

INSPIRATION AND SUCCESS IN READING

*Tips to help youths and adults
find their desire to read*



Kuntoutussäätiö





INSPIRATION AND SUCCESS IN READING

– Tips to help youths and adults find their desire to read

Does reading feel slow, boring or difficult? Dyslexia or difficulties with concentration can diminish your joy of reading. Luckily, you can make reading easier in various ways.

The purpose of this material is to encourage you to try new ways of reading. It is possible for people of all ages to ignite the spark of reading!

Choose the contents you find most interesting or go through them all.

Content:

- Are you inspired by reading?
- Dyslexia affects the desire to read
- When it is hard to concentrate on reading
- Five tips to help you focus on reading
- Create a reading-friendly environment
- How to remember what you have read
- Tools to support reading
- Help with reading difficulties
- Read by listening
- Encourage yourself to read

We hope you can find the joy in reading!



INSPIRED BY READING?



Or does it feel slow, boring or difficult at times? Then you should seek out reading that interests you and try different ways of reading.

Many people only find their desire to read in adulthood. What could reading bring to your life?

What would make reading most comfortable for you?

What kind of topics are you interested in?

to get carried away in adventure



to learn about things that interest you



to enjoy yourself and relax while listening to the text



READING GIVES YOU THE CHANCE:



to understand yourself and others



to receive and share information



to make life easier



DYSLEXIA AFFECTS THE DESIRE TO READ

When reading is difficult, the desire to read might not be there. When you discover what you should read and how, you might find the spark of reading. What kind of text should you start with?



DYSLEXIA

- is caused by the brain's different way of processing information
- makes learning to read more difficult and often persists into adulthood
- also often hinders reading comprehension, writing, learning of foreign languages and concentration
- does not prevent you from reading or enjoying it!



WHEN IT IS HARD TO FOCUS ON READING

...reading is slow and frustrating.

What disturbs your concentration?

What is your reading environment like?

While reading, your concentration can be disrupted by matters such as:

- a difficult or boring subject
- disruptive sounds or movements
- your smartphone
- unfinished work
- the scent of nearby food
- daydreaming.

How you feel can also impact your focus:

- being hungry or thirsty
- energy level
- worries, hurry or performance stress
- excitement or feeling nervous
- belief in being successful.

Long-term problems with concentration could be the result of:

- extended stress or sleep deprivation
- attention-deficit disorder
- dyslexia or other learning difficulty
- mental health disorder
- other illness or its treatment.

Identify the factors that disturb your concentration and familiarise yourself with methods that can support it!



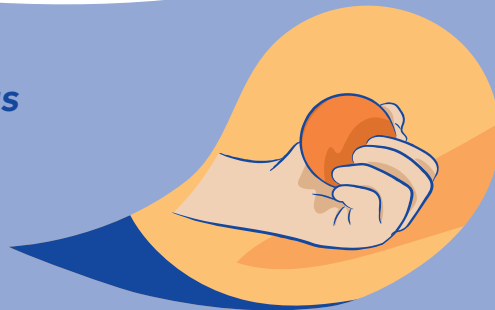
FIVE TIPS TO HELP YOU FOCUS ON READING



Reading requires adequate concentration. If staying concentrated is difficult, your focus can wander or you can feel restless during longer reading sessions. Absorbing and remembering the text is hard if you cannot concentrate.

Ways of improving your focus on reading:

1 Allow yourself to move a little.



2 Choose a reading spot that supports concentration and remove unnecessary distractions.



3 Read while refreshed and alert, and take breaks. Time your reading using the Pomodoro technique, for example.



4 Try aids and tools for listening and reading, such as headphones or reading rulers.



5 Find topics that interest you and reading methods that suit you.



When you have a lot to read and you should remember what you have read, plan your reading beforehand. Take notes, draw mind maps and test your learning while you read.

What helps you concentrate?

CREATE A READING-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

The best reading environment is different for everyone. It can also vary depending on what you are reading.

An audiobook might be best enjoyed while on a walk outdoors, but focusing on a textbook may require a peaceful place or room for making notes.

The environment also affects your concentration and whether there are interruptions.

Where is reading comfortable for you?

Where do you read when the material requires focus?

Sounds?

Possibility to move about?

Other people?

Ambience?

Time of day?

Light?

Place?

Position?



HOW TO REMEMBER WHAT YOU HAVE READ



Learning by reading requires mental processing of what you are reading. To remember something you must first understand it.

Think about what you are reading in different ways before you read, while you read and after reading.

