

# Dyslexic Advantage

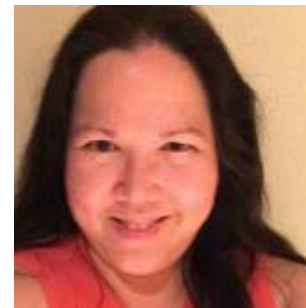
## NEWSLETTER



The Pleasures of  
Reading by Ear



- JERSHIKA MAPLE SINGS
- MADE BY DYSLEXIA
- KATE GRIGGS
- DYSLEXIA SUPER POWER
- MARGARET ROOKE
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- CREATIVE MATH EDUCATOR: OUR DYSLEXIA AND MATH JOURNEY
- DYSLEXIA NEWS



Fernette Eide MD, Editor

Dear Friends,

Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas! We have a book giveaway this month **HERE** for a copy of The Dyslexic Advantage, Creative Successful Dyslexic, Dyslexia is My Superpower, or This is Dyslexia. Wow! Happy New Year too! - Fernette and Brock

Become a **Premium Subscriber** and discover the most comprehensive resource on dyslexia in the world. You can sign up for an individual subscription or gift a school with institutional subscription. Don't forget there is a **Homeschooler's** course for parents and for teachers, a clock hour course that provides professional development credits (**Dyslexia for Teachers**). For a 50% off coupon on a signed **Dyslexic Advantage Hardcover** from our store, use the coupon **BOOK50** before Dec 31st.

The **NEUROLEARNING** Dyslexia Screening App is \$39.99 and available for children and adults 7-70 years old. iPad, iPhone, Android, and Kindle Fire.



The app may be used to identify and qualify for services such as Benetech's huge free library of e-books.

Thank you volunteers Shelley Wear, Trish Seres, Dayna Russell Freudenthal, and Michelle Williams for their astute critique and proofing. Thanks to Lady Grace Belarmino for beautiful design and layout.

**PREMIUM**

Editor's Note: to make our publications easier to read, we will avoid use of italics and certain types of fonts.

Newsletters can be read online **HERE**. This issue will be available on the Joomag site for 3 months and can also be downloaded as a pdf file.



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# THE PLEASURES OF READING BY EAR

This multi-colored brain image shows what brains do when they're listening to stories (learn more about this [HERE](#)).

## Semantic maps

Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) was used to measure brain activity in seven people while they listened to more than 2 hours of stories from *The Moth Radio Hour*. This data was used to estimate voxel-wise models that predict brain activity in each voxel (volumetric pixel) based on the meaning of the words in the stories. [Read the paper describing this research here.](#)

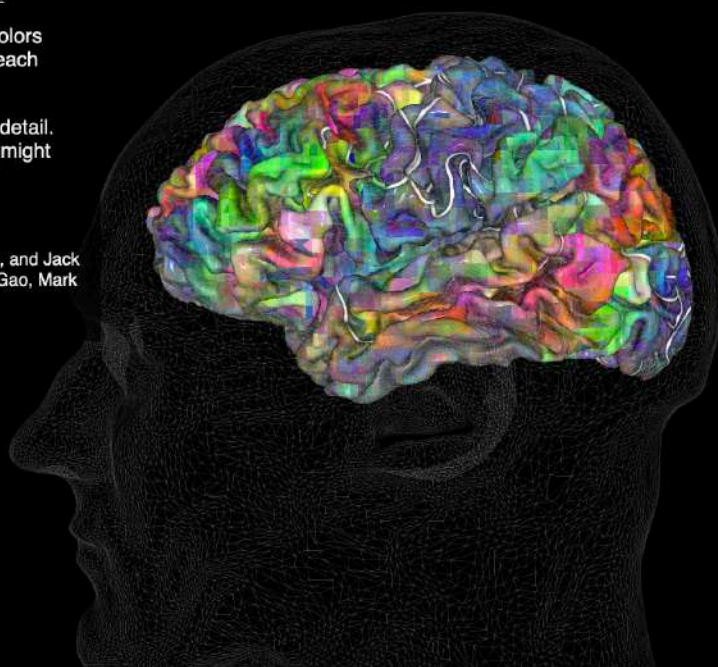
This is an interactive 3D viewer for models fit to one subject's brain. Colors show the category of words predicted to elicit the largest response in each voxel (legend, bottom left).

