



READING GUIDE & LESSON PLAN

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Reading Guide for *Brilliantly Dyslexic*

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Introduction

About the Book

Summary

Brilliantly Dyslexic is a collection of over twenty inspiring real-life stories about incredible people with dyslexia. Each story includes their struggles and triumphs as they grew up, attended school, and pursued their passions by building unique and sometimes unexpected careers. Illustrated by seventeen artists from around the world, these diverse stories encourage kids to dream big, play to their strengths, and never let challenges define them.

At the end of the book, you'll find perspectives from kids with dyslexia (pages 92–97); advice from experts (pages 98–99); and further information about dyslexia (pages 102–109 and 118–119).

Creators

Liz and Quinn Trudeau are a mother-daughter team. The book was inspired by Quinn's experience as someone with dyslexia, and Liz's desire to empower her daughter with stories about successful people with dyslexia. They created *Brilliantly Dyslexic* as a way to show kids, parents, and teachers that people with dyslexia are smart, talented, and uniquely skilled to see the world in a new way. Liz wrote the stories, and Quinn was the creative director, choosing the illustrations and overseeing the design of the book.

About this Guide

How to Use It

This guide is divided into two parts. Use Part 1 if you are looking for a way to introduce dyslexia to your children. Use Part 2 as a way to dig deeper into the themes of the book and the experiences described in the stories. Choose the questions and activities that best suit your goals for the book and the needs and interests of the children you are reading with.

About the Author

Becky Noelle is an experienced teacher with over five years teaching elementary school. She has taught many learners as young as five years old not only how to read and write—but also how to love it! Becky now uses her work as an educational editor and writer to support parents and teachers in helping children come to love reading and writing.

Educational Connections

The state standards and skills listed on the next page are some of the possible outcomes. The specific outcomes reached will depend on which activities and questions are used from this guide.

Common Core State Standards

- Reading Standards for Informational Text (Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas)
- Writing Standards (Text Types and Purposes, Research to Build and Present Knowledge)
- Speaking and Listening Standards (Comprehension and Collaboration, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas)

Skills

reading	discussing	organizing information
writing	inferring	evaluating information
listening	making connections	applying strategies
speaking	using a dictionary	identifying themes
observing	reflecting	synthesizing
predicting	summarizing	researching
identifying the main topic	analyzing	drawing conclusions
asking questions	gathering information	presenting information

Knowledge

nonfiction
biography
dyslexia
neurodiversity

Part 1: A Brief Introduction to Dyslexia

Follow the directions below to introduce readers to dyslexia.

1. Read a story from the book. No need to give an explanation about dyslexia in advance.
2. Discuss the following questions together:
 - » What did you admire about [subject's name]?
 - » Was there anything about their story you could relate to?
 - » What kinds of things do you find difficult?
 - » What types of things come easily for you?

3. After you read the story, someone will likely ask, "What is dyslexia?" Use that as a prompt to watch a short YouTube video about dyslexia. (See links below for some examples of YouTube videos with accessible and reliable descriptions of dyslexia.)

[DYSLEXIA | What Is Dyslexia? | Learning Disability | The Dr Binocs Show | Peekaboo Kidz See Dyslexia Differently](#)

4. After watching the video together, discuss the following questions:
 - » What did you learn from the video?
 - » What would you still like to know about dyslexia?
5. Have readers create an acrostic poem about dyslexia. Encourage them to use words that describe the different skills and abilities of people with dyslexia and show what makes them unique.

Part 2: A Deep Dive into *Brilliantly Dyslexic*

Before Reading

Reflect on the Topic

Use the following directions and questions to guide readers in a discussion before reading the book. Additional directions for you as the instructor are included in brackets.

1. Look at the cover of the book and flip through the pages.
 - » What do you think this book might be about?
 - » Do you think this is a fiction or a nonfiction book? How do you know?
2. Each of these stories is a biography. Do you know what a biography is? (If not, explain that a biography is a true story about someone's life.)
3. This book is about people with dyslexia. What do you already know about dyslexia?
4. What are you hoping to learn from the book? Write a list of questions you have about the book.

Use the Illustrations to Make Predictions

Before reading each story, have readers look carefully at the illustration. Use the following questions to help readers make predictions about the person in the story.

1. What do you see in the picture? Make a list of things you notice.
2. What does the illustration tell you about the person in this story?
3. What do you think their career might be?

During Reading

Make Connections

As you read each story, take time to pause and discuss important points in the text to help readers connect with the story. Use the following questions as a guide, asking each when it is relevant to the story being read.

1. Have you ever felt that way? Have you read another story or watched a movie where the character felt that way? (Some emotion words to look out for are listed below.)

disappointed
unstoppable
confused
frustrated
embarrassed
misunderstood
terrified

2. Do you remember learning how to read and write? Did you find it easy or hard?
3. Who is someone that helped you learn how to read and write?
4. What strategies do you use when something is hard for you?
5. Who is someone that encourages you to do your best?
6. What do you love doing?
7. What do you want to do when you grow up?

