

Indicators of a Person with Low Reading Skills

There is not a certain “type” of person who has reading difficulties. Many people who cannot read often find it very difficult or embarrassing to admit that they have a problem. However, there are many common recurring signs that family or friends might see in a person who cannot read. The following is a list of possible indicators of low reading skills.

- Passing paperwork on
- Writing very little or misspelling a lot of words
- Avoiding situations or participation in activities in which he/she might have to read or write
- Ordering the same item whenever he/she goes to a restaurant
- Ordering something that is not on the menu
- Having someone else order for him/her in a restaurant
- Saying he/she can’t read because of forgotten eye glasses
- Trying to take paperwork home to fill it out or get someone else to complete
- Rarely responding to written messages
- Paying bills in person, with cash and avoid having to write checks
- Avoiding using ATM machines
- Indicating that a spouse handles “those” matters
- Avoiding reading and/or signing forms
- Making mistakes when given instructions in writing, such as when trying to fill a written order
- Often mispronouncing or misusing words
- When giving directions somewhere, describing landmarks rather than signs or asking for a visual map instead of written directions
- Asking for directions when they are clearly marked instructions
- Asking for verbal directions about what is needed to be done, even when instructions are available in writing
- Employee absence following announcement of or during transition to computerization
- Apparently unnecessary collaboration with fellow employees immediately after assignments
- Apparent confrontation when given written assignments, particularly if the situation is easily resolved following an oral explanation
- Refusal of advancement when one apparently has the talent to do the new job
- Coming in early for unspecified reasons (need more time to read assignments or other material more slowly)
- Slow performance immediately after receiving a new assignment
- Having a short attention span
- An unwillingness to read aloud (making excuses so others would offer to complete forms or papers)
- A dislike for classroom learning situations

- Getting angry with a person who is asking to have something read (this is finding fault with the person for not taking care of the issue themselves. For example, “you mean you haven’t looked at Billy’s report card yourself? Why do I always have to be responsible for this?”
- In some (ESL) situations, responding to a question with a stare and then go on working without answering
- Claiming to have not received a written correspondence
- Stating that one didn’t have time to read correspondence; blaming being too busy or too pressured with deadlines, and asking others to tell them what’s written
- Claiming print is too small
- Delaying giving a response to written correspondence to allow time to get someone else to read and interpret the material
- Avoiding proofreading, then blaming others for erroneous material to which he/she places a signature
- Asking others to spell even the most common words
- Telling others “I’m a ‘people’ person, not a paper pusher, so don’t write me memos or notes; pick up the phone or come by and talk with me.”

11-04.Indicators FS