

# Supporting your young person with Specific Learning Difficulties

(and all other learners!)

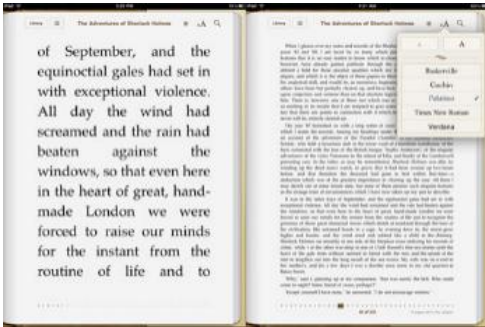
YP = young person

SpLD = specific learning difficulty LS = Learning Support

## Reading

If your YP person is reluctant to read, there may be a variety of reasons why. It is likely that reading is very hard work for them and, at the end of a busy day of having to focus very hard, the last thing their brain is able to do is read a book! Secondly, difficulties with working memory are almost universal in YPs with SpLD. So they may read fairly (or even very) well in terms of accuracy, but the story doesn't stay in their head long enough to be enjoyable (or useful, if it's for English or History etc)

## Assistive tech

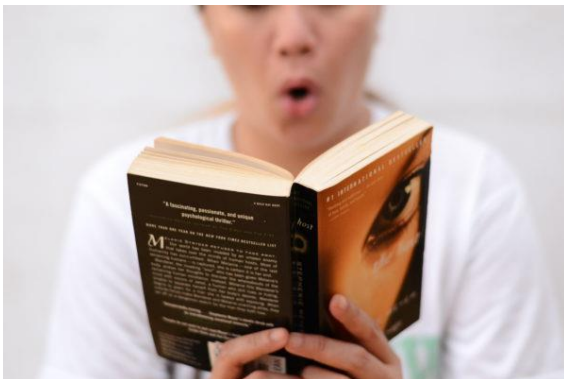


Use an e-book version of the book and listen to it. Turn on text-to-speech on their device and it will read out loud. Where possible, LS will try to find an e-book version for you, if your YP lets us know what they are reading. A reading app means you can choose a suitable font – a larger size or a sans-serif font to boost readability. We can also provide e-books of text books.

## Audio books

Some set texts (for Eng Literature and some other subjects) are available as audio books for free. Where possible, LS will try to find an audio version for you, if your YP lets us know what they are reading. Otherwise, you can buy audio versions from Amazon or Google. [Audible](#) is an Amazon audio book subscription.

## Read for them



Where possible, make yourself available as a reader for your YP. This takes away the stress of reading, ensures no reading errors and enables understanding of the text. They can ask you to repeat passages or words easily, freeing up their working memory for the learning task.

You are also a fantastic walking dictionary when they need a word explaining!

## Reducing visual stress

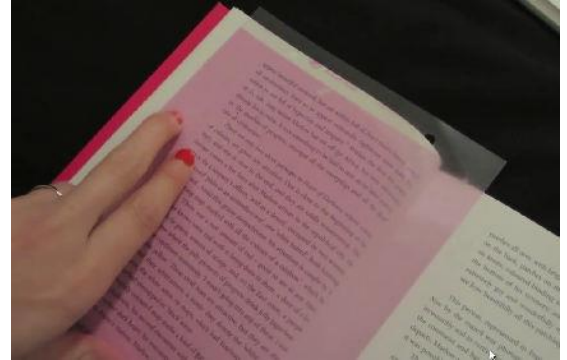


Colour, colour, colour and colour. It doesn't help for everyone, but many people find that coloured paper is easier to read and write on than black on a white background. You can change the page colour of Word or Pages to a colour that works better for your eyes. It can improve the speed of writing and improve the flow of reading work back to check it.

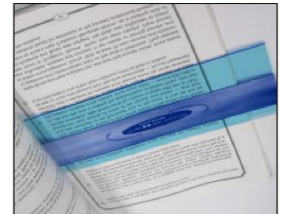
Some learners use coloured overlays if they find they have tracking

difficulties when reading – missing or repeating lines or words, if the words wobble or fizz, if they get lots of headaches when reading...

If they don't have a coloured overlay but report any of these concerns, send them to the LS team.



If your YP has a coloured overlay, remind them to use it all the time with text – so you should see it often being used for homework. We have 2 sizes, A4 for textbooks or worksheets, reading ruler for novels etc.