Before reading:



- **Estimate the time it takes.**

Do you have a lot to read? Is the text simple or difficult? You can divide the reading over several days.

- **Set a goal for the reading.**

What question are you looking to answer? Are you reading the entire text or only parts of it?

- **Pick up info beforehand.**

What do you learn just by looking at headings or pictures?

- **Tune your mind to the text.**

What do you know about the topic of the text? Is it related to you or your interests?

During reading:



- **Try to find the essential points.**

What are the most important concepts and issues in the text? These can often be found in headings, images, bolded sections or summaries.

- **Look up unfamiliar words and phrases.**

Write difficult words down.

- **Think about the subject.**

Is the text connected to your previous learning? Is there something interesting or puzzling about it?

- **Make the text understandable and easier to remember.**

Make notes, drawings or mind maps in your own way.

- **Test your learning.**

Summarise what you've read into a few sentences or draw a mind map. Talk to someone else or to yourself out loud about what you've read.

- **Re-read the things you don't remember.**

Revisit the most difficult core issues after each paragraph or section, for example.

- **Return to the text later.**

Think about what you can say about what you've read from memory or simply based on headings. If you made notes, go over them again.

- **Seek more information from reliable sources.**

To complement what you've read, seek out images or videos, for example.



TOOLS TO SUPPORT READING



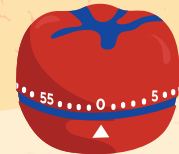
Try various apps and tools to support your reading. Would any of the following be of use to you?



1. Try audiobooks



2. Make it easier to stay on the line



3. Read in short bursts and take breaks



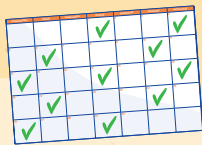
4. Give your hands something to do

Lukemisen tukena voi myös kokeilla myös esimerkiksi apuvälineitä ja sovelluksia ja arsinulla.

5. Make the text larger



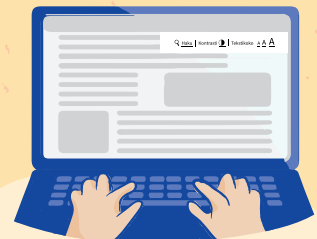
6. Remove distractions



7. Schedule your reading



8. Listen to the text



9. Look into other tools

1. Audiobooks, e.g., [libraries](#) and [Celia.fi](#)
2. [Reading overlays and rulers](#), or blocking superfluous text with paper
3. Timers and time management techniques (e.g., [Pomodoro](#))
4. Fidget toys, stress toys or blu-tack, for example
5. [Magnifying glass cards](#), larger font size
6. Ear plugs, putting the phone in focus mode or removing it from the reading area, noise-cancelling headphones
7. Calendar and making a reading plan
8. Read-aloud features on the computer, phone apps that read text aloud from camera photos (e.g., [Microsoft Lens](#))
9. [Learning Aid Centre \(DLA\)](#), [Smaly.fi](#), [Oppimisvaikeus.fi](#)



HELP WITH READING DIFFICULTIES



IN STUDIES

- Look into possibilities for personalised arrangements (e.g., extra time, a calm space, tools and aids)
 - in matriculation exams
 - in entrance exams
 - with assignments and regular exams.
- Ask to receive learning goals and lecture materials beforehand.
- Ask your library about loan extensions and Celia's audiobooks.
- Ask for permission to record the teaching as sound, image or video.

SECONDARY SCHOOL:

Ask for help from a...

- teacher
- special teacher
- psychologist
- school social worker.

UNIVERSITY:

Help can be provided by a...

- special teacher
- study psychologist
- department secretary
- accessibility contact person.

HEALTHCARE AND REHABILITATION

- Get tested for learning difficulties especially if you need the diagnosis to receive benefits or rehabilitation.

Have you told the people at your school or workplace about your reading challenges?

IN WORKING LIFE

- Consider discussing your strengths and challenges with your supervisor.
- When needed, negotiate changes to work duties and the working environment.
- Contact occupational healthcare if the challenges are too stressful.

Can you affect your working environment?

ALSO REMEMBER

- Choose a suitable working space and place to sit.
- Use (digital) learning tools.
- Look into the guidance and peer support provided by organisations:
 - Rehabilitation Foundation's Learning Support Centre and Oppimisvaikeus.fi
 - The Finnish Diverse Learners' Association

You're not alone!



