
Introduction to Irlen Syndrome

A visual perceptual dysfunction
Affecting 18-20% of the population



Parental permission obtained

Guide for professionals

www.readingbycolour.org.uk



Contents – (All photocopyable)

Introduction	1
Would you want to read if the page looked like this?	2
Facts	3
Symptoms	4
Making life easier	5
Feedback	6
Irlen quiz	7
Screening form (photocopyable)	8
More reading and research	9



Introduction (1)

We thought it might be useful to put together an information pack for teachers, TAs, professionals and sufferers who are not familiar with the signs and symptoms of Irlen syndrome.

Hopefully, you will then feel equipped to help your pupils, or yourself.

The worst enemies for those suffering from Irlen syndrome are fluorescent lighting and white/smart boards. Those with high light-sensitivity suffer greatly, in one case the charity knows of inducing seizures.

We cannot do a great deal about the boards, except, for sympathetic use of colours (in some cases). The lighting can often be switched off as use of fluorescent lighting can cause unnecessary headaches and glare on the tables and paper.

If after reading the list of symptoms you feel that a pupil, or you may be in need of investigation, feel free to contact us.

A screening form is included in this pack. We are happy to look at the results. for schools, parents and interested groups as well as giving advice, screening and presentations.



Irlen syndrome, unlike some disorders is improved with detection. The use of Irlen™ filters can be life changing.

Thanks to the Irlen centre Kent for the photograph

Reading by Colour
Great Cauldham Farm
Cauldham Lane
Capel-Le-Ferne
Kent
CT18 7HQ
Telephone us on 020 323 995 96 (skype)
(Please leave a message if we are unavailable, we will get back to you)

admin@readingbycolour.org.uk - www.readingbycolour.org.uk

To order an electronic copy please contact us



Would you want to read if the page looked like this? (2)

Arthur is a friendly, talkative boy who speaks in a rather loud voice. He dressed the examiner as a nervous, high-strung youngster. He was restless, frequently tapping his fingers on the table and often out of his seat, yet he endeavored to work steadily by the table. Arthur seemed to be making a good effort on all the test items, but he talked rapidly and had difficulty sustaining his attention for any length of time. Some specific and tentative comments were noted. Arthur appeared to resist academic tasks, reacting to evaluative behavior which indicated covering alternatives, making excuses, and verbalizing circumstances which produced falsely favorable conditions. Arthur displayed considerable energy avoiding a job rather than accepting the responsibility for it. He was quite

Blurry and wash-out

Robinson and Conway (1988, unpublished) reported significant improvement in subjects using the L to R and U to D directions on basic and mixed subjects: reading comprehension, reading accuracy, and rate of reading. Adler and Cross (1987) evaluated the results of a ten-week (23) remedial high school students with a matched control group. Significant improvement for the experimental group was noted for time needed to locate words on a printed page, timed reading scores, length of time for sustained reading, and span of focus, as well as other perceptual tasks. Additionally, seven of the 23 experimental found employment, but none of the control group was employed by the end of the semester. In contrast, Winters (1987) was unable to find differences in his study. Winters gave 15 elementary school children four minutes to locate and circle 68 examples of the letter "h" on three pages, each page of which contained 600 random letters in 20 lines of

Swirling

PROMISES PROMISES
PROMISES PROMISES

Shaky or vibrating



Facts (3)



Irlen syndrome affects 18-20% of the population.



Approx 50% of dyslexics and as many as 30% with ASD, ADD (HD), dyspraxia and dyscalculia have Irlen syndrome.



Irlen™ spectral filters are only available from licensed Irlen diagnosticians from Irlen centres.



The majority of sufferers are unaware that what they perceive is not normal, and therefore cannot recognize the problem by themselves.



Irlen filters counteract the spectral light which causes distortion, allowing the brain to process visual information correctly. The wearer does not see any colour.



Irlen filters are as necessary for Irlen sufferers as prescription glasses are for those with an optical problem. It is not diagnosed by standard visual testing.



Irlen syndrome is a perceptual processing problem. Dyslexia is a language processing problem which makes it difficult for people to access text. They are not the same, however they can co-exist.



Each individual has their own symptoms and colour needs. The colours must be precise for each person otherwise they will not work efficiently. Filters are not the same colour as the overlays.



Irlen syndrome can seriously affect driving, beware!



The symptoms (4)



This section highlights possible problems with reading, complaints after reading, general writing characteristics, maths, music and depth perception/gross motor skills.

Reading - do you?

- Skip and reread sentences and lines
- Place book on lap / shade eyes to help eliminate glare
- Loose your place
- Use finger as a marker
- Misread words
- Have poor reading comprehension
- Notice that your reading deteriorates the longer you read
- Lack concentration
- Have problems tracking
- Avoid reading
- Prefer reading in dim light
- Move around trying to find a comfortable place to read
- Blink and squint excessively
- Appear hyperactive when reading



After reading

- Suffer from headaches or nausea
- Notice that the page seems too bright
- Suffer from tiredness
- Find print is blurry or fuzzy
- Experience the disappearance of print while reading
- Blink or squint
- Open eyes wide
- Rub your eyes
- State reading is too hard
- Complain of eyestrain, red or watery eyes.
- Strain to see a computer screen

General writing characteristics

- Have problems writing on lines
- Write with unequal spacing
- Make mistakes when copying
- Spell the same word inconsistently
- Ask someone to check your work for accuracy

Maths

- Misalign numbers in columns
- Have difficulty learning tables

Music

- Have difficulty reading music
- Play by memorising

Depth Perception/Gross motor skills

- Find that you are clumsy and uncoordinated
- Have problems catching a ball, judging distances, balancing
- Experience problems using escalators and stairs
- Drive with extreme caution (especially at night)



Making life easier (5)

Suggestions for adjustment of the classroom or room, for those diagnosed with Irlen Syndrome.

