



Dysgraphia

Definition:

1. Dysgraphia is characterized as a learning disability in the category of written expression when one's writing skills are below those expected given a person's age measured through intelligence and age appropriate education.

(DSM 5- [Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th edition](#))

The word dysgraphia comes from the Greek words *dys* meaning "impaired" and *graphia* meaning "writing by hand".

Dysgraphia is deficiency in the ability to write, primarily in terms of handwriting, but also in terms of coherence. Dysgraphia is a transcription disability, meaning that it is a writing disorder associated with impaired handwriting, orthographic coding (the storing process of written words and processing the letters in those words), and finger sequencing (the movement of muscles required to write). It often overlaps with other learning disabilities, such as speech impairment, attention deficit disorder (ADD), or [developmental coordination disorder \(DCD/Dyspraxia\)](#).

There are at least two stages in the act of writing: the linguistic and the motor-expressive-praxic stage. The linguistic stage involves the encoding of auditory and visual information into symbols for letters and written words. The motor stage is where the expression of written words is articulated.

People with dysgraphia can often write on some level and may experience difficulty with other fine motor skills, such as tying shoes. However, dysgraphia does not affect all fine motor skills. People with dysgraphia often have unusual difficulty with handwriting and spelling which in turn can cause writing fatigue. They may lack basic grammar and spelling skills (for example, having difficulties with the letters p, q, b, and d), and often will write the wrong word when trying to formulate their thoughts on paper. The disorder generally emerges when the child is first introduced to writing. Adults, teenagers, and children alike are all subject to dysgraphia.

Indicators of dysgraphia can include:

- a mixture of upper/lower case letters, irregular letter sizes and shapes, unfinished letters, struggle to use writing as a communications tool, odd writing grip, many spelling mistakes

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(sometimes), pain when writing, decreased or increased speed of writing and copying, talks to self while writing, and general illegibility. Reluctance or refusal to complete writing tasks.

- Stress is not related to but is often associated with dysgraphia. Often children and adults with dysgraphia will become extremely frustrated with the task of writing (and spelling), and may refuse to complete work. This frustration can lead to stress related illnesses.

Websites worth investigating:

- **National Handwriting Association** at www.nha-handwriting.org.uk/
- <http://www.resourceroom.net/readspell/dysgraphia.asp>