

IDA Dyslexia Definition (2025)

The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) released an updated definition of dyslexia. Here's what's different!

Blue highlights indicate key terms or ideas that are retained from the old definition.

Green highlights indicate updates to the definition

“Dyslexia is a **specific learning disability** characterized by difficulties in **word reading and/or spelling** that involve accuracy, speed, or both and **vary depending on the orthography**. These difficulties occur along a **continuum of severity** and persist even with instruction that is effective for the individual's peers. The causes of dyslexia are complex and involve combinations of **genetic, neurobiological, and environmental influences** that interact throughout development. Underlying difficulties with phonological and **morphological processing** are common but not universal, and early oral language weaknesses often foreshadow literacy challenges. Secondary consequences include **reading comprehension problems and reduced reading and writing experience** that can impede growth in language, knowledge, written expression, and overall academic achievement. **Psychological well-being and employment opportunities** also may be affected. Although identification and targeted instruction are important at any age, **language and literacy support** before and during the early years of education is particularly effective.”



Updates

Orthography : Accounts for a variety of languages and the complexity of their writing system.

Continuum of Severity : Offers a more nuanced and individualized outlook on the disability.

Complex Causes : Recognizes more factors involved in the cause of dyslexia.

Updated Difficulties : Includes morphology alongside phonology as a processing challenge associated with dyslexia, but excludes the previous reference to “other cognitive abilities.”

Secondary Consequences : Includes impacts on psychological well-being and employment.

Window of Support : Emphasizes the importance of both language and literacy support during the early years of education.



For more information, visit improvingliteracy.org.

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