

SELF-TEST FOR IRLLEN SYNDROME

Irlen Syndrome is a difficulty with visual-perceptual processing of the light spectrum. It involves inefficiency, inaccuracy, distraction, and discomfort during academic reading, calculations, writing/copying, judging depth & distance, and other visually-intensive activities. The following checklist is based on information from the Irlen Institute. (www.irlen.com)

International students: Answer based on reading in one's native (or primary educational) language.

<u>When reading for school or work, do you sometimes:</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Skip words or lines?	_____	_____
Reread lines?	_____	_____
Lose your place?	_____	_____
Need to take breaks often?	_____	_____
Find it harder to read the longer you read?	_____	_____
** Get a headache?	_____	_____
** Become tired or fatigued?	_____	_____
Blink or squint often?	_____	_____
Open your eyes wide or rub your eyes?	_____	_____
** See only a small portion (one word or less) in focus while the rest of the page is blurry?	_____	_____
Prefer to read in dim light?	_____	_____
Become easily distracted?	_____	_____
Read close to the page?	_____	_____
Use your finger or other markers to keep your place?	_____	_____
Get restless, active, or fidgety?	_____	_____
Move around to get page in focus or out of glare?	_____	_____
** Feel nauseous?	_____	_____
** See letters, words, or other things moving on the page?	_____	_____

If you checked "Yes" for 3 or more items overall or checked "Yes" for any of the items marked **, then Irlen Syndrome might be negatively affecting you. Arrange to be assessed by a certified Irlen Screener.

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Irlen Syndrome-What You Can Do

How Teachers can help:

- **Reduce your fluorescent lighting** by creating areas that do not have fluorescent lights, areas where half the lights are off, and areas with full fluorescent lighting. If you have a room with enough natural lighting, do not turn on your fluorescent lights.
- **Worksheets/Test/Math Sheets/Information sheets** should be printed on colored paper, if possible the color of the student's preference, blue/green/yellow/pink. The incorrect color may cause similar problems to white. Recycled paper is better than white.
- **Colored Paper.** For those students with handwriting problems, allow as much work as possible to be done on colored paper, again a color of the student's own preference or a gray or beige.
- **Hats or Visors.** Let your students wear hats with dark under brims in the classroom. This reduces the glare from the fluorescent lighting.
- **Book Position.** Reading should be done from materials placed directly in front of the student. Student should not attempt to 'share' reading material.
- **Overheads.** Limit the amount of work done using an overhead projector - the intense lighting may cause real discomfort or place a blue colored overlay on the projector.
- **Chalkboards.** Write in columns rather than across the board. Write each paragraph in different colors to help with tracking. And whenever possible do not use whiteboards. The white boards are available in brown or gray which is much easier for readability.
- **Copying.** Allow student to copy from paper to paper. If necessary, copying what has already been copied from a board by another student, if possible onto colored paper.
- **Colored Overlays.** Encourage and remind student to use the colored overlay(s) in all subject areas in which reading occurs including Mathematics.
- Ensure that reading is tested using the student's preferred overlay color(s).

If You Have Irlen Syndrome:

- **Paper Color.** You should avoid white paper and use colored paper for writing whenever possible. Investigate the color of ink which is most readable with colored paper.
- **Plastic Colored Overlays.** An Irlen plastic overlay can be used over reading material, especially with white, high gloss paper and under fluorescent lights, when you find yourself overly fatigued or when working for long periods of time under fluorescent lights.
- **Natural Lighting.** Experiment and find seating where the lighting conditions make it easier and more comfortable to read and work. Indirect natural lighting and incandescent lighting is the best. Dim lighting is usually better than bright lights.
- **Brimmed Hat/Visor.** Wear a visor or hat with a brim in heavily lit rooms, supermarkets and shopping malls, possibly even when reading or studying. The underside of the brim should be a dark color such as blue, green, or black.
- **Bookstand.** The position of reading material affects the ease of reading. The reading material or material to be copied should be placed on an angle to reduce glare. An adjustable bookstand or holder can be helpful.
- **Markers.** Use of a ruler or book marker can aid accuracy and speed. Some individuals become more efficient readers by using markers under the line; others by using a marker on top of the line; others by using the marker after the word being read to block off the rest of the sentence. The color of the marker should be the same color as the plastic overlay.
- **Enlarged Print.** There are several organizations which publish enlarged print books, magazines, and dictionaries. Consider utilizing the services of Reader's Digest Fund for the Blind, Inc., Large Print Department, Pleasantville, New York, 10570.
- **Breaks.** Continue to incorporate breaks while reading, writing, or doing other visually-intensive tasks.
- **Read Aloud Onto Tape And Replay.** Consider reading aloud or onto a tape and then replay the tape. Listening to the tape may increase reading comprehension.