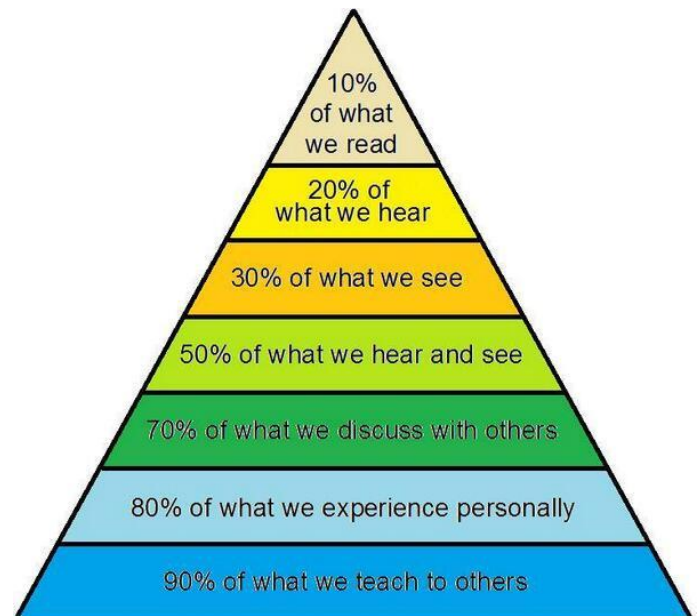
## Revision and memory

Revision is best started during the teaching of that topic or unit in lessons. Leaving it all until an exam season is approaching means creating a lot of revision resources in many subjects and overload.

Revision techniques – need to include a variety of activities to create and strengthen neural links in the memory.

Most YPs will read through their books and say they have revised. This is the first

stage; the brain cannot retain enough detail just from reading; we need *to do* something with those words.



We would recommend mixing and matching a variety of these to make it multisensory; different techniques work well for different subjects:



### Presentations

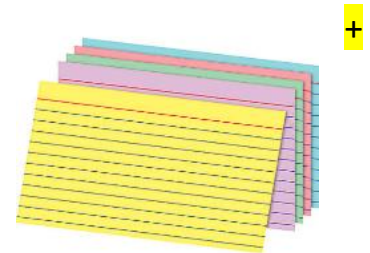
Reduce text to key terms only, avoid paragraphs and sentences.

**Minimal text + maximum diagrams and illustrations.** The act of finding suitable images is part of strengthening the memory.

### Audio recording

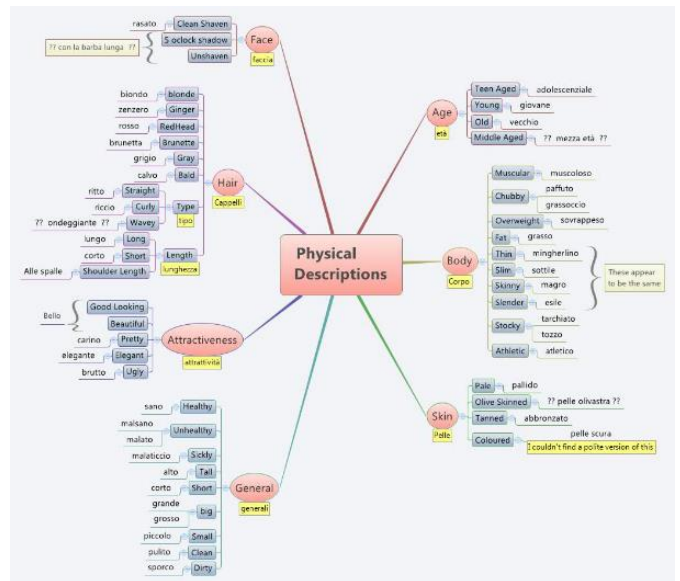
### Sticky notes

**Note cards with minimal text + maximum diagrams and illustrations.**



### Mind maps

Where possible A3 (LS always have A3 paper if needed) and lots of colour and drawing. There are also some great mind-mapping apps and many are free – including XMind. You can add images to these also.



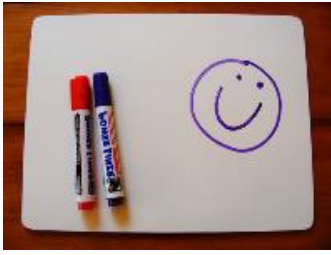
### Organisation



A quick evening diary check with your YP is vital so that they can pack their bag ready for tomorrow and double check all homework is completed and in the bag, ready to go.

We would recommend having their timetable on the wall in their room by their desk. LS can provide a blank timetable for that. Colour code it – one colour for each subject.

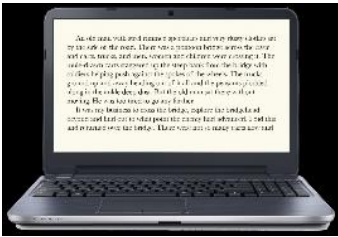
### Whiteboards



You probably use these at work yourself. A whiteboard can be used for lots of useful tasks: planning, redrafting. A YP may be happy to start on a whiteboard because they know they can change or improve it before it goes onto paper or they type it up. Where possible, a whiteboard on the bedroom wall but an A4 is also good. Lots of colours of whiteboard pens are useful to colour code plans or to mindmap.



## Writing



Many pupils with SpLD don't find that writing flows smoothly from their hand. They have ideas but they get tangled or they forget them when they try to write them down. We would recommend trying word processing, because that makes editing so much easier.

(At GCSE and A Level, candidates whose normal way of working in school is to word process can do so in their exams

these days)

**Plan** – bullet points, a brainstorm, a mind map, sticky notes (whiteboard is perfect for planning) or talking to the record app in their phone or ipad.

**Draft**

**Edit** – check the plan to make sure nothing is missed, check punctuation is in there, capital letters are correct. Spellcheck it if word processing. Check name is on it, title and date.

**(print)**

