

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

	Traditional Characteristics of Gifted Students	Gifted Students with Disabilities
Basic Skills	Ability to learn basic skills quickly and easily and retain information with less repetition	Often struggles to learn basic skills due to cognitive processing difficulties; needs to learn compensatory strategies in order to acquire basic skills and information
Verbal Skills	High verbal ability	High verbal ability but extreme difficulty in written language area; may use language in inappropriate ways and at inappropriate times
Leadership	Exhibits leadership ability	Often leader among the more non-traditional students; demonstrates strong "street-wise" behavior; the disability may interfere with ability to exercise leadership skills
Broad Interests	Wide range of interests	Wide range of interests but is process/learning problems impede their pursuit of them
Focused Interests	Very focused interest, i.e., a passion about a certain topic to the exclusion of others	Very focused interests, i.e., a passion about a certain topic to the exclusion of others - often not school related subjects
Humor	Unusual, often highly developed sense of humor	Humor may be used to divert attention from school failure; may use humor to make fun of peers or to avoid trouble
Maturity	May mature at different rates than age peers	Sometimes appears immature since they may use anger, crying, withdrawal, etc. to express feelings and to deal with difficulties
Independence	Sense of independence	Requires frequent teacher support and feedback in deficit areas; highly independent in other areas; often appears to be extremely stubborn and inflexible
Reading Ability	Early reading ability	Frequently has reading problems due to cognitive processing deficits
Observation Skills	Keen powers of observation	Strong observation skills but often has deficits in memory
Organization	Organizational skills can vary; some gifted students can be very organized while others struggle	Usually struggle with organization; organization of things, ideas, and time
Problem Solving	Strong critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making skills	Excels in "real-world" problems; outstanding critical thinking and decision-making skills; often independently develops compensatory skills

Persistence	Long attention-span; persistent, intense concentration	Attention is frequently impacted; may be able to concentrate for long periods of time in areas of interest
Emotionality	Sensitive	Sensitive regarding disability area(s); highly critical of self and others including teachers; can express concern about the feelings of others even while engaging in anti-social behaviors
Social Skills	May not be accepted by other children and may feel isolated	May be perceived as a loner since they do not fit typical model for either a gifted or a learning disabled student; sometimes has difficulty being accepted by peers due to poor social skills
Curiosity	Questioning Attitude	Strong questioning attitude, may appear disrespectful when questioning information, facts, etc. presented by teacher
Creativity	Creative in the generation of thoughts, ideas, actions; innovative	Unusual imagination; frequently generates original and at times rather "bizarre" ideas; extremely divergent in thought; may appear to daydream when generating ideas
Risk Taking	Takes risks	Often unwilling to take risks with regard to academics; takes risks in non-school areas without consideration of consequences