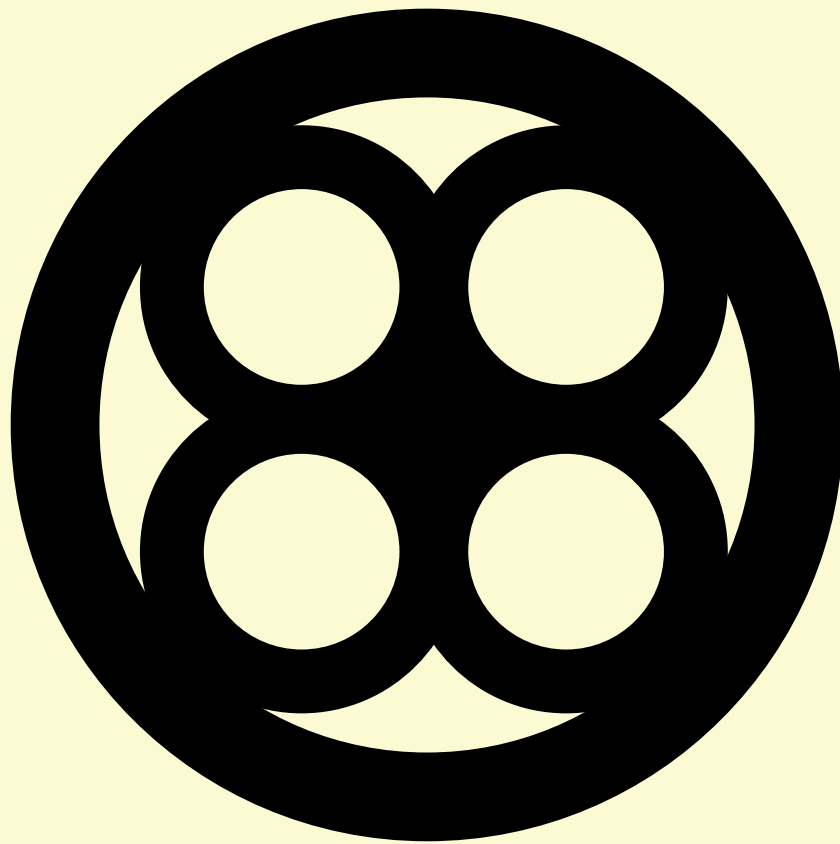


# Demystifying Dyslexia



**A Girl Scouts of Southern Appalachians Patch Program**

created by

**Fiona Smith & Safiya Blevins of Troop 20034**

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## **What is Dyslexia?**

“Dyslexia is most commonly associated with trouble learning to read. It affects a child’s ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds in language. Kids with dyslexia have a hard time decoding new words, or breaking them down into manageable chunks they can then sound out. This causes difficulty with reading, writing and spelling. They may compensate by memorizing words, but they’ll have trouble recognizing new words and may be slow in retrieving even familiar ones.” - Childmind.org

## **How does it affect people?**

Dyslexia can affect people in many different ways. Some of the most common issues include difficulty with spelling, writing, and reading. Dyslexia affects how the brain processes print information to convert that print into sound and words. Dyslexia does not affect intelligence, and in fact, people with dyslexia are just as smart as anyone else! As you can imagine, this can be very frustrating! Sometimes, people with dyslexia concentrate so hard on a page trying to find a letter combination that makes sense that the words begin to appear to move around. This can make reading even harder. This is why it’s important to have empathy for a friend who does not wish to read aloud and be kind to anyone who struggles with spelling.

## **What are some characteristics of dyslexia?**

Signs of dyslexia can be hard to recognize, but there are some clues that a person might have this learning difference. Learning to speak later than most children, and difficulty learning new words are signs. Reading at a much lower grade level than expected is also a sign of dyslexia. Difficulty finding words and answers is also a common sign.

## **Dyslexia strengths!**

“Scientific research shows that dyslexic children and adults process information differently from non-dyslexics and some of these changes may account for strengths in creative problem solving, entrepreneurial thinking, and certain types of learning and memory. An understanding of the advantages of dyslexia is important for children to discover how they learn and remember best as well as for adults to find careers and work environments that allow them to work to their highest abilities.”