Click and drag brain to rotate. Scroll to zoom. Click voxel to see more detail. Click 'Next' to begin a short tour. If you have problems [email](#) or [github](#) might help.

You can download the PrAGMATIC atlas of semantic areas [here](#).

Research by Alexander Huth, Wendy de Heer, Tom Griffiths, Frederic Theunissen, and Jack Gallant. Brain viewer by Alexander Huth, made with [pycortex](#) software by James Gao, Mark Lescroart, and Alexander Huth.

colors show approximate semantic selectivity



It's a whole brain workout and its effects seem largely the same whether you listen to a book or read it with your eyes (research [HERE](#)).

Stories go right to the heart of personal learners and for dyslexic listeners, it builds on strengths of conceptual understanding, interconnected thinking, narrative, of course, and mental simulations. Being able to listen to a story also frees up working memory, so a person can immerse themselves in a world, characters, or situations without being dependent on one's reading speed or level.

There may be some people who need to be walking, rocking in chair or doing something that doesn't take a lot of cognitive work (like knitting or yard work) in order to listen for long periods of time, but whatever it takes, be assured that you're doing lots of important things with your brain, whether it's reflecting or learning the contents of the book, developing your vocabulary, syntax, and executive function, developing your perspective taking and empathy, or enriching your imagination.

## DIFFERENCES IN READING BY EAR VS. EYE

Readers and listeners sometimes debate whether one way of consuming a book is better than another, but it's likely that there is not a single answer for everyone.

Some people prefer listening to print because the work of reading by eye is so great that it's harder to keep all the information in mind once sentences and stories are decoded. Others may like to listen while reading along, or eye read only because it's auditory attention and working memory that get overloaded.

I confess I am a sloppy skimming sort of print reader and while I read things, I often don't get imagery from what I'm reading. Interestingly, though if I'm listening to an audiobook by a good reader (a professional reader, for instance, with a lively voice), I can make vivid images while I hear the words.

If it is possible, it is best to aspire to a certain level of proficiency in both; but if your listening and eye reading are very uneven, then no one should feel guilty that one modality is better than another.

Recently, I read an [article](#) by journalist Claire Armitstead where she pondered about where listening made a difference to her interpretation of a novel.

"My most startling recent audio-reading experience, however, was with Colm Tóibín's *Nora Webster*. Reading the novel for myself, I found Nora an alienating figure, a mother with little maternal warmth, the flatness of whose life and relationships left me feeling flat too. It was only when I heard Fiona Shaw reading it that I understood



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## READING BY EAR

the intricacy of Tóibín's achievement, how he weaves a manner of thinking into a manner of speech, so that a whole era and society are contained in the narrator's broken reporting of spoken sentences..."

Interestingly, neuroscientist VS Ramachandran has said that "people have been listening to stories for far longer than they have been reading them.... it's possible that listening to speech (including such things as cadence, rhythm, and intonation) is more spontaneously comprehensible and linked to emotional brain centers – hence more evocative and natural."

Claire is not alone. Those who read for a living have promoted other benefits to listening rather than reading books.

In [The New Yorker](#), John Colapinto has talked about audiobooks being a necessity when he has to get through a lot of re-reading in a short amount of time and also when he looks forward to talented actor's interpretation of characters. When listening to a Hemingway book read by William Hurt, for example, funny and touching parts of the book came to the surface. John also sang the praises of a reader, Frank Muller, who managed to bring all the characters in *The Great Gatsby* to life.

More recently Farhad Manjoo has been [singing the praises](#) of audiobooks in the New York Times. He argues that author-read stories bring added dimensions to the text that help listeners gain "a sense that one is inside the story rather than peering in from the outside."

