



Study skills

A guide to help people with dyslexia think about study skills

Dyslexia can mean that you might take longer to process and remember information. This is why you might be given extra time in exams. Difficulties with short-term memory mean that you often need to 'over learn' things until you know them perfectly when you are studying – you cannot study at the last minute.

Some of the dyslexic difficulties that affect reading and writing also affect organisation skills like time management, organising ideas and structuring your work. This is why it's important to think about what will work for you well ahead.

People with dyslexia can find effective ways to approach studies and retain the information that's needed to sit exams. There is no evidence that people with dyslexia learn better in one particular style, but they should develop their own preferences and approaches to learning.

In your approaches to studying you need to consider the following:

- **Planning** – plan well ahead
- **Organising** – take an organised approach to how you study
- **Time management** – allocate the correct times for each subject
- **Revising techniques** – think about the ways that work best for you.

Things to help your study skills

- Make a study timetable – make sure each subject is on it. Allocate times for each subject – some may need more time than others. Include times for when you'll not be able to study and breaks.

- Think about what times of the day you work best and plan around this.
- Maximise your efficiency and energy by eating well and getting enough sleep.
- Avoid distractions in your study space – do it somewhere quiet and clutter free. Turn off phone notifications.
- Take each task one at a time and chunk them into small steps. Prioritise tasks – most to least important, or quickest/easiest first.
- Make a 'to do' list and mark off each task when it's done.
- Don't switch between subjects.
- When you've finished a session, plan for the next one so you're clear what you'll be doing before you start.
- Set deadlines – it's fine if you don't always meet them but a deadline can be a helpful motivation.
- Use the 'pomodoro technique' – work for a certain length of time and then take a quick break. For example work for 50 minutes and then have a 10 minute break. Use a timer with an alarm for this.
- Colour code different subjects, for example have different coloured folders with notes for each subject to help with organisation. Colour code notes with highlighters. This can be useful for visualising notes in exams.
- Highlight key points to remember in notes.
- Use cue cards or sticky notes with key messages and/or images to help trigger your memory. Get family and friends to 'test' you.
- Talk to other students about how they revise and study and talk about the topics you are studying.
- Look at past papers to help identify common question topics.
- Listen to recorded notes from lectures or classes (having asked permission to record them).

Some people with dyslexia find mindmaps useful for studying. The benefits of making mindmaps for revision are:

- you can see all the major ideas and information on one page (and the relationships between them)
- you can add your own ideas and comments to the notes or you can add information and ideas from extra reading
- it makes your revision active so you are not just reading and re-reading your notes
- it allows you to revise in shorter sessions – after a break you can restart your revision by a quick review of your summary
- it makes your revision summaries look different from your standard notes which will help you to memorise them
- reformatting information in a way that you understand will also help memory
- once a mindmap is made, it can easily be reviewed and updated.