- Drs. Brock and Fernette Eide, *Dyslexic Advantage*

**Learn More:** [Dyslexic Advantage](#)

## **What do professionals say?**

“We are all different. Some kids are great at art, some sports, some math, and some reading. Just as we are all great at some things, we can't all be great at everything. For kids who have dyslexia, reading and spelling are a big challenge. It's harder because they have differences in the reading pathways in their brains, but they are just as smart as all kids. In fact, there are many famous people who have dyslexia including the Disney Channel's own Bella Thorne and Dr. Jack Horner who is the paleontologist who helped do research for the movie Jurassic Park. Also, there is more than one pathway to reading! Just like some kids need glasses to see, many kids with dyslexia benefit from listening to their books on audio.”

-Julya Johnson, leader of Decoding Dyslexia TN.

**Learn More:** [Dyslexia at a Glance](#)

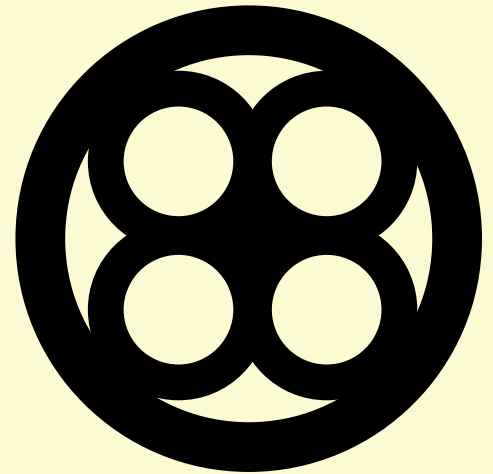
## Fun Facts

- The first description of dyslexia appeared in 1896 by Dr. W. Pringle Morgan in Sussex, England, this is what he wrote: “Percy F.,... aged 14,... has always been a bright and intelligent boy, quick at games, and in no way inferior to others of his age. His great difficulty has been—and is now—his inability to learn to read.”  
([50 Interesting Facts About Dyslexia - Reading Horizons At-Home](#))
- Dyslexia is the most common learning disability. Individuals with this medical condition have difficulty in the areas of language processing (dosomething.org)
- 1 in 5 people have been diagnosed with dyslexia. (dosomething.org)
- Comic book fonts are easier for some people with dyslexia to read.  
[ A note from Troop 20034: “We chose the fonts used in this packet with purpose! Our research showed us that these fonts (Comic Sans and Arial) were easier for people with dyslexia to read.” ]

## Helping People with Dyslexia

Pqbd is an organization that sells jewelry with the pqbd symbol on it to raise money. Pqbd donates its profits to teachers helping students with dyslexia. The pqbd symbol was created to “be meaningful for those on this journey. I turned to the common misunderstanding that dyslexics are reading backwards or in mirror image. Inspired by the three dimensional aspect of the letters p q b d, this stylized design becomes a symbol for awareness and a place to start conversations about dyslexia.”

-Rebecca Warner,  
Co-founder, Decoding Dyslexia Virginia



The pqbd Symbol

## **Accommodations**

Students with dyslexia can get help at school. Help for students with learning differences are often called accommodations. Accommodations can help learners work on the same material as their classmates. Some examples of accommodations that a student with dyslexia might use are speech to text programs, text to speech programs, audio books or “ear reading.” Some students may need extra time for reading and writing assignments. Students with learning differences are entitled to the same education as all other students, and their teachers and parents form a learning plan that helps them.

## Resources

- [Decoding Dyslexia TN](#)
- [Dyslexia -Mayo Clinic: Go quick overview on dyslexia](#)
- [The Yale Center for Dyslexia: Explaining dyslexia to parents and educators](#)
- [The Dyslexia Foundation: Has the latest dyslexia research](#)
- [What is Dyslexia? TED-Ed](#)
- [What is it like to have dyslexia? Kids talking about their experience](#)
- [How Do Dyslexic Brains Work? Simple explanation](#)
- [What is dyslexia? A brains on podcast](#)
- [Popsicle Stick Dogsled](#)
- [Dyslexia Simulator](#)
- [How I Made Dyslexia my Secret Code- TEDx Talks](#)
- [Made By Dyslexia - YouTube](#)
- [See dyslexia differently - YouTube](#)
- [Ann Bancroft, World Explorer](#)
- [Whoopi Goldberg Biography](#)
- [Brain Pop Eleanor Roosevelt](#)
- [Inspiring scientists: Maggie Aderin-Pocock's story](#)
- [Dyslexia-Friendly Style Guide](#)

