# Checklist of Common Characteristics - Early Years, Primary, Secondary

The following characteristics can be found in many children for a variety of reasons. Children with dyslexia will have a pattern of difficulties within this range. You may like to use this checklist as a first step in identifying pupils who are causing concern who may have dyslexia. Highlight those statements that apply in order to inform intervention. If more than approximately 50% of the characteristics are highlighted there is a likelihood that a pupil has dyslexia and the pathway moves to SEN Support

## [Early Years Checklist](#_Early_Years_Checklist)

Persistent difficulty learning simple rhymes, doing actions with rhymes and naming objects

* Enjoys listening to stories but shows no interest in words or letters
* May have difficulty dressing/ undressing, shoes on wrong feet, etc.
* May have difficulty throwing, catching, kicking a ball, balancing, hopping, skipping, cutting out etc
* May have delayed speech or intermittent hearing difficulties
* May have family history of literacy difficulties
* May have difficulty with attention
* May have difficulty learning to sing or keeping to a simple rhythm
* May have difficulty remembering names of friends, teachers, colours

## [Primary Age Checklist](#_Primary_Age_Checklist)

Often shows ability in creative activities, problem solving and oral work

May show ability in sport, music, art and drama

May show interest in topics, have good general knowledge

May be good at construction activities e.g. Lego, showing good spatial abilities

### Key factors

* Tires easily, especially when asked to read, copy or write for long periods
* May lack concentration and be easily distracted
* May have low self-esteem and self-confidence, especially in literacy tasks
* May use avoidance tactics (e.g. sharpening pencils, looking for books) or become class clown which may result in inappropriate behaviour
* May become withdrawn and isolated
* May appear to be ‘lazy’ or ‘dreamy’
* May have behavioural difficulties (e.g. through frustration)
* May find it difficult copying from the board
* Finds reading, writing, planning and spelling difficult
* May be slow in processing of written and spoken information, especially complex instructions
* May display clumsiness and poor motor skills
* Has difficulty in recalling information in the correct sequence or order
* Cannot match oral ability when writing
* Has difficulty self-organising
* May be forgetful of words
* May have alternating/intermittent hand preference
* May perform unevenly from day to day
* May be confused by differences between left/right, up/down, east/west
* May have limited understanding of non-verbal communication

### Reading

* Phonological awareness may be poor: has difficulty identifying sounds at beginning middles and ends of words, identifying syllables, blending letters
* Does not progress at the same rate as peers in reading and writing skills (although may make an apparently good start by memorising words in reading books)
* Reading is often slow, laborious and hesitant
* May omit words, jump lines, lose place in the text, ignore punctuation
* May not recognise familiar words or high frequency words
* May be unable to follow the left-right flow of text
* May reverse (or invert) letters e.g. bpdq unmwv, whole words and syllables e.g. scared/sacred, was/saw
* May show no expression when reading
* May decode all words and confuse familiar words
* May be unable to select key points in text, but recall some points orally
* May have good reading comprehension skills despite inaccurate reading
* May lose the point of the story being read or written
* Eyes may water or one eye may be occluded, ( partially or fully covered by their

hand) , when reading

* May suffer from headaches

### Writing

* Standard and amount may be well below expected range and in comparison with knowledge and vocabulary
* May have difficulty identifying errors in sentence and spellings
* May find planning, sequencing and organising thoughts and ideas difficult, resulting in seemingly messy overcorrected work
* Poor motor control may result in handwriting that is difficult to read, non cursive and incorrect letter formation
* Pencil grip may be incorrect in position, tension and pressure
* Spellings may include a mixture of lower and upper case (e.g. BaBy)
* Letters may be written in reverse
* Writing may drift away from lines and margins
* Spellings are often incorrect and inconsistent; even within a paragraph, several patterns may be used – thay, tehy, tahy
* May attempt to use phonic alternatives – cercl /circle or bizarre combinations of letters
* May make anagrams of words e.g. tired for tried, breaded for bearded
* May use unusual sequencing of letters or words

### Problems with Maths may occur as a result of the above difficulties:

* Number and symbol reversals
* Place value confusion
* Inability to remember sequences – tables, months, days, dates
* Difficulty with concept of time e.g. yesterday, today, tomorrow
* Time telling and awareness (use of timetables, organisation etc. may also suffer as a result of poor personal organisation skills)
* Inability to read mathematical instructions
* Confusion of symbols such as + and x signs
* Difficulty learning and remembering times tables

## [Secondary Age Checklist](#_Secondary_Age_Checklist)

With secondary age pupils it is important to first look for evidence of a possible continuation of factors listed within the Primary Age Section. Additionally, we may expect to see:

* Difficulty reading, spelling understanding new subject and technical vocabulary
* Confusion of dates, times, etc
* Difficulty following a timetable
* Difficulty with organisation of equipment, books, homework tasks etc
* Difficulty remembering instructions, information
* Misunderstanding complex instructions
* Increased difficulty in planning tasks, coursework etc
* Self-esteem may become increasingly fragile leading to emotional and behavioural problems, sometimes severely so
* Reading levels of text books, especially dense and complex texts, may be too demanding
* Unable to listen and make notes
* Unable to write or copy instructions accurately unless adequate time is allowed or alternative arrangements are made
* May have difficulty recalling facts, formulae, sequence of ideas, especially under pressure of tests and exams
* Homework set may take three times as long to complete if alternative methods of recording are not offered
* May not be able to use library /internet efficiently as unable to read information or use reference systems
* May not remember passwords or codes for logging in, or may enter them incorrectly / reverse etc.
* Unable to skim through or scan over reading matter
* Difficulty extracting the sense from written material without substantial re-reading