

Information taken from the Mayo Clinic and Web MD

### **Dyslexia:**

- Dyslexia is a learning disorder that affects reading and speech.
- It's shown that dyslexic brains show lower activation in the areas of the brain that process reading
- In the show, Annabeth says it seems like “words float off the page”
- This is called “visual dyslexia”
- “Dyslexia? Not cool” Children with dyslexia have a higher risk of internalizing mental health concerns. Structures in school don't usually adhere or adjust to students with dyslexia, so it is harder for them to match up to their peers.

### Traits of dyslexia

- Reading below the “average level”
- Trouble pronouncing words
- Trouble finding the right words to describe something
- Difficulty processing what is heard
- Difficulty reading and reading aloud
- With visual dyslexia, it can seem like the words shake, move around, slip, or slide off the page
- Mispronouncing names or words
- Words seeming like they go in and out of focus

### **ADHD:**

- Research suggests that ADHD is characterized by a lack of proper dopamine production in the brain, or the “instant gratification chemical”
- There are 3 types of ADHD: inattentive, hyperactive, and combined
- In the show, Percy mentions ADD, which is now currently diagnosed as the inattentive type of ADHD, he is also told to “pay attention” at the beginning of the show
- However, Annabeth mentions traits associated with hyperactive ADHD
- Therefore, half-bloods are most likely diagnosed with combined ADHD

### Traits of ADHD

#### Hyperactive:

- Trouble sitting still
- Fidgeting
- Often jumps into conversations or interrupts
- Feeling constantly “on the go”

- Struggling to wait
- Feeling restless in situations that require stillness
- Finishing other people's sentences
- Racing thoughts

Inattentive:

- Trouble focusing on details
- Zoning out or losing focus
- Trouble staying on task
- Being easily distracted by stimuli
- Often losing track of items
- Forgetting certain details or dates

How these affect daily life:

- Due to trouble focusing, grades can slip
- Impulsivity can lead to rash decision making
- Easier to lose items or forget appointments
- Forgetting to eat for long periods of time, or eating too much to chase dopamine
- Often causes misunderstandings or conflicts with neurotypical people
- Due to these struggles, people with ADHD are more prone to anxiety and depression
- People with ADHD also have a lower self esteem than the average population, this is because they might:
  - Be told to just "try harder" despite putting in effort
  - Feel as if there is something wrong with them
  - Are bullied by their peers
  - Blaming themselves for symptoms
  - Feeling "at war with themselves"
  - Feel pressured by the stigma surrounding ADHD and mental health
  - Frequent rejection from important figures in their life
  - Being seen as a "problem" just because of how their brain works
- These struggles with self-esteem are seen frequently in the show

**Ways actors can incorporate traits into the show**

- Stimming: everyone stims, it's just more frequent with neurodivergent people. Stimming is completely healthy and a normal. The only bad thing that can occur is if the stim is physically harming the person doing it.

- Examples of stimming include: finger tapping, leg bouncing, tongue clicking, repeating certain words or phrases, humming, flapping hands, tugging at clothing, lip biting, skin picking, hair twirling, etc.
- Lack of eye contact: this applies to autism as well, but some people with ADHD have trouble processing eye contact.
- Daydreaming: perhaps there could be moments where the half-bloods are shown to struggle paying attention to what someone is saying

### **It's not all "struggle"**

- Rick Riordan, the author of the Percy Jackson series, wrote the half bloods to have ADHD and dyslexia because his son has them. He wanted his son to see that he could be a hero too.
- Many of the "struggles" that come with these conditions are because of the stigmas and systems put in place that do not benefit or work with neurodivergent traits.
- We don't want to "play" ADHD or dyslexia, forcing neurodivergent traits can create harmful stereotypes. Instead, we want to take these traits and find honesty within them.
- People with ADHD are not less smart than their neurotypical peers, far from it. They are actually much more creative and able to focus on things that really interest them to an incredible degree. They are also incredibly resilient and have an innate ability to think outside the box. A lot of people with ADHD would not want to live without it since it is an important part of who they are.
- People with dyslexia are not less smart than their peers without dyslexia. Many students with dyslexia are hard workers and excel in school when they have the proper tools and accommodations. They are very creative and good at problem solving. They also have higher empathy and strong imagination and curiosity