Reflect on Frequently Used Words

As you read the book, have readers keep a list of words they noticed repeated throughout the stories. Discuss what each word means and what it can teach readers about reaching their goals. A few examples of frequently used words are listed below.

different
persevere
hard work
love

Learn the Vocabulary

When more complex words are used that readers may not understand, ask the child if they know what the word means. If they don't, look it up in a dictionary together. Readers could also keep a list of words as you read each story, looking them all up at the end of the story or the end of the book. Listed below are a few examples of words used in the book that you may want to look up together.

activist	endeavor	muddled	shadowed
anime/manga	exceptional	obstacle	showcase
architecture	expansive	plagiarism	sloppy
buoyed	expedition	portfolio	studiously
camouflage	floundering	poverty	stuttered
cassette tapes	graphic designer	powerhouse	tumultuous
coil	imprisoned	radiology	ultrasound
curriculum	innovative	recruit	unravel
debate	knack	revolutionary	vanquish
discriminating	legislator	sanctuary	vivid
dozen	modest	self-reliance	whirlwind

After Reading

Discuss the Themes of the Book

Many different themes and topics can be pulled from this book, depending on the age and interests of the readers. Possible discussion questions are listed below, ordered from most basic to most in-depth. Choose the questions that best suit the abilities and interests of the children you are reading with and the amount of time you have. If readers created a frequently used word list during reading, use it to spark conversation.

1. What's something that you've had to work hard at?
2. What does it mean to persevere?
3. What comes easiest for you, reading, writing, speaking, or listening?
4. Which story did you connect with most? Why?
5. What did you learn from the people in the book?
6. What did you learn about dyslexia?
7. Describe a time you had to work really hard to be successful. What made you keep going?
8. What common themes did you notice throughout the stories?
9. What helped each person to be successful?
10. What specific strategies for learning were shared in the book? Have you tried any of these strategies? What other strategies have helped you learn? (Some of the learning strategies shared in the book are listed below.)
 - » Switch to a new task when something isn't working.
 - » Ask for more time to complete a project.
 - » Ask for permission to do something in your own way.
 - » Look for shortcuts.
 - » Record yourself speaking instead of writing notes on a topic.
 - » Speak up when you don't understand.
 - » Have someone read aloud to you.
 - » Use drawings or ways other than writing to get your message across.

11. What big picture strategies did you notice repeated in the book? Did you connect with any of these strategies? (Some of the big picture strategies are listed below to help spark conversation.)

- » Work hard.
- » Find your strengths.
- » Get help.
- » Trust yourself.
- » Keep going.
- » Pursue what you love.
- » Take your time.
- » See failure as part of the process.
- » Focus on your goals.
- » Give back.

Synthesize Your Learning

The following activities are also ordered from most basic to most in-depth. Change or add to them as needed, letting the creativity and inspiration of readers guide the exploration.

1. Using facts from the book, create a poster about dyslexia. Hang it in your school or neighbourhood to teach others about dyslexia. (Hint: Start with the information on pages 102 to 109 of the book!)
2. Choose one person in the book to research and learn more about. Use other books, websites, and videos to learn more about the person and their life. Share what you learned with others by creating a poster, slide presentation, or video about the person.
3. Research dyslexia or another type of neurodiversity like ADHD, OCD, or autism. Use books, websites, and videos to learn more. Share what you learned with others by creating a poster, slide presentation, or video about that type of neurodiversity.
4. Gather information from the book and organize it into a table. Include the year each person was born and when they found out they had dyslexia. What was the average age when people in the book found out they had dyslexia? What patterns do you notice in the information? Why might it have taken so long for some of the people to figure out they had dyslexia? (Have readers draw their own table or create it on a computer. The example table on the next page only includes the people whose stories have information about when they found out they had dyslexia. Readers will need to use the information included in the stories to infer the ages. For example, Ann Bancroft was in seventh grade when she found out, so she would have been around twelve years old.)

Name	Birth year	Age when they found out they had dyslexia
Ann Bancroft		
Ruqsana Begum		
Beryl Benacerraf		
Richard Branson		
Darcey Bussell		
Heather Day		
Kate Evans		
John Hoke		
Dona Sarkar		
Steven Spielberg		
Cliff Weitzman		
Joe Whitt Jr.		

5. Research the history of dyslexia and create a timeline by adding important dates in the discovery of dyslexia. Do you notice any patterns between the dates in your table from activity 4 and the dates from your research on dyslexia? Why is research into types of neurodiversity like dyslexia important? How might research help people with dyslexia?
6. Choose a different famous person with dyslexia, autism, ADHD, or another type of neurodiversity to research and learn more about. Write a short biography about the person like those in the book.