Knowing many of the strengths of dyslexic people - that include sensitivity to voice, rhythms, emotions, and the multisensory aspects of spoken literature, we are missing a bigger picture if we see audiobooks as a short cut to avoiding the work of print. If you haven't tried audiobooks and you are dyslexic, give it a whirl. Most libraries have expanded their audiobook collections since the pandemic. Great resources include public library [LibbyApp](#) .

If you're hunting for great audiobook narrators, check out Audible's [Narrator's Hall of Fame](#). Don't be afraid to try out a speaker from a different country; sometimes a slight accent may be a nice change.



# JERSHIKA MAPLE SINGS HER HEART OUT ON "THE VOICE"

"Jershika dedicated her song to the fourth and fifth grade teachers who helped Maple discover she had dyslexia, and it was filled with emotion and power..."

- Taste of Country

Jershika Maple described the alienation she felt as a 4th grader in Louisiana being held back because of her dyslexia. But she made it through and thanked her teachers for helping to save her life.

She dedicated her singing of King & Country's God Only Knows and reflected, "God knew that those teachers would see something that I couldn't see."





# HUGE WIN FOR DYSLEXIA IN FEDERAL COURT

## Federal Court Orders Clark County School District to Reimburse Parents \$456,000

A federal court has ordered a school district to reimburse a family that had accumulated significant expenses to document their student's educational needs with dyslexia, ADHD, and developmental mathematics disorder.

Special Education Attorney Pete Wright wrote an excellent summary of the case [HERE](#).

Excerpt:

This case is noteworthy in several respects. The Court held that:

- the IEP team failed to consider evaluations provided by the parents and failed to meaningfully consider the parents' concerns for enhancing their child's education;
- the IEP team ignored the findings and recommendations of the professional evaluations of O.R.;
- O.R. needs were complex so she required a methodology that was research-based, systemic, cumulative, and rigorously implemented;
- the district's response to the parents' requests for a program that met their child's needs was "trust us to provide her with what she needs";
- the Court held an evidentiary hearing to obtain expert testimony about Orton-Gillingham methodology;
- the Court held that the cost of training teachers in the Orton-Gillingham method

## ADVOCACY

The interesting aspects of this decision are the fact that it was made in federal court and therefore has implications across the United States. The parents tested their student privately and in both cases, specific remediation (i.e. Orton-Gillingham (O-G) based multisensory instruction) was recommended, which the school district refused. The school refused to accept outside findings which documented dyslexia and instead qualified the student only under "OHI or Other Health Impairment". After parents requested a "due process hearing", an independent hearing officer also concluded that the student was not provided with a "free appropriate education" as guaranteed by federal law.

The independent hearing office concluded that the district did not demonstrate a working knowledge of Orton-Gillingham and that the district had predetermined that they would not include O-G in the students IEP.

From the court:

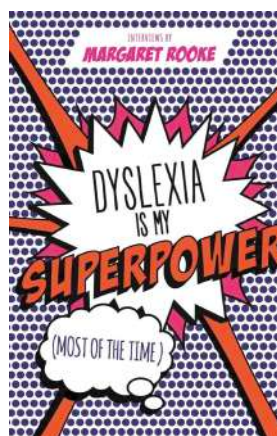
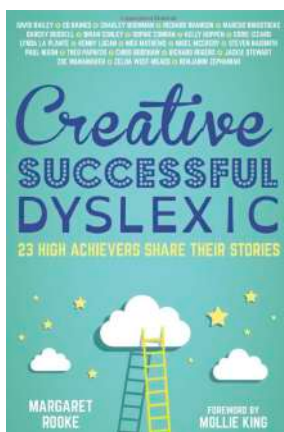
**"O.R. required consistent programming throughout the day. The IEP teams' failure to recognize this, despite having notice in the form of recommendations provided in the evaluations and discussion with O.R.'s parents, demonstrates deliberate indifference. The record therefore establishes that Defendant violated Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act."**

As a result of this decision, the school district had to reimburse the parents for tuition and travel expenses for this child to enroll in Eagle Hill School (a school that employs Orton-Gillingham instruction). In addition to paying the parents \$456,000, they were also ordered to reimburse the parents for attorneys fees in the case.

