



Dyslexia Style Guide 2021

Help children with learning difficulties at school with dyslexia-friendly content.

Use this style guide in the classroom and at home to ensure consistency of written documents, to improve the readability of worksheets and all written communication for all – but especially for those with such learning difficulties as dyslexia.

This guide should be used for all communication – including presentations, web pages, printed materials, worksheets, emails and instructions.

Font

- If possible, download a dyslexic font such as Open Dyslexic ([download here](#)).
- If that isn't possible, use a sans serif font, (for example Arial and Comic Sans) as letters appear less crowded. If these aren't suitable, choose either Calibri, Century Gothic, Tahoma or Verdana.
- Font size should be 12-14 point. Some children with dyslexia may require a larger font.
- Larger character spacing improves readability. However too much space between letters hinders readability. The ideal spacing is approximately 35% of the average letter width.
- Word spacing should be at least 3.5 times the character spacing.
- Line spacing should be proportional to word spacing: 1.5/150% is optimum.
- Avoid underlining and italics. Both of these functions can make words appear as if they are running into each other. Use bold if you need to emphasise words.
- Avoid uppercase, capital letters and small caps (when possible) as these can be harder to read.



Structure

- Consistency is of vital importance when creating dyslexia-friendly content. The structure should be as consistent as possible when creating written communication.
- Headings will help each child navigate their ways through whatever content they are reading. All headings should be at least 20% larger than the main text and if even more emphasis is required, use bold.
- Use formatting tools to align text: indents and lists help to create clear, easy to read content. Use the Layout tab in Word adjust spacing, align the work and manage paragraphs
- Ensure there is extra space after headings and between paragraphs.

Layout

- Left align all text, with no justification.
- Avoid multiple columns
- Never make lines too long. (stick to between 60-70 characters per line)
- Avoid clutter
- Break up the text with plenty of sub-headings in long documents. Always include a table of contents.

Written style

- Use active voice. (Avoid passive voice)
- Use short, direct and simple sentences - clear and concise instructions.
- Use images throughout. Charts are a good visual aid while graphics can help children locate information.
- Bullet points are great way to avoid long sentences.
- Avoid double negatives, jargon and abbreviations where possible (or explain them for the first use). Provide a glossary of abbreviations



Colour/Printing

- Always use single colour backgrounds. Patterned backgrounds of any style will distract from the text.
- Make sure there is appropriate contrast levels between background and text – a dark coloured text on a light (not white) background.
- Avoid pink, red and green as these colours are difficult for anyone who has any level of colour blindness.
- White backgrounds aren't always the best. Remember this when using whiteboards. Cream is a good alternative. However, some children with dyslexia will have a particular colour that helps.
- When printing, always use matt paper and if printing double sided, make sure the other side does not show through.

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