

“Good writing is writing one, maybe two pages, and having periods, capital letters, indenting, paragraphs, spelling, and ideas - everything right...”

Clethra alnifolia: 2 summer sweet Clethra. Clethra
white, very fragrant flowers in July. Bees like them
- A diaphanous
- Prefers moist soil, even wet
- Poor on dry
- Leaves can burn in full sun
- mites attack when plant is stressed in dry soil
- 'Rosen' - pink flower buds - open pink & fade to white
Cornus alternifolia Fragrant Dogwood. Cornaceae
EV Am, 23 Horizontal branching
- alternate leaves
- Yellowish-white flowers (to some flowers small bud)
- beautiful fruit in abundance - comp. is black
- reddish fruit stalks persist
- acid soils, but tolerant
- finds bright corner when older or stressed
- Argentina - variegated foliage
Cornus florida Flowering Dogwood. Cornaceae
25
- Not pollinator or drought tolerant
- Ant. trichomes & dogwood borer can be a problem
- difficult to grow plant
- prefers acid soils
- 2" wide flower buds
- red or red-purplish in fall
- bright red fruit (bragel)
- 43 different birds are known to eat fruit
- bark looks like a light tan skin
- var. rubra - Cherokee ch. of this var. red br

An example of writing by a student with dyslexia

Source: Jayme Miller

Do you Have Writing Problems?

“The words are all tangled up inside my head. I’m nervous. My hands are sweating. I am scared that I won’t finish my test. I get tangled up trying to write the words - but I can’t do it, so I stop.”

Introduction

Is writing difficult for you? Does the above quote remind you of something you may have said? If so, you could be experiencing a writing disability.

Writing is a complicated task that takes years of practice to develop. It can be frustrating. It involves two different skills; the physical act of handwriting and of composition such as essay writing. A goal of education is to help learners become effective writers so they can remember, organize, and process information.

What is Dysgraphia?

“Dysgraphia is a difficulty in automatically remembering and mastering the sequence of muscle motor movements needed in writing letters and numbers.”

Dysgraphia is a learning disability (LD) related to dyslexia, the reading learning disability. It affects writing and spelling because the basic pre-

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requisite skills for motor movements and letter formation are inefficient. Reading and writing are closely related language skills. Poor readers can also struggle with writing. At least 10% of the general population has some difficulty acquiring writing skills.

Dysgraphia makes the act of writing difficult. It can lead to problems with spelling, poor handwriting, and putting thoughts on paper. People with dysgraphia can have trouble organizing letters, numbers, and words on a line or page. This can happen for the following reasons:

- Trouble processing what the eye sees
- Trouble processing and making sense of what the ear hears

As with all other learning disabilities, dysgraphia is a lifelong challenge. The effects of the disability can change over time.

What are the Signs of Dysgraphia?

Children can be diagnosed with dysgraphia soon after they have learned to write. Adults can acquire dysgraphia after a stroke, brain injury, etc. The signs of dysgraphia are as follows:

- Illegible writing even with enough time to complete the task
- Incomplete words, letters, space between word, or omitted words

- Mixing manuscript and cursive, upper and lower case, or irregular sizes, shapes, or slant of letters
- Not staying within lines and margins
- Holding wrist, body, or paper in strange positions
- Having a cramped or unusual grip
- Holding the writing instrument too close to the paper
- Not pre-visualizing letter formation
- Trouble thinking and writing at the same time
- Talking to self while writing
- Watching the hand that is writing
- Slow or labored writing or copying

Many students with LD are frustrated in their attempts at writing because of difficulty with the mechanical aspects. Additional problems with spelling, punctuation, and handwriting may draw attention away from the writer's focus on ideas and composition.

What Can Be Done?

A student with this disorder can benefit from specific accommodations in class or in testing. Spending extra practice time learning the skills required to be a good writer every day will help as well as the other suggestions below:

- Pencil grips
- Orally answering questions
- Extended time

- Getting notes from teachers or buddies
- Writing on a slightly inclined plane
- Using wide rule paper and graph paper
- Not having neatness or spelling as grading criteria
- Using pens and pencils that are different colors
- Using manuscript if cursive is too difficult
- Using tape recorders to supplement note taking and to prepare for writing assignments
- Spending more time for written tasks including note-taking, copying, and tests
- Starting assignments early
- Breaking writing assignments into small tasks in a step-by-step manner
- Learning keyboarding skills to increase the speed and legibility of written work
- Using assistive technology
 - speech-to-text
- Asking for constructive feedback on your work

For More Help

Just having bad handwriting doesn't always mean you have dysgraphia or a writing disability. If you think you might have this writing problem, contact your teacher or guidance counselor for more information.