

Characteristics of Individuals that Qualify Under Specific Learning Disability or Reading Accommodation

The following characteristics should not determine eligibility in isolation. A Competent Authority must evaluate and determine qualification through assessments, observations, a review of student work and must be consistent enough to prohibit accessing standard print at the expected benchmarks for each grade.

Phonemic Awareness	Lack of understanding of the explicit correspondence between sounds and letters or letter combinations
Phonics	Unable to blend sounds together to form words
Decoding	Inability to rapidly match letters and letter combinations to their sounds and recognize the patterns that make syllables and words
Fluency	Struggle with accuracy, automaticity, and rate of reading - oral reading lacks intonation with deficiencies in understanding phrasing and pausing
Vocabulary	Lack of exposure to an increased number of words because of the inability to read standard print
Comprehension	Inability to decode words, fully understand and decipher what is read due to un-mastered reading skills, not an intellectual deficit
Prosody	Lack of understanding and difficulty understanding the rhythm and patterns of accent and intonation in language
Access to Grade Level Content	Unable to access grade level materials because of a learning disability or characteristics of a learning disability
Executive Functioning	Struggles with the set of processes that have to do with managing oneself and one's resources
Reading Motivation & Stamina	Displays a lack of motivation, the desire and drive to read, and stamina - the ability to read for an extended period of time, not because of willingness or interest, but because reading skills have not been mastered
Social/Emotional	Avoids reading tasks for fear of embarrassment and shame over academic struggles, exhibits anxiety or frustration and/or appears distracted or unfocused

Learning Ally is a nonprofit organization with leading teacher solutions proven to transform the lives of students with learning differences and print disabilities.