

Section 504 accommodations to consider for students with dyslexia

(1) Accommodations for General Overall Instruction (comments for each item starts on page 3):

Allow the student with dyslexia to more easily process direction when they either (i) have trouble hearing or processing the information or (ii) need to wiggle/move around a little bit:

1	Preferential seating.
2	Seating near the teacher to minimize distractions.
3	Check for understanding of directions/expectations and content.
4	Break directions into smaller steps/segments.
5	Allow physical movement in the classroom (subtle approach).
6	Provide an alternative setting for test taking, as needed.
7	Classroom “buddy” designated and given permission to help student during class.

The student with dyslexia - in general.

8	Allow additional time to complete assignments, tests, and homework (as needed).
9	Reduce the amount of assignments and homework (teacher decision)
10	Provide advance notice of long-term assignments so that the student can begin reading the required work.
11	Provide textbook for home use (as available).
12	Provide grading rubric in advance.
13	Provide easy access to teacher notes or a written outline of the lecture; and/or provide timely peer note taking services.
14	Do not take points off for hand written or hand formatted work that appears sloppy or careless; reduce copying aspects of work.
15	Allow the use of wide rule paper and graph paper.
16	Directions reread verbatim; Read aloud CDs for HSPE.
17	Preferential scheduling of classes for high school,

Allow the student with dyslexia to easily discern letters, numbers and music notes:

18	Reduce the visual clutter in worksheets.
19	Enlarge print.
20	Provide worksheets in light pastel colors; alternatively, provide color overlay.
21	Allow use of a strip of heavy paper to assist in tracking.
22	Color coding using highlights.
23	Avoid multiple choice and bubble answer sheets if possible; alternatively, allow the student to use a masking device and/or to mark the original text in order to isolate answers.

(2) Accommodations related to Writing, Reading, Spelling for all subjects

--- all subjects require writing and reading – do not discount these accommodations just because the subject is science, math, art (including music), etc.---

24	Allow access to a computer, as available. If student is expected to write by hand, student is allowed to print the assignment and is not required to use cursive.
25	Spelling: a) Student not to be scored on spelling words where spelling is not a state mandated requirement. [LWSD to outline what subjects mandate it] b) Spelling words to be scored on misspelled words without penalizing score/grade. c) Decrease number of spelling words and work towards improvement, not perfection. d) Hand written work should not be graded for spelling. e) Allow use of spelling/grammar devices.
26	Provide a list of key vocabulary words prior to presentation of a lesson.
27	Allow access to audio recordings of text books, as available, and use of books on tape and “e-books” with text-to-speech.
28	Allow use of speech-to-text software at school (as available).
29	Allow use of calculator.
30	Provide a scribe.
31	Allow student to show knowledge of subject matter verbally instead of in writing.

Elaboration:

(1) Accommodations for General Overall Instructional:

Allow the student with dyslexia to more easily process direction when they either (i) have trouble hearing or processing the information or (ii) need to wiggle/move around a little bit:

- 1) *Preferential seating.* This may include sitting near the front of the classroom, but consider children with phonological processing difficulties who also need to sit away from extraneous noise distractions, such as HVAC noise or an opening next to a noisy hallway.
- 2) *Seating near the teacher to minimize distractions.* This also allows the student to see the teacher's lips and have a secondary method of helping overcome phonological processing difficulties.
- 3) *Check for understanding of directions/expectations and content.* Use ample visual and tactile cues to get student's attention when instructions are given. Ask questions that make sure student has both registered and understood any oral instructions. For example, ask student to both repeat and restate (in his/her own words) instructions. Be sensitive to student feeling 'picked on'.
- 4) *Break directions into smaller steps/segments.* Some students with dyslexia have problems remembering a sequence of actions.
- 5) *Allow physical movement in the classroom (subtle approach).* Some students with dyslexia have sensory processing challenges, so their attention can be improved through appropriate physical stimulation. Brief physical exercises may help. A squeeze ball is an example of something that may improve focus. OSPI allows 'Breaks: Multiple or Frequent' as a universal accommodation and this may help the student with dyslexia during classroom testing as well. (#29)
- 6) *Provide an alternative setting for test taking, as needed.* OSPI allows 'Change a student's location' as a universal accommodation and this may help the student with dyslexia during classroom testing as well. (#25)
- 7) *Classroom "buddy" designated and give permission to help student during class.* This buddy can help monitor the student's understanding of teacher instruction and provide additional backup for the teacher. This buddy can also provide reading assistance.

