



# Dysgraphia Explained



Dysgraphia is difficulty in writing coherently. There are three main forms:

**Dyslexic Dysgraphia** where spontaneous written work is illegible, spelling is poor but copied work may be satisfactory.

**Motor Dysgraphia** caused by poor fine motor skills, although not all fine motor skills are necessarily impaired. Spelling is not impaired.

**Spatial Dysgraphia** due to a defect in the understanding of space.

## Characteristics of Dysgraphia

Cramped fingers on writing tool  
Odd wrist, body, and paper positions  
Excessive erasures  
Mixture of upper- and lowercase letters  
Mixture of printed and cursive letters  
Inconsistent letter formations and slant  
Irregular letter sizes and shapes  
Unfinished cursive letters  
Misuse of line and margin  
Poor organization on the page  
Inefficient speed in copying  
Decreased speed of writing  
General illegibility  
Inattentiveness about details when writing  
Frequent need of verbal cues and use of sub-vocalizing  
Heavy reliance on vision to monitor what the hand is doing during writing  
Slow implementation of verbal directions that involve sequencing and planning

## Strategies

- Occupational therapy to correct muscle tone, improve fine motor skills and dexterity
- Vision therapy by a behavioural optometrist
- Use computer to type in class -allows the student to avoid writing and continue learning while seeking other suggested treatment
- Use LARGE writing on the board
- Use oral ways to assess students
- Use reader/writers

## Causes

- Deficient fine motor skills (delay may be caused by ambidexterity)
- Poor muscle tone and /or unspecified motor clumsiness
- Neurological trauma
- Association with autism, Asperger syndrome/Tourette syndrome/ADHD
- Defect in the understanding of space (spatial dysgraphia)

## Consequences

- Writing skills substantially below chronological age ranging from poorly formed to general illegibility
- Reluctance or refusal to complete writing tasks
- Odd writing grip
- Pain while writing
- Poor spelling caused by difficulty with letters p, q, b, d





# What is Dysgraphia Spelling



Students with dysgraphia, a learning disability that hampers written expression, often struggle with spelling because they write letters out of order, compose words backwards, leave out sections of words, or omit punctuation.

## Causes

Because writing links many complex brain functions, dysgraphia can arise from any weakness in that link, including injury to parts of the brain.

People diagnosed with dysgraphia may exhibit dyslexia, auditory or language processing weakness, attention deficit disorder, visual processing issues, or sequential processing weakness.

## Strategies

Successfully dealing with spelling dysgraphia takes time, effort, and a strong support system of students, parents, and educators.

Strategies include outlining thoughts before writing, dictating ideas into a tape recorder, practicing keyboard skills instead of handwriting, and using computer programs to check spelling.

## People with Dysgraphia

Famous people with dyslexic dysgraphia include Pres. George Washington, Gen. George Patton, scientist Albert Einstein, and mystery writer Agatha Christie.

## Signs and Symptoms

Dysgraphic writers display early signs of spelling challenges by mixing up lowercase and uppercase letters, using illegible handwriting, holding a pen awkwardly, and appearing frustrated as they organize words and thoughts on paper.

Students with dysgraphia often show a marked gap between oral and written understanding--communicating thoughtfully through speech but unable to do the same on the page. Their writing ability does not appear to match their intelligence.

## Research

Although dysgraphia poses a lifelong challenge, research shows that people can deal effectively with this learning disability and other related conditions. When properly diagnosed, students quickly leave behind their previous labels of "slow" or "backwards," moving forward to become confident achievers using alternate learning styles.

