

Dyslexia: a challenge, an advantage or both?

Have you ever heard of dyslexia? Many people believe that the famous physicist, Albert Einstein (1879–1955), had dyslexia. But did you know that researchers at the Cass Business School in London have found that a large percentage of business owners – possibly as many as 35% – are dyslexic?

A person with dyslexia has difficulty reading, understanding and memorizing written information. Anybody can be dyslexic – even a genius like Einstein. If you haven't realized it yet, dyslexia has nothing to do with intelligence, and it can be an advantage. At least 10% of the global population is dyslexic. It often runs in the family, from one generation to the next.

Michael, 23, has struggled with dyslexia ¹for years. He has recently graduated from university, where he studied Business Management. He's intelligent, kind and funny – but things haven't been easy for him. ²seven years old, Michael's teacher noticed that he couldn't read easily. ³a few weeks, an expert identified that the problem was dyslexia. ⁴after that, Michael started learning new ways to read.

⁵his childhood and teenage years, studying was a huge challenge. 'If my non-dyslexic classmates needed ten minutes to read and understand something, sometimes I needed three times longer.' We have to respect the strength and motivation it takes dyslexic people to study and pass exams.

⁶, education has relied on reading, writing and memory. These skills are important, but the 21st-century workplace needs other talents, such as creativity. Here's where people with dyslexia may have an advantage. People like Michael have spent years creating strategies to manage their dyslexia, and being adaptable and able to solve problems gives them a big advantage in the world of business, too.

'I really believe dyslexia has made me stronger. I've never been afraid to take risks. I've already faced a lot of challenges in my life, but with patience and hard work, things have gone really well for me so far!'



An article

- 1 ★☆☆ Read the article. Complete the sentences with the words below.

adaptable advantage challenge childhood
management realized relied strategies
struggled

- 1 My uncle's biggest **challenge** was learning to walk again after a very serious car accident. It was extremely difficult, but he did it.
- 2 Dina is a very _____ person. She can change and accept new situations quickly and successfully.
- 3 This company is badly organized and isn't growing. But with new _____ to lead it better, it could be a commercial success.
- 4 Knowing two languages gives me a big _____ in life.
- 5 I was seven years old when I _____. Father Christmas didn't exist.
- 6 I couldn't do my project without the internet. I _____ on it completely to find the information I needed.
- 7 I really _____ with algebra when I was younger. I thought it was really difficult. But I had a great maths teacher, and now I can do it!
- 8 If you want to learn the guitar, you may need to use a range of _____, such as finger and listening exercises.
- 9 My grandma had a sad _____ because her mum was very ill when she was young.





We use time expressions in a text to help us work out the sequence of events. Time expressions include:

- at the age of X
- when he/she was X years old
- during his/her childhood
- after a few weeks/months/years
- soon
- then
- a year later



2 ★☆☆ Read the Skill UP! Choose the correct time expressions to complete the article.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 A years ago | 4 A Before |
| B for years | B During |
| C since many years | C Soon |
| 2 A If he was | 5 A During |
| B For he was | B At |
| C When he was | C For |
| 3 A After | 6 A After a long time |
| B Before | B For centuries |
| C Next | C Many years ago |



3 ★☆☆ Choose the correct answers.

- According to the article, ...
 - A only intelligent people have dyslexia.
 - B dyslexia is a reading difficulty.**
 - C people with dyslexia are unhappy.
- Which statement is true?
 - A Michael was a teenager when they discovered he was dyslexic.
 - B Dyslexia isn't a genetic condition.
 - C Anyone can have dyslexia.
- Which statement is not true?
 - A Dyslexia is only found in a few areas of the world.
 - B More than 10% of the global population is probably dyslexic.
 - C People with dyslexia need more time to read and understand information.
- According to the article, Michael ...
 - A has found an amazing new job.
 - B has completed a university course.
 - C wants to study Business Management.
- Why does the writer think people with dyslexia might have an advantage?
 - A They think in new, unusual ways to solve problems.
 - B They think more quickly than most people.
 - C They think slowly and carefully about solutions to problems.

4 ★☆☆ Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- More than a third of business owners may have dyslexia. T ☒ F ☐
- If no one in your family has dyslexia, you are less likely to have it. T ☐ F ☐
- Michael didn't get any help with his dyslexia when he was young. T ☐ F ☐
- When studying, dyslexic people need to make more effort than non-dyslexic people. T ☐ F ☐
- Until recently, education systems have prioritized two main skills. T ☐ F ☐
- Today's world needs workers who aren't afraid to try new ways of doing things. T ☐ F ☐

5 ★☆☆ Choose one of these famous dyslexic people to research. Write a short biography about their achievements and the challenges they faced.

- Paloma Faith, actor and singer
- Steven Spielberg, film director
- Lewis Hamilton, racing driver
- Richard Branson, business owner
- Salma Hayek, actor

6 ★☆☆ Imagine you're interviewing the person you chose from exercise 5. Write five questions to ask them. Use the words below and your own ideas.

advantage challenge creative disadvantage
discover help skills strength struggle

When did you first discover that ...?
