“Dyslexia” by August Dickman
3rd Place, Informal Essay 10-12
Dyslexia

/Dəsˈleksіə/ noun- A general term for a disorder that involves difficulty in learning to read or interpret words, letters, and other symbols, but that do not affect general intelligence.

That’s Google’s definition of dyslexia. I have my own.

/Dɪsˈlɛksіə/ adjective- A disorder that makes you appear very dumb.

The English language is hard. There are so many words that sound the same but mean different things. To, two, too. Plain, plane. Peace, piece. There, their, they’re. Where, wear, ware.

SOME disorders you can cure. Dyslexia is not one of them.

I many times in school was made fun of. Sometimes by the teachers even. I never thought my life was bad though. I had my parent’s right by my side. They understood. They were always there for me. They knew why I was never good at spelling. They knew why learning math was hard. They knew everything about me. That’s why the best teacher for me is my mom. She understands.

My dream was to write and publish books, but when I tried I was always discouraged. When I came to words I didn’t know how to spell, I would have to
avoid using the words I wanted to. I didn’t know how to spell them. I might have
wanted to use the word confused, but I’d end up using the words ‘I don’t know’
instead. I felt something was holding me back.

I thought there was no hope for me to accomplish anything in life I wanted
to do. It might seem silly to you. You might think all dyslexia does is make it
where you can’t spell, and read very well, but it’s much more than just that. Your
self-confidence lowers every time you look at all your misspellings.

Dyslexia also affects the MATH part of your brain. In 5th grade I was really
good in math. I got an A in math, but I worked 10 times harder than a normal kid
would need to work. Dyslexia can make it where it takes you longer to learn and
understand math facts. When I was really little, subtraction was so hard. It took me
about 30 minutes to do 4 problems. I had a really hard time memorizing my
multiplication tables and other things like division. When it came time to do math
in school, I never got done in time, so I always had math homework. Once I finally
understand the math fact, I can make 100% after a lot of blood, sweat, and tears.

One time at school, my teacher could tell I was having a hard time
understanding the math problem. She came up to me and started to explain the
problem. I didn’t understand anything she was saying. It was like she was speaking a foreign language. I started to cry because as she was explaining it to me for the 50th time, I could see other kids finishing their assignments and turning them in. I felt like the dumb kid. The kid who never gets it.

One time our teacher gave us an “easy” day of math and told us to partner up and play math games. My friend and I picked the game Multiplication Towers. Even though I knew my multiplication tables it was really hard for me. My friend was whipping them out and I was slowly getting through them. It made me feel really stupid.

Now I homeschool. Ever since I have homeschooled it’s been hard to find a math program that works for me. Most kids can watch one random lesson and then they get it. I however need to pick a certain lesson and watch it 50 times before I even get an idea of what’s happening. Teachers have to explain the math lesson differently to me than other kids. We had been trying so many math programs and asking other homeschoolers what to use. It just never seemed we would find anything. We finally found one that’s perfect. I can watch the video once or twice and I get it!
Difficulty reading is one of the best ways to tell if someone is dyslexic. I’ve never had a hard time reading, so my parents and teachers never thought I might have dyslexia. Then I started homeschooling. My mom has always had a hard time spelling even as an adult. Once she saw I also struggled with spelling she started doing some research to see what could be causing this problem. After a lot of reading she noticed that the symptoms of a form of dyslexia were similar to what I was dealing with. After more research she also found dysgraphia, a type of dyslexia. The difference between dyslexia and dysgraphia, is that dyslexia affects your reading. Like I mentioned before, I’ve never have had a hard time reading. But dysgraphia affects spelling and handwriting. I have always had really bad handwriting. It’s sloppy, messy, and it’s hard to space the words correctly. I have never officially been diagnosed with dyslexia, but online testing shows I have some form of it, most likely dysgraphia.

One time I wrote a story. I asked some of my friends to read it. One of my friends told me everything I did wrong. While she was reading it she kept on giggling and laughing. I asked her what it was. I thought she was laughing at all the jokes in it. She said that I had misspelled practicality everything. I had used
the wrong ‘plain’ and that I used the wrong ‘to’ and I misspelled every other word. I felt so embarrassed. Almost all of my friends had read that story. I looked dumb.

Not all of my friends make fun of my spelling though. One of my friends always knows what I’m trying to say when I misspell everything. My parents have always been supportive with my writing. They help me when I don’t know how to spell something, and they never make fun of me. It’s not that way with everyone who has dyslexia though. Many kids are bullied because of dyslexia. Steven Spielberg was bullied in school because he had dyslexia along with Whoopi Goldberg, and Jay Leno. Keira Knightley said that dyslexia has made her the actress she is today. Look where they are now!

Just because you have dyslexia doesn’t mean you can’t follow your dream. John F. Kennedy had dyslexia. He was president! So many writers have dyslexia too! Dav Pilkey, the author and illustrator of Caption Underpants, has not only dyslexia but also ADHD that caused him to act out in class. He started to write Caption Underpants at his desk in school.

Dyslexia, or types of dyslexia, may affect your spelling, reading, and/or math, but it doesn’t affect your creativity. I can write even if I need to go though
and check my spelling multiple times. Writing is what I want to do, and I’m not
going to let dyslexia stop me. No one is perfect. Sometimes our imperfections
make us who we are.

I might be dyslexic, and that’s okay.