## **Books with Dyslexic Main Characters**

- **“Fish in a Tree” by Linda Mullaly Hunt**
- **“May B.” by Caroline Starr Rose**
- **“Close to Famous” by Joan Bauer**
- **“The Percy Jackson” series by Rick Riordan**
- **“My Name is Brain Brian” by Jeanne Betancourt**
- **“Hank Zipper” by Henry Winkler**
- **“The Alphabet War: A Story About Dyslexia” by Diane Burton Robb**
- **“Tom’s Special Talent” by Kate Gaynor**
- **“Looking for Heroes” by Aidan Colvin**
- **“The Wild Book” by Margarita Engle**
- **“Thank You, Mr. Falker” by Patricia Polacco**
- **“My Gift of Difference” by Jordan Ashley Greene**
- **“Clementine” by Sarah Pennypacker**
- **“Author, a True Story” by Helen Lester**



## How to Use this Patch Program

Using the Girl Scout model of “discover, connect, take action” you can follow this program and can earn your Demystifying Dyslexia patch. You will discover some facts about dyslexia. You will connect with people who have dyslexia through personal interactions, literature, or videos. You will take action to raise awareness about dyslexia.

You can do this program with your troop or as an individual Girl Scout. For each category (discover, connect, take action) do the number of steps that corresponds to your Girl Scout level.

We hope you enjoy learning about dyslexia and earning this patch.

Your friends,

**Fiona Smith & Safiya Blevins**

Troop 20034

## **Discover** - Connect - Take Action

Learn about dyslexia and how it affects the brain.

- Daisies & Brownies: Complete 1 step from this section.
- Juniors & Cadettes: Complete 2 steps from this section.
- Seniors & Ambassadors: Complete 3 steps from this section.

### **Options:**

1. Listen to Brains On podcast, episode [What is Dyslexia?](#)
2. Watch a video on dyslexia in the brain.
3. Talk to a professional about dyslexia and the brain.
4. Learn about the left and right brains and what works differently in the brain of dyslexics: [How Do Dyslexic Brains Work?](#)
5. Talk to someone with dyslexia about their experiences. How have some things been harder for them? How are some things easier?
6. Before reading the packet of information about dyslexia, write down what you think dyslexia is. After reading about dyslexia, write down what you think dyslexia is. Compare how your answers are different and reflect on what you learned.
7. After learning about dyslexia with the information in this packet, draw a square, a triangle, and a circle. In the circle, write a question that is still circling in your mind. In the square, write something you have squared away. In the triangle, write three takeaways you have learned.

## Discover - **Connect** - Take Action

Learn about famous people with dyslexia.

- Daisies & Brownies: Complete 1 step from this section.
- Juniors & Cadettes: Complete 2 steps from this section.
- Seniors & Ambassadors: Complete 3 steps from this section.

### Options:

1. Learn about Whoopi Goldberg. Come up with three jokes of your own and share them with someone else.
2. Learn about Agatha Christie. Write a short story and share it with your troopmates.
3. Learn about Ann Bancroft and [make a dog sled out of popsicle sticks](#).
4. Learn about Eleanor Roosevelt, and research three facts about the current president and their spouse.
5. Learn about Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock and build your own rocket! You can use one of our ideas that we found, or you can use your own:
  - » [Rocket Corner Bookmark](#)
  - » [Simple Rocket Space Craft for kids](#)
  - » [Paper Space Rocket Craft](#)
  - » [Easy DIY Cardboard Rocketship](#)
6. Learn about Meryl Davis. Learn 5 ice skating tips and share them with your troop. Better yet: learn how to ice skate! Practice moves at Girl Scouts and maybe even go to an ice skating rink!
7. Do some of your own research! Find out about someone else with dyslexia and share what you learned about them with a poster, short video or report.

## Discover - Connect - **Take Action**

Learn about famous people with dyslexia.