Hopefully this decision may help more school districts to become aware of the need to train their teachers and provide appropriate remediation and support to all their dyslexic students.

# CREATIVE

## SUCCESSFUL DYSLEXIC and DYSLEXIA IS MY SUPERPOWER AUTHOR MARGARET ROOKE



Margaret Rooke, Author

Margaret Rooke, British author of *Creative Successful Dyslexic* and *Dyslexia is My Superpower* has gifted us with some of her books to give away. Books can be purchased online [HERE](#) or [HERE](#), but also Margaret has gifted us a few for a holiday giveaway [HERE](#).

Margaret also wrote us , and shared the following from her personal journey with dyslexia:

All parents are anxious about different aspects of their children's lives. I was as concerned as the next mother, but it never occurred to me that my daughter would have difficulties with her schoolwork. She achieved well until she was 11. I had no reason to think this would change.

It was when my daughter went to high school that she seemed to stop learning. Her scores for all her subjects came to a standstill. At home we had no idea why this had happened. Was it because she was generally unhappy? Was it a problem with the school? She claimed to us that the school was chaotic, yet other children had done well there. We were at a loss.

## INSPIRATION

I was clearing out a box of papers when I came across a poster she'd made at 10 for her school's 'anti-bullying week'. I noticed for the first time that the slogan on the poster 'Tell an adult' contained a mis-spelling. Adult had become adlut.

During her early years I thought spelling would come to her in time. She was one of those children who could learn their spellings for the Friday spelling tests, then forget them all instantly when the test was over.

Now I knew I was wrong. When I saw the poster my instincts told me she was dyslexic, and I organised tests that confirmed this. I couldn't have felt more shocked. I was deeply concerned too. I knew she'd always felt proud of her academic record and, after two or three years of not achieving at high school, I felt the years ahead would be a battle for her.

What happened next changed everything. I think it must have been the special needs teacher at school who recommended [The Dyslexic Advantage](#) to me.

I flicked through the pages and, as I did this, my stress subsided, and my mind was at ease. When I read about the different ways that the dyslexic brain works and learnt there were other ways to be smart besides being 'school smart', I knew everything would be OK.

I reached the chapter on the M strengths and felt I didn't need to read any further. I thought this described my daughter and her abilities. The chapter enabled me to visualise how she could have a successful career – in interior design, for instance. No wonder she'd always seemed to have a natural ability for knowing where furniture should go, and which colours went together.

I also loved the way the Eides explored how dyslexic strengths could help those wanting to be truck drivers just as much as those hoping to be architects. There was no snobbery here. No need to excel in exams if this wasn't your thing. What mattered was acknowledging and exploring and focussing on your strengths, while doing your darndest to do well at school; not dwelling on the impossibility of taking in historical dates or chemical formulae.



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## INSPIRATION

I honestly think *The Dyslexic Advantage* made me a better mother. From that moment on I did all I could to encourage her, to give her a sense of confidence that didn't rely on how she was doing at school. The book meant I focussed on my daughter's abilities, not her weaknesses. I supported her to build her confidence, build her resume and get through her exams at the highest grades she could manage.

As a writer I decided I could encourage her and those like her by writing books on the subject.

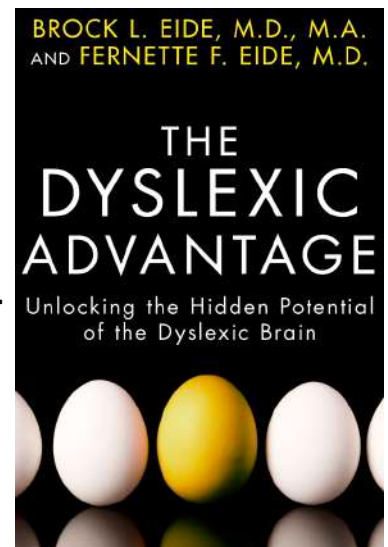
My first was *Creative, Successful, Dyslexic*, a book of inspiring interviews with 23 high achievers, all talking about their life experiences, what went wrong for them and how they achieved so well. They talked about having a supportive adult while they were growing up and the difference this made, and how much they learnt outside the classroom.