The student with dyslexia – in general.

- 8) *Allow additional time to complete assignments, tests, and homework (as needed).* Because of slow reading speed associated with dyslexia, provide student with extra time on all tests. Including state assessments. Give the option of extended or unlimited time for all standardized and routine classroom work. Example of what can happen when rushed: a student dropped a negative ('not') and left out a verb, resulting in work that did not reflect what the student knew.
- 9) *Reduce the amount of assignments and homework (teacher decision).* The quantity of written work (problem sets, etc) should be reduced if concepts can be mastered with less written work.
- 10) *Provide advance notice of long-term assignments so that the student can begin reading the required work.* Because of slow reading speed associated with dyslexia, provide student with a head start on reading.
- 11) *Provide textbook for home use (as available).* Because of slow reading speed associated with

dyslexia, this allows the student the opportunity to catch up on reading assignments at home. If student is experiencing comprehension problems due to slow reading, this also allows student time to review the assignment.

- 12) Provide grading rubric in advance. Many teachers already do this. This is particularly helpful to the student with dyslexia because composition is a complex process for the brain. “Writing (handwriting and composition) is challenging for dyslexic readers.” (Shaywitz pg 254)
- 13) Provide easy access to teacher notes or a written outline of the lecture; provide timely peer note taking services. Often the student is concentrating so hard on following directions or processing the instruction that they do not have the capacity to simultaneously take notes.
- 14) Do not take points off for hand written or hand formatted work that appears sloppy or careless; reduce copying aspects of work. Dr. Shaywitz describes it thus: “I have found handwriting to be an important clue to dyslexia. Children who are dyslexic frequently have abominable handwriting – a problem that continues into adulthood.” (Shaywitz pg 114) Dr. Shaywitz does not say all students with dyslexia have this problem, but for those that do it needs to be understood that it is not from lack of trying. Because of writing challenges, reducing the amount of work the student needs to copy, for example by pre-printing math problems, will help preserve brain power for solving the work problems. See #25 below for more on handwriting and spelling.
- 15) Allow the use of wide rule paper and graph paper. This is related to #14 above. Writing larger or on graph paper can help with ease of writing and with legibility.
- 16) Directions reread verbatim; Read aloud CDs for HSPE. Teachers will likely reread and explain instructions during classroom work, but the student would benefit from this accommodation during classroom testing. OSPI allows the first item as a universal accommodation stating: ‘Directions must be read verbatim without clarifying, elaborating or providing assistance with the meaning of words. As determined by the proctor, directions can be read as many times as needed to gain student understanding.’ (#1) OSPI allows the second item (read aloud CDs for HSPE) to students on a 504 stating: ‘Read aloud CDs are available for high school students taking the reading HSPE.... These CDs should be used in place of a human reader.’ (#13)
- 17) Preferential scheduling of classes for high school. Fewer classes may be available or appropriate to meet the dyslexic student’s needs at the high school level, both required and elective classes. Students need classes with high interest, challenging and varied assignments that include hands-on and experiential components, opportunities to demonstrate understanding using alternatives to written expression such as video, art, or recorded verbal presentation.

Allow the student with dyslexia to easily discern letters, numbers and music notes:

- 18) Reduce the visual clutter in worksheets. Small lettering and dense text or math problems are difficult to decipher. Students with dyslexia are continually deciphering and decoding, and this can be facilitated (both for accuracy and speed) when the text/numbers can be clearly seen, and when there are minimal visual distractions.
- 19) Enlarge print. For the same reason as #18 above. This also applies to music scores. OSPI allows ‘Large Print’ for students on a 504 (#9).
- 20) Provide worksheets in light pastel colors; alternatively, provide color overlay. This helps

reduce the glare from white paper that interferes with decoding. OSPI allows ‘overlays’ as a universal accommodation for state assessments (#7).