- Daisies & Brownies: Complete 1 step from this section.
- Juniors & Cadettes: Complete 2 steps from this section.
- Seniors & Ambassadors: Complete 3 steps from this section.

### **Options:**

1. Put up posters at your school or Girl Scout meeting place educating people about dyslexia.
2. Teach someone outside of your family about dyslexia.
3. During National Dyslexia Month (October), participate in an activity promoted by your local learning differences advocacy group to help make things more dyslexia-friendly.
4. See if your school library has books with main characters with learning differences, and write a letter suggesting some good books.
5. Read a book with a dyslexic main character in it, and write a review or tell someone about it.
6. Create a “commercial” that explains what dyslexia is and/or demonstrates ways to help people with dyslexia.
7. Make a collage using things you have learned from the Discover and Connect steps.

## Biographies of Famous Dyslexics



### **Whoopi Goldberg**

Whoopi Goldberg was born in New York city. She was born Caryn Elaine Johnson (she later changed her name claiming that it was boring). She had one brother named Clyde, her father later abandoned the family. In 1991 Whoopi Goldberg was the first African American woman to win the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress. Whoopi Goldberg was only the second African American to win an Oscar for acting. Whoopi Goldberg is a talented comedian, and she does it all with dyslexia.

## Biographies of Famous Dyslexics



### **Agatha Christie**

Agatha Christie is a best-selling author. She is known for writing action-packed mysteries and adventures. She was born in Torquay, England, in 1890. She was the youngest of three sisters, and she was homeschooled by her parents. She published her first book, "The Mysterious Affair at Styles", in 1916. It starred the detective Hercules Poirot. Later she wrote more books about Poirot and his adventures. Poirot was so beloved that he got his obituary in The New York Times. She also wrote plays. Her first play was called The Mousetrap. It debuted in 1952, and was an instant hit. She was one of the first well-known female authors, and she also had dyslexia. She did not let either of those things stop her, however; more of her books have been sold than any other. Only William Shakespeare and the Bible have sold more.

## Biographies of Famous Dyslexics



### **Ann Bancroft**

Ann Bancroft was born in 1955 in Mendota Heights, Minnesota. In 1986 Ann drove a dogsled 1,000 miles in Canada, and in 1993, she led the American women's expedition to the South Pole on a 67-day expedition. In 2001, Ann and her teammate Liv Arnesen became the first woman ever to sail and ski across Antarctica's land mass. She did all these amazing things—and all with dyslexia.

## Biographies of Famous Dyslexics



### **Eleanor Roosevelt**

Eleanor Roosevelt (born Anna Eleanor Roosevelt) was born in 1884 in New York City. She is the longest serving First Lady, and is known for her activism and work towards equality. She was very friendly and kind, and she made it her duty to fight for everyone, regardless of race, gender, or class. She had a very difficult childhood; her father was an alcoholic and her mother died when she was eight. She was very beloved by the American people and was a very popular public speaker. She invited many women to the White House and did many things that women were not expected to do. She had her own radio show, had press conferences with women guests, and generally broke the rules and restrictions that were in place for women. She had dyslexia, but she didn't let it stop her, even writing her own daily newspaper column, called "My Day." She also wrote many books and other columns to help bring light to the causes she was fighting.



## Biographies of Famous Dyslexics



### **Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock**

Margaret Aderin was born March 9, 1968, in Islington, London, England. She is the first Black woman ever to win a gold medal in the Physics News Awards. She is a renowned space scientist and science communicator, and she also presents the BBC program, *The Sky at Night*. Not only that, but she also is the president of the British Science Association. She was diagnosed with dyslexia when she was eight years old, but she didn't let that stop her.

## Biographies of Famous Dyslexics



### **Meryl Davis**

Meryl Davis was born on January 1, 1987 in Royal Oak, Michigan. As a child she played the flute in her school band, but she had trouble sight reading her music so she decided to quit the flute. Around the time she quit the flute, she fell in love with figure skating. Now Meryl Davis is a figure skater for the USA Olympic team; she has won the gold, silver, and bronze medal with her dance partner Charlie White—and she had dyslexia.

“I think success is finding happiness” - Meryl Davis

**girl scouts**   
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