

Dyslexia and study skills

Being dyslexic does not mean that you are not as clever as other people, only that you learn in a different way.

Being dyslexic means that you take longer to process and remember information. This is why you might be allowed extra time in exams.

Short-term memory means that you must over-learn things until you know them perfectly. You cannot study things at the last minute.

The same difficulties that affect reading and writing also affect organisation skills, such as time management, organising ideas and structuring your work.

Some tips for studying are:

- Use different coloured folders for each subject
- Use sticky notes to summarise your notes (a very short sentence or drawing might help you)
- Check at what time of day you work best
- Make a list of what things distract you and how to prevent each of these
- Study little and often in 'chunks' in 10 minute or 20 minute bursts
- If you don't understand your notes try to Google a simple answer.

'Learning styles'

While people used to talk about 'learning styles', there is no evidence that people with dyslexia learn better in one particular style.

People with dyslexia should be encouraged to develop their own preferences and approaches to learning.

Work in ways that suit you best:

- Keep things simple: start with the basics and build up your understanding
- Keep notes to a minimum
- Put key points on cards and on the other side of the card draw something to remind you. Test your knowledge.
- Concentrate on the things you do not know – put the things you know to one side. Use a mindmap to help you with this (see our leaflet on Mindmaps)
- Try and draw the mindmap from memory – check what you have forgotten and work on those things
- Use your mindmaps to plan answer essays to old exam questions
- Look at old exam papers and know how many questions you must answer (ask your exam board, teacher or lecturer)
- Analyse each part of the question and underline the keywords of the task, the limit of what you have been asked and the area you are being asked about
- If your mind goes blank, try and draw a cartoon or mindmap, leave a space and it might come back when you relax
- Use the 7 'WH' questions to see if you can interview yourself (What, Where, Why, Who, When, Which, How) and write answers for each one in note form to see if this jogs your memory.

More information

Other Dyslexia Scotland Guides

(all available at www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/leaflets)

- **Useful resources**
- Studying with Dyslexia by Janet Godwin
- Study Skills for Students with Dyslexia by Sandra Hargreaves
- 'The Study Skills Toolkit for Students with Dyslexia' by Monica Gribben
- 'Advanced Study Skills' by Christine Ostler and Frances Ward
- 'The Study Skills Handbook' by Stella Cottrell
- Dyslexia Scotland Helpline 0344 800 8484
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Dyslexia Scotland

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