My second was *Dyslexia is My Superpower (Most of the Time)*: interviews with 100 children and teens from across the world all talking about being dyslexic: how they feel about it, what helps them learn, relax, and feel good about themselves, and how parents and teachers can play their part. One of the most important aspects to this book is that it shows children they are part of a big gang all over the world. They are not alone.

For the past five years I've been giving talks on what I've learnt from everyone I've spoken to. Of course in every talk I talk about my books and why I believe they can help children and adults with dyslexia. But I also talk about *The Dyslexic Advantage*, its role in my journey as a parent and how I believe its philosophy can change lives.

My daughter is now 23 and has a job with a fashion company she loves. In fact the skills she mainly uses in her work are not the M strengths I first identified in her. She explained to me recently how she uses her problem-solving and communication abilities every day of her working life.

Another lesson for me that we never stop learning – all of us. Those of us with dyslexia and those who support them.



## CREATIVE MATH EDUCATOR: OUR STORY of DYSLEXIA & MATH

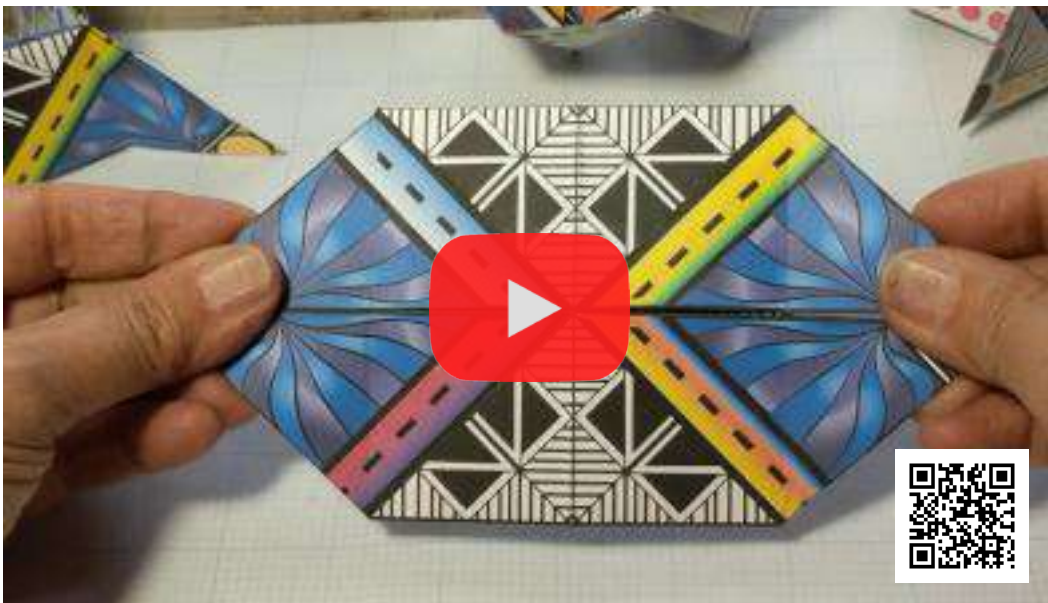
Paula Beardell-Krieg is a innovative math educator and paper artist who brings all types of math wonder and discovery in her work as a math educator. As an example, check out her flexagon below.



I recently had the chance to talk with her about her experiences raising two children with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and math difficulties. They are now all grown and they are generous about sharing their experiences with math.

### FATIGUE

The first thing that Paula mentioned when I asked her math, was the fatigue her children experienced with completing assigned math work. She showed me an example of one of her children's papers which required two columns of fill-in-the-blank answers for estimating math numbers. Her daughter had dutifully completed all the questions in the left column of the work sheet, but by the time she got to the second column, the errors dramatically increased.