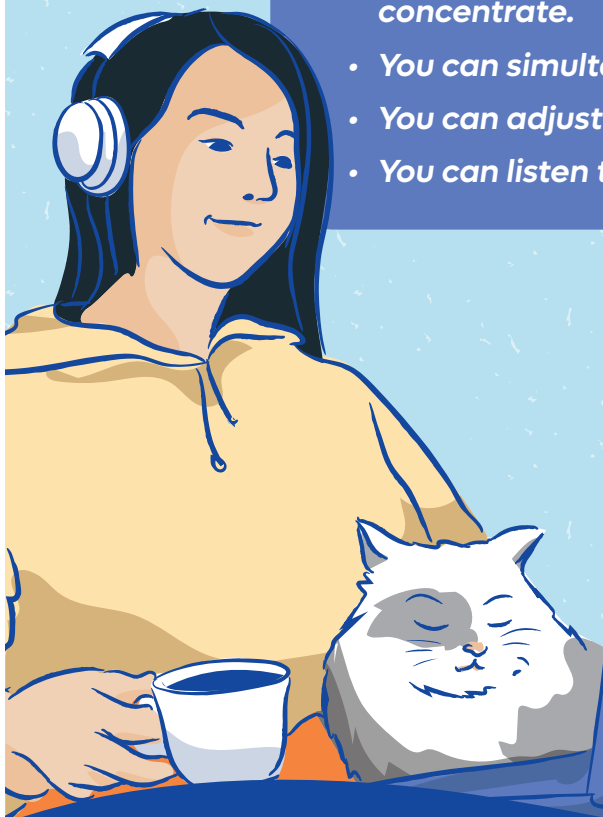
READ BY LISTENING



Did you know that you can listen to books, texts and websites? This listening is possible with a computer, tablet or phone, for example. You could listen to websites or take a photo of the text with your phone and then listen to it with a text-to-speech application. In addition to commercial audiobook services, libraries also offer audiobooks free of charge.

Listening to texts is suitable for many. If reading is slow or difficult, listening to texts might be especially beneficial.

- You can focus on the content of the text instead of correct reading.
- Instead of reading you can hear the difficult words, making reading more fluent.
- You can move about slightly while listening, which can help you concentrate.
- You can simultaneously listen to the text and follow it on the screen.
- You can adjust the listening speed to suit you.
- You can listen to texts you have written to catch typos, for example.



If you have a challenge that affects reading, such as dyslexia or ADHD, you can gain access to the Celia.fi audiobook service free of charge. The service contains both textbooks and fiction.

Ways to listen to texts:

- Immersive reader programs
- Text-to-speech features, see [Smaly.fi](https://smaly.fi)
- Audiobooks, e.g., ekirjasto.kirjastot.fi or www.celia.fi
- Read-aloud features of smart devices, e.g., [Microsoft Lens](https://microsoft.com/lens)

ENCOURAGE YOURSELF TO READ

Difficulties with reading and poor reading experiences can be dispiriting and make one feel like an outsider. Miserable thoughts are understandable, but they are rarely completely true.

Do not put too much weight on thoughts that discourage you from trying or practicing. By trial and error you will find your own way of reading, which will often also change the way you think and feel about reading.

Do you recognise any dispiriting thoughts about reading in your mind? How about thoughts that encourage you to read and succeed?

DISPIRITING THOUGHTS

"I can't read or learn."

"I failed yet again.
I shouldn't have even tried."

"I'm slower and stupider
than others."

"Others will laugh if they find out
how poor my reading is."

ENCOURAGING THOUGHTS

"I will find a way to read
and learn that suits me."

