Official Definitions Defined:
If it looks like a duck and walks like a duck, it's probably a duck.
Or is testing for dyslexia really necessary?

Official Definitions of Dyslexia Translated into Plain English

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Official Definition #1. According to the World Federation of Neurology, dyslexia is "a disorder manifested by difficulty in learning to read despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence and sociocultural opportunity." (sic)

Translated into plain English, this means that if a student isn't dumb and he isn't surrounded by people who hate schools and **if** he goes to school and **if** he gets the "conventional instruction" (Look-see or whole language) and **if** he still has problems reading, it must be that he is a dyslexic.

Official Definition #2. According to the International Dyslexia Association's Committee of Members in November, 1994, "Dyslexia is a neurologically-based, often familial, disorder which interferes with the acquisition and processing of language. Varying in degrees of severity, it is manifested by difficulties in receptive and expressive language, including phonological processing, in reading, writing, spelling, handwriting, and sometimes in arithmetic. Dyslexia is not a result of lack of motivation, sensory impairment, inadequate instructional or environmental opportunities, or other limiting conditions, but may occur together with these conditions. Although dyslexia is life-long, individuals with dyslexia frequently respond successfully to timely and appropriate intervention."

Translated into plain English, this means that dyslexia has to do with how the brain organizes what the eyes see and the ears hear. The condition is such that traditional methods of teaching reading will not work with a person with dyslexia. However, dyslexics may be taught to read and write with proper instruction. This usually involves multi-sensory approaches as used by AVKO, Orton-Gillingham, Slingerland, Spalding tutors, etc.

Official Definition #3. According to the International Dyslexia Association's Research Committee in November 1994, "Dyslexia is one of several distinct learning disabilities. It is a specific language-based disorder of constitutional origin characterized by difficulties in single word decoding, usually reflecting insufficient phonological processing abilities. These difficulties in single word decoding are often unexpected in relation to age and other cognitive and academic abilities; they are not the result of generalized developmental disability or sensory impairment. Dyslexia is manifested by variable difficulty with different forms of language, often including, in addition to problems reading, a conspicuous problem with acquiring proficiency in writing and spelling."

Translated into plain English, this means that if someone has normal intelligence but has severe problems learning to read and write despite "conventional" instruction, that person is dyslexic.

Official Definition #4. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Developmental dyslexia is a specific learning disability characterized by difficulty in learning to read. Some dyslexics also may have difficulty learning to write, to spell, and, sometimes, to speak or to work with numbers. We do not know for sure what causes dyslexia, but we do know that it affects children who are physically and emotionally healthy, academically capable, and who come from good home environments. In fact, many dyslexics have the advantages of excellent schools, high mental ability, and parents who are well-educated and value learning.

Translated into plain English, this means that when you can't find a reason for a child not being able to read, it must be that he is dyslexic.

Official Definition #5. Dyslexia is a term that has been loosely applied to reading disabilities. Specific definitions for dyslexia vary with disciplines. Those in medicine define dyslexia as a condition resulting from neurological, maturational, and genetic causes, while those in psychology relate dyslexia on the basis of the specific reading problems evidenced and give no reference to causation. All disciplines would probably agree that dyslexia is evidenced by persons of otherwise normal intellectual capacity **who have not learned to read despite exposure to adequate instruction**.

Translated into plain English, this means that when you can't find a reason for a child not being able to read, it must be he is dyslexic.