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National Center for Learning Disabilities, the International Dyslexia Association have evaluated the Sonday System(r) and deemed that the program contained the required elements for teaching reading identified by the Nation Reading Panel.



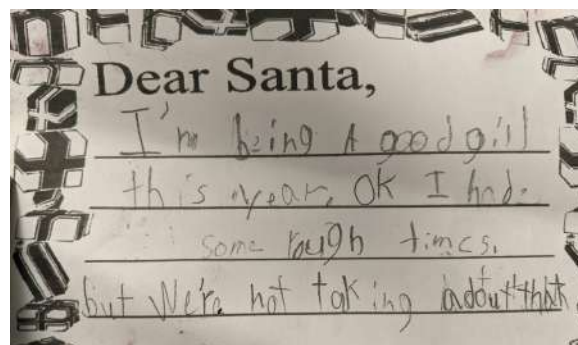
## MATH

The sheer quantity of math homework assigned is often wildly out of touch with reality of dysgraphia, impaired automaticity, and working memory overload seen with dyslexia. After the point of fatigue, there is no purpose for more math work. Errors will accumulate, and worse, students may become confused about math concepts and procedures that they have already mastered.

In an example from higher math, Paula said she recalled reviewing with her son the different ways that polynomials like a quadratic equation could be factored. But because of fatigue, her son preferred just fitting in the numbers into the quadratic equation which he could write from memory because he had learned it in a song...and Paula recognized it because she realized it was real and deep fatigue.

### DENYING RECESS EVERY DAY

Because Paula regularly visited different schools, she would often learn about how different teachers might approach a problem like "incomplete work". For instance, one of her daughter's teachers prevented her from going to recess every day because of incomplete work. When she spoke with teachers from other districts about this, she found that some districts specifically prevent teachers from doing this.



Paula shared this Santa writing from her daughter. It reads: "I'm being a good girl this year. Ok I had some rough times, but I'm not talking about that."

A first grade teacher or second grade teacher would tell her that her daughter was "choosing not to do work," but other teachers told her that children don't choose not to do work...so she began to think differently about when individual conflicts arose.

### POINTS OFF

Another difference Paula discovered among teachers was their use of "points off" or negative reinforcement to change student behavior. When she talked about this with her son, he recalled a teacher in the 6th grade who, although in most regards was a wonderful teacher, had little information about dyslexia, and would

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## MATH

take points off for all sort of mistakes or omissions like forgetting to put your name at the top of an assignment. The teacher would tell the class that she would take 10 points off if they forgot to write their name at the top, and when passing papers back, mention that he had forgotten to write his name (but not take the points off), but regardless, the end result was that he felt terrible. When Paula asked him whether the "points off" approach made it more likely that he'd remember in the future, he said "No, it just made me feel worse."

Later another teacher told Paula that she used to take points off or warn about taking points off for various mistakes, but then she stopped doing it because it didn't result in any change. Instead, she switched to positive reinforcement-providing rewards or something else positive to increase the likelihood that students would remember.

Premium subscribers can listen to my entire talk with Paula in our Premium Podcasts [HERE](#) in the Math recordings group.

Toward the end of our talk, Paula talked more about general strategies she tried to develop in her children as they worked their way through public, then private school. First, she made sure her children could tell their teacher how they needed to hear information. For instance, she remembered when she once tried to explain something to her son and he didn't understand it. She tried conveying the information another way - but he stopped her saying - no don't explain it another way, just repeat what you said before. Sometimes it would take repeating several more times, but he would get more of it each time until he finally understand the process or principle. He would try to do the same in school, but sometimes a teacher wouldn't want to explain information again.

Paula also shared that she observed that there were predictable times when her children seemed to have trouble in making the transition to Algebra. Up until that time math consists of operations involving specific numbers, but things change to more generalized number relationships with equations and polynomials, and variables that are expression in relationship to other variables. Without explicitly teaching this big picture difference in the branch of mathematics, students can get confused with the use of different letters to represent numbers and all of the math work that follows.