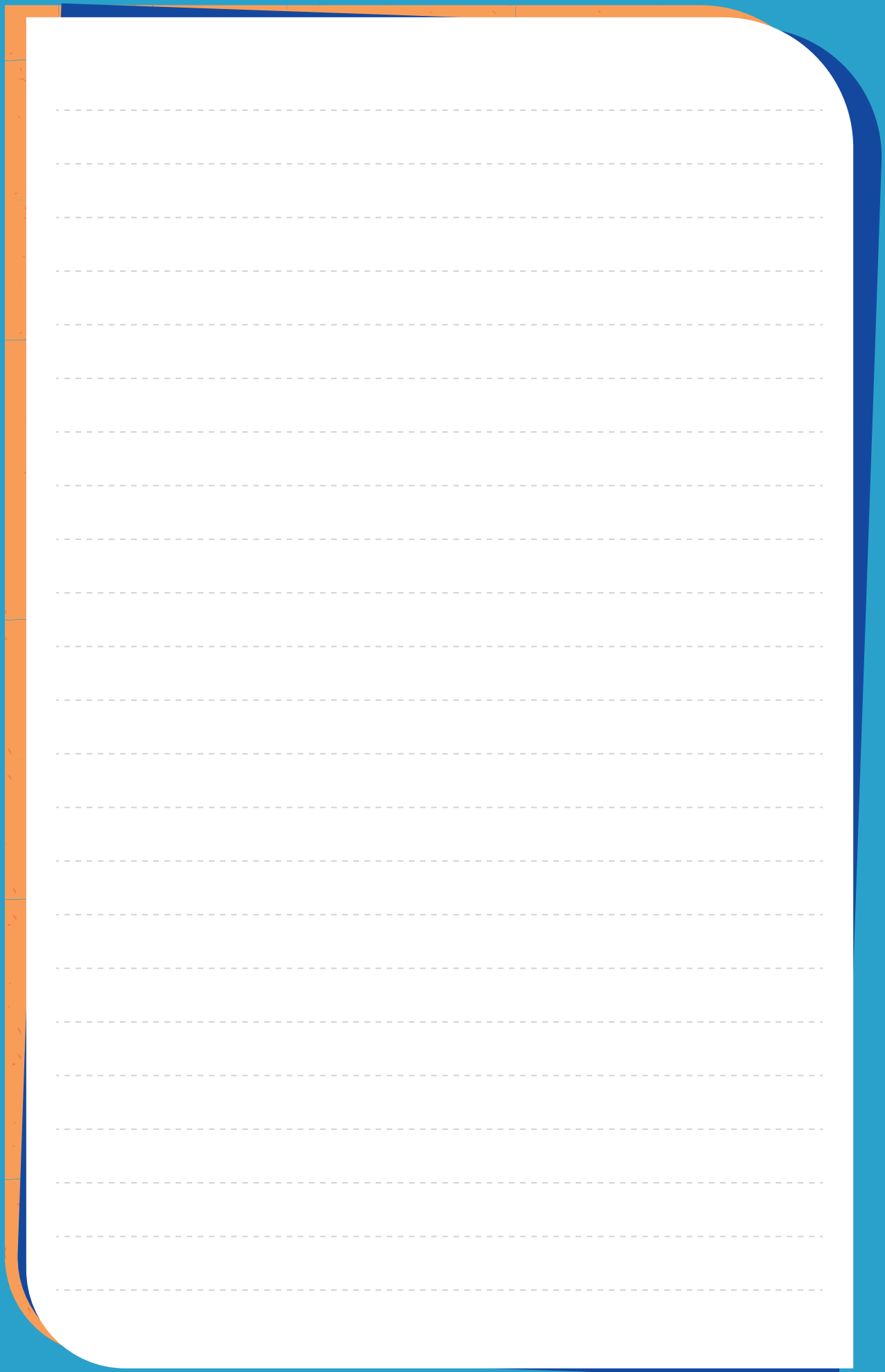
"This is difficult, but I can practice
and learn more."

"I learn in my own way."

"If I talk about my challenges with
others I can be met with support
and understanding."

It might be wise to discuss one's reading-related challenges with others who are experiencing similar problems. Peer support for learning difficulties can be found through various organisations, for example:

[Rehabilitation Foundation's Learning Support Centre & The Finnish Diverse Learners' Association](#)





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– Tips to help youths and adults find their desire to read

The Inspiration and Success in Reading material contains ideas and methods that encourage you to read and try new ways of reading. The content is especially designed for youths and adults for whom reading is more difficult than usual because of dyslexia or problems with concentration. The material is also helpful to others who wish to find new ways to support their reading. The material can, for example, help you choose a suitable reading environment or identify the thoughts that affect your desire to read.

The material can be used for the following purposes, for example:

- To develop one's reading and learning habits
- To understand one's dyslexia or difficulty in concentrating
- Awakening the desire to read in one's instructees, pupils or students

The material consists of ten different topics that can be viewed in isolation or as a complete package. The electronic material (<http://aoe.fi>) also contains a video related to each topic. The topics can be viewed, printed or pressed either individually or as a complete booklet.

The reader is encouraged to have an open mind toward reading and to try out new and personal ways of reading. The content relays information in diverse ways using text, images and video. The material promotes the perspective of multiliteracy where reading is seen to include more than just the ability to read text fluently.

The content was designed by Kuntoutussäätiö's psychologists specialising in learning difficulties Johanna Stenberg and Minna Parkkila in collaboration with expert by experience Saana Alanko. The material has been developed in the Inspiration and Success in Reading project funded by the Finnish National Agency for Education (Literacy Movement's action aid 2022).

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Illustration: Terese Bast