

defect Something that prevents proper functioning or a problem.

dyslexia don't think of it as a defect. Dyslexia is not a measure of intelligence: you may have a genius on your hands. Having dyslexia can make you creative. If you want to construct a sentence and can't find the word you are searching for, you have to think of a way to write round it. This requires being creative and so your 'creativity muscle' gets bigger.

Kids come up to me and say, "I'm dyslexic too," and I say to them, "Use it to your advantage, see the world differently. Us dyslexic people, we've got it going on – we are the architects. We are the designers." It's like these kids are proud to be like me and if that helps them, that is great. I didn't have that as a child. I say to them, "Bloody nondyslexics ... who do they think they are?"

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

This newspaper article is drawn from Zephaniah's contribution to a book about how dyslexic people can be successful. He presents himself as someone who has found ways of coping with dyslexia, persuading other dyslexics that they should not regard dyslexia as an obstacle, but as an opportunity to be creative, rather than restricted.

In a relatively short space, Zephaniah introduces a number of important points. Mainly, he does this by using short, tightly-written paragraphs so that in a matter of a few minutes you learn what the author understands as the essential elements of his coping with dyslexia.

ACTIVITY 1

A01

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING

▼ ANALYSING THE ARTICLE

Copy and complete the following table, analysing what the writer is saying in each of the examples from the article.

▼ EXAMPLE	▼ WHAT THE WRITER IS SAYING
'no compassion, no understanding and no humanity'	These words show Zephaniah's view of his time in school.
'She also had a point'	
'such hard work that I would give up'	
'But opportunities opened for me and they missed theirs'	
'Do I need an operation?'	
'I don't sit down and think, "How can I become white?"'	