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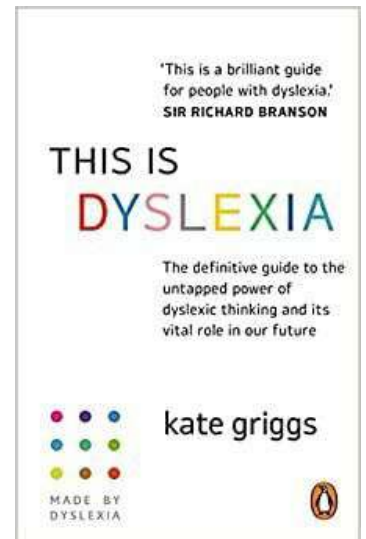




## MADE BY DYSLEXIA: KATE GRIGGS

Social entrepreneur Kate Griggs from the UK has a new book called [This is Dyslexia](#).

Kate has also generously gifted Dyslexic Advantage with a few copies of her book. If you'd like to register for a chance to win a copy, click [HERE](#).



Recently, Fernette had the chance to catch up with Kate Griggs, founder of the global charity [Made by Dyslexia](#). It's mission is to "help the world to understand, value and support dyslexia", and they have made quite a splash on the international scene by resources like the video below having a wide variety of accomplished people talk about their dyslexic differences and strengths.



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## DYSLEXIA

Kate told me that her book [This is Dyslexia](#) is a book "by dyslexics for dyslexics about dyslexia to help the world to understand dyslexia."

Fernette's chat with Kate:

Audio file here:



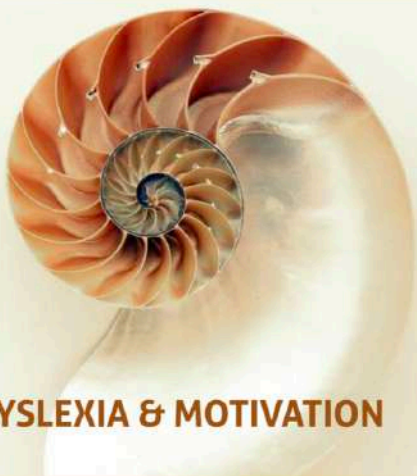
"It really is all about your strengths. Four out of five successful dyslexics say they're successful *because of* their dyslexia, and *because of* the way that they think. And as a child, or even as a parent, when your kid is going through school, if you can keep focused on that is the big picture and the end result, it will help you to be well to cope with the struggles that we know are in education." - Kate Griggs





PREMIUM ISSUE SEVENTY-ONE NOVEMBER 2021

# Dyslexic Advantage PREMIUM MAGAZINE



## DYSLEXIA & MOTIVATION

- DYSLEXIA AND ACCELERATED READER
- TEACHING AND MOTIVATION
- REMOTE WORK HACKS
- STORYTELLING IN MATH FOR DYSLEXIA
- LIP READING
- READING SMALL WORDS

# PREMIUM



## PREVIOUS ISSUE: DYSLEXIA AND MOTIVATION

- Dyslexia and Accelerated Reader
- Teaching and Motivation
- Storytelling in Math
- Lip Reading
- Reading Small Words

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\$1000 or more in prizes will be awarded to K-12 young dyslexic writers. This awards program is a partnership between Dyslexic Advantage and The Writers Workshop in NY. Because of international regulations, monetary prizes are limited to US citizens.

Applicants must be dyslexic and submissions may be from 17 (e.g. haiku) to 700 words.

