

Hi I'm Finn, a child in 4th class and I have Autism. In school it is a little harder for me, my senses are a little more sensitive than yours.

For example, when it is quiet in class, I become aware of all of the noises around me. When I hear loud, squeaky or annoying noises, it gives me burning sensations in my head, like a spark hits my head. Sometimes my temperature rises around my forehead and I can start to feel dizzy, this can possibly become a sensory overload. A sensory overload is when one or more of my senses cannot cope anymore.

When I am in a sensory overload, my brain goes so fast I don't even know what I am doing and I feel like I have to defend myself.

It is like a war happening in my head. One side of my brain - the peaceful side, is losing the battle so the defensive side has to kick in and take over - this is the defence mode. If the defensive side is losing, they bring in the big guns and that is what the sensory overload is like. This is more scary for me because I can't control my senses. Sometimes my body is fighting to regain control and I punch a wall or something. This makes my body feel something and this can snap my brain out of it.

When the defensive side has retreated or has no reason to fight, then the peaceful side returns to normal.

Sometimes I am not able to tell you what I am experiencing, like when I am starting to feel overwhelmed.

After an overload, it makes me feel exhausted and I would sleep for a week if I could.

I am working on trying to recognise triggers but I need help with this from adults. You could help me by recognising when I am reaching a sensory overload and help me recognise it too before it happens.

I am slow to know about some emotions, I don't know when I am being cheeky or argumentative. Sometimes, I forget to say please and thank you. I can do it most of the time with friends and family.

Some famous people who are also said to be autistic are...

- Albert Einstein—scientist
- Alan Turing—who helped invent the computer
- Sophie Germain—Discovered methods that engineers used to make the Eiffel Tower
- Lewis Carroll—Author of Alice in Wonderland



Drawing by Finn, aged 10