as Understood.org and Made by Dyslexia.



* Learn more about Max's story and inventions.
maxiscreations.com



LANDMARK SCHOOL

Harnessing the Power of Learning Differently

FOR:

- › **Students**
- › **Families**
- › **Advocates**
- › **Educational Consultants**

LEARN MORE:

landmarkschool.org



LANDMARK OUTREACH

PD and Coaching for Educators

FOR:

- › **Educators**
- › **Schools**
- › **Districts**
- › **Universities**

LEARN MORE:

landmarkoutreach.org



DOWNLOAD
THE DYSLEXIA
GUIDEBOOK