We accept poems, short stories, fan fiction, and excerpts from longer stories. Submissions are judged on ideas, storytelling, and quality of writing and not on technical aspects such as spelling. Works may be dictated to a parent or friend. If you'd like to check out some previous winning entries, visit **HERE.**

**CREATE**



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## PREMIUM



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- Writing: How to Start
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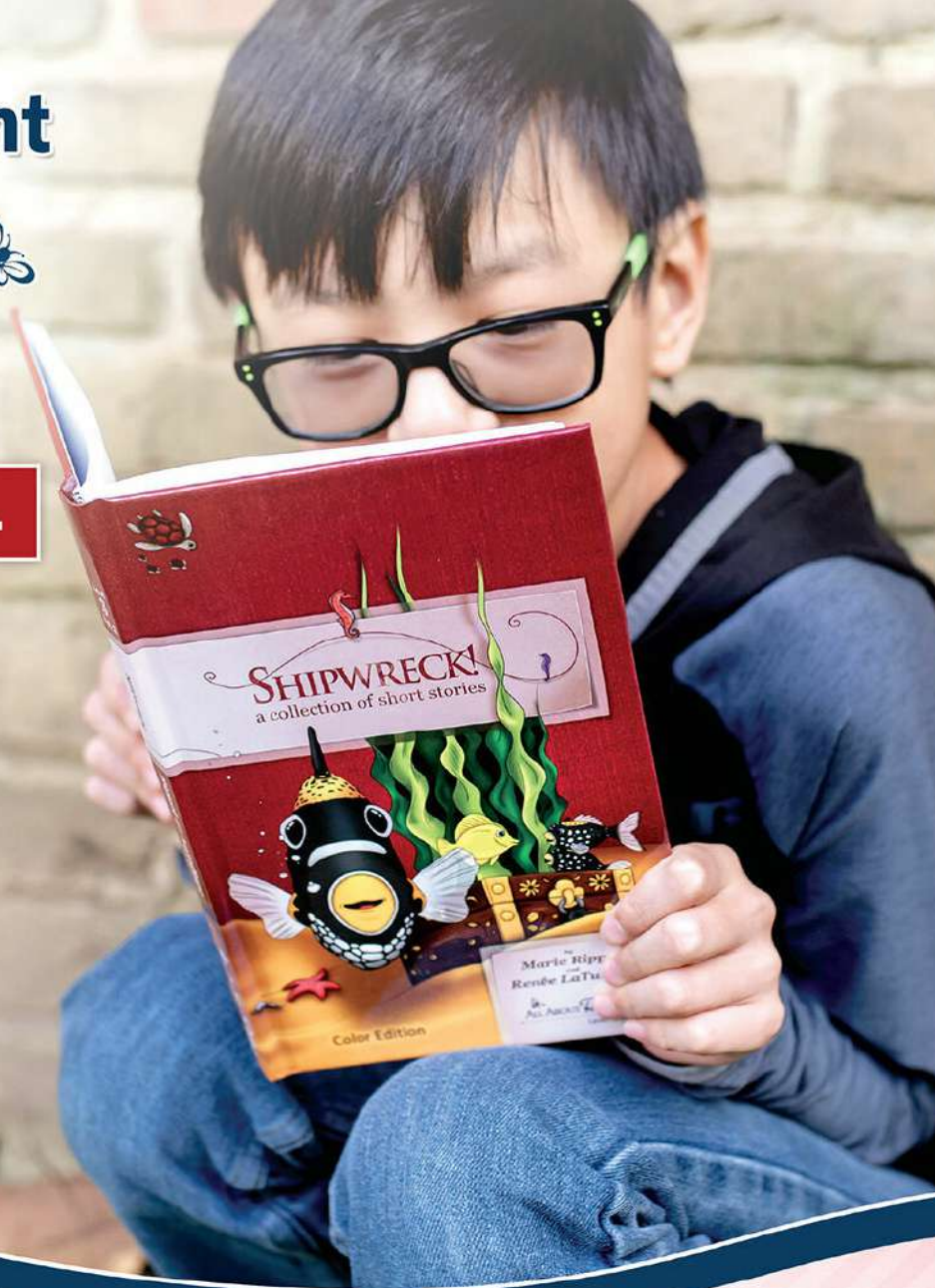
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"For me, dyslexia is not a disability. The unique strengths and characteristics of dyslexia allow me to think 'outside the box.'"

-Attorney Pete Wright