- 21) *Allow use of a strip of heavy paper to assist in tracking.* For the same reason as #18 above. OSPI allows for ‘Tracking Tool: Provide student with a strip of heavy paper to assist in tracking’ as a universal accommodation for state assessments (#16). There are some parameters on types of paper usable and when.
- 22) *Color coding using highlights.* This helps the student with dyslexia focus on important portions of the text.
- 23) *Avoid multiple choice and bubble answer sheets if possible; alternatively, allow the student to use a masking device and/or to mark the original text in order to isolate answers.* For the same reason as #18 above. When text/bubbles is too compact, it is easier to inadvertently mark the wrong item. OSPI allows ‘masking devices to isolate print’ as a universal accommodation for state assessments (#7).

Accommodations related to Writing, Reading, Spelling for all subjects

- 24) *Allow access to a computer, as available. If student is expected to write, student is allowed to print the assignment and is not required to use cursive.* “Writing (handwriting and composition) is challenging for dyslexic readers.” (Shaywitz pg 254) The extra concentration and coordination required to write in cursive makes it difficult for the student to retain their thoughts and write them quickly enough before they forget them.
- 25) *Spelling:* “Spelling is intimately linked to reading not only because sounds are being linked to letters but because words are being encoded – literally put into a code instead of merely being deciphered or decoded.” (Shaywitz pg191) Students with dyslexia conceptualize at a very high level, but as a result of phonological weakness, they experience difficulty with handwriting and spelling (Shaywitz pg 330).
 - a) *Student not to be scored on spelling words where spelling is not a state mandated requirement. [LWSD to outline what subjects mandate it]*
 - b) *Spelling words to be scored on misspelled words without penalizing score/grade.*

Decide in advance if an assignment is to practice spelling or handwriting, or punctuation, or whether it is to focus on the development and expression of ideas. Grade accordingly. For example, spelling tests should be graded only for spelling, although letter sizing and form can be critiqued no points should be deducted.
 - c) *Decrease number of spelling words and work towards improvement, not perfection.* Progressing towards better spelling is an achievable goal where perfection is not.
 - d) *Hand written work should not be graded for spelling.* The pressure to have correct spelling detracts the brain’s needed resources for drafting content,

resulting in a student ‘dumbing down’ work by using easy to spell, small words in shorter sentences.

e) Allow use of spelling/grammar devices. OSPI allows Spell Check/Word Prediction Software for students on a 504 although ‘topic specific dictionaries must be disabled.’

26) Provide a list of key vocabulary words prior to presentation of a lesson. This allows for pre-learning at home so student can successfully read the text at school. Student may preview the words for prefixes and suffixes (morphology), look up definitions, and apply other strategies.

27) Allow access to audio recordings of text books, as available, and use of books on tape and “e-books” with text-to-speech. This gives the student the opportunity to read more and build vocabulary. Students with dyslexia tire easily when reading due to the need for constant decoding and therefore read significantly less without audio accommodations. Many students with dyslexia do not have comprehension problems when text is read to them.

28) Allow use of speech-to-text software at school (as available). “Writing (handwriting and composition) is challenging for dyslexic readers.” (Shaywitz pg 254) Students with dyslexia frequently write slowly, can leave out words and can have difficulty deciphering their own work. OSPI allows Voice Recognition Software: Speech-to-Text for students on a 504 (#21).

29) Allow use of calculator. Some students with dyslexia also have dyscalculia. OSPI allows the use of a calculator as a universal accommodation for 7th grade and above on all state assessment tests, including math; and calculation devices are allowed in and after 5th grade for all science assessments. (#24)

30) Provide a scribe. Scribe student’s work for the student, either by teacher, other staff member or student.

31) Student can show knowledge of subject matter verbally instead of in writing. Consider alternative methods for ascertaining if the student has learned the subject matter. For example, videotaped reports or audio taped reports. Be aware that “The same phonologic weakness that affects [a student’s] reading can also affect [the student’s] ability to come up with spoken words quickly” (Shaywitz pg 330). Sometimes this is called the ‘tip of the tongue’ problem. And so on- the-spot oral exams or other instant oral response methods may not reflect the student’s best work.

OSPI – References to OSPI are to the Washington State Accommodations Guidelines for Statewide Assessment, October 2011

Shaywitz M.D., Sally, Overcoming Dyslexia, 2003