

Information retrieved from: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

There are a number of different definitions and descriptions of dyslexia, which may be appropriate for certain contexts or purposes.

In 2009 Sir Jim Rose’s Report on 'Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties’ gave the following description of dyslexia, which was adopted by the BDA Management Board, but with the addition of the further paragraph shown below, which should always appear with it:

The description of dyslexia adopted in the report is as follows:

 'Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.

Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.

Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.

It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.

Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.

A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention.'

In addition to these characteristics, the BDA acknowledges the visual and auditory processing difficulties that some individuals with dyslexia can experience, and points out that dyslexic readers can show a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the learning process.  Some also have strengths in other areas, such as design, problem solving, creative skills, interactive skills and oral skills.

In October 2007, the BDA Management Board approved the following definition:

“Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that mainly affects the development of literacy and language related skills.  It is likely to be present at birth and to be life-long in its effects.  It is characterised by difficulties with phonological processing, rapid naming, working memory, processing speed, and the automatic development of skills that may not match up to an individual's other cognitive abilities.

It tends to be resistant to conventional teaching methods, but its effect can be mitigated by appropriately specific intervention, including the application of information technology and supportive counselling.

The following description is quoted in the BDA Code of Practice for Employers:

“Dyslexia is a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the learning process in one or more of reading, spelling and writing. It is a persistent condition.

Accompanying weaknesses may be identified in areas of speed of processing, short-term memory, organisation, sequencing, spoken language and motor skills. There may be difficulties with auditory and /or visual perception.  It is particularly related to mastering and using written language, which may include alphabetic, numeric and musical notation.

Dyslexia can occur despite normal intellectual ability and teaching. It is constitutional in origin, part of one’s make-up and independent of socio-economic or language background.

Some learners have very well developed creative skills and/or interpersonal skills, others have strong oral skills. Some have no outstanding talents. All have strengths.”

(Dr.Lindsay Peer, 2006)