Allow the individual to sit near a window for more natural light.

Allow the individual to wear a visor or hat with a brim.

Allow the individual to sit where he/she can avoid sitting directly under fluorescent lights.

Allow the individual to sit at the front of the class.

Reduce the glare from interactive white boards by changing the background colour; when using overhead projectors place an Irlen coloured overlay on the projector.

Allow the individual to place Irlen coloured overlay/s over the computer screen to cut down on glare and brightness or change the background colour and brightness for comfort.

Reading Activities:

Allow the individual to use the appropriate Irlen coloured overlay/s.

Allow the individual to use a magnifying bar if appropriate.

Allow the individual to use a sloping board.

Written Assignments:

Allow the individual to use their preferred colour of paper to reduce the problem of black print on white paper.

Allow the individual to use a tape recorder or laptop.

Maths Assignments:

Allow the individual to use coloured paper of their choice.

Photocopy work onto coloured paper.

Allow the use of a magnifying bar.

Allow the use of Irlen coloured overlays.

Tests and Exams:

Photocopy tests onto their preferred colour of paper to reduce eyestrain and fatigue from the glare of white paper.

Enlarge the print if this is appropriate.

Allow the individual to use appropriate Irlen coloured overlay/s.

Allow the individual to use a room without fluorescent lights.

Allow breaks or extra time.

Allow the individual to use a magnifying bar if appropriate.

Allow the individual to use a laptop/computer where appropriate.



Feedback (6)

"I was fitting every hour of the day at least ten times. I had lots of tests to see whether I had epilepsy or not, but they came back negative, they thought I had mental problems. I was tested at school and found to have Irlen syndrome. I went for further assessment, and now have nine colours in my filters and my fits have stopped when I am wearing my filters. In the few minutes while my dad was cleaning them I had a fit, we hadn't noticed the fruit machine flashing behind me. We have been to the cinema and in the sunshine with no problems.

I can't believe what I have been missing, buildings have straight sides now and there are different tones in colours".

Chloe says that the stairs are not all sloped now and she doesn't hang onto the railing. When she used to read words, they would move or jump on the page. A sentence would blur and she would struggle to read. She now writes about three pages of writing where before she struggled with three lines and had someone to scribe for her. She now enjoys getting ideas to write stories. She is very grateful to have her filters.. She can see the TV. and computer well now and no longer bumps into things.

Since having his filters Henry had a dynamic change in his confidence, and reading ability.

In a very short space of time his reading levels doubled.

He was so delighted with his new spectral filters that he ran the length of the playground to show them off. Stress levels have also been greatly reduced as Henry puts his filters on when he wants to calm himself. He said that when he was walking by a road with his filters he now sees only one car when before he saw two.

Since using Irlen filters Owen has seen a definite improvement in his reading, as the words no longer move and wriggle on the page. He also finds writing much easier without the words jumping off the lines. The lines are much more visible for him to see and stay still for him to write on, which has also improved the neatness of his handwriting. Two years down the line Owen has made great progress with his literacy and maths. It has been noticed that his concentration is very much better in class when he is wearing his filters.

I had not found reading very easy but I thought everyone felt the same. In year three, I was lucky to have a trained screener as my TA. She was watching me as I worked and could see it was a struggle. I used to have headaches all the time, feel sick, and by the end of the school day felt drained and looked very pale. I needed seven different coloured overlays to help me and straight away my reading became so much faster and clearer. Reading and bright sunshine are now no longer a problem to me.

I feel more confident and I can swim and ride my bike now. I can see more things, read quicker and my writing is much clearer on everything. I can go up the stairs normally and not on all fours, and get on escalators quicker.



Quiz- Designed to simulate Irlen syndrome, try it! (7)

Write down the first letter of each answer to form the charity motto.

Capital of France

Capital of Italy

Capital of Norway

City of water

Country associated with pasta or pizza

In this fair city the maids are so pretty

Gulf state

9 X 10

Mixture of yellow and blue

Cooked bread

_____ Potter

Tower in Paris

Jumping Arabian mammal

Piglet's donkey friend

365 days

10 + 10

Colour and fruit

Capital of England

Fried, poached or scrambled

William Tell's target

Left and _____

Opposite of yes

Religious live here

Compass point

Mixture of black and white





Screening form - Please return to Reading by Colour (8)



Class name School.....

Name:

Date:

Instructions: Read the questions below with me. Answer to the best of your ability. Each question is personal to you. There is no right or wrong answer. For example, with the question "Do you like reading?" answer what you really feel. If you do not enjoy reading, you can say so.

Section A:

Do you like reading?

If not, can you explain why not?

How long can you sustain reading before your eyes get tired or want to stop?

2-3 mins

5 mins

10 mins

30 mins

1 hour

Why do you stop then?

What happens if you keep going?

When you get to the point when you want to stop:

How do your eyes feel?

How does your head feel?

Do the words always stay nice and clear?

Do the words always stay still?

Section B: Circle round the word that applies to you

yes or no

Do you hang onto the railing going up/downstairs?	yes	no
Do you miscalculate the number of stairs at the top or bottom?	yes	no
Do you bump into furniture or doorways?	yes	no
Did you have trouble with balance when learning to ride a bike?	yes	no
Do you have trouble riding a bike in a straight line?	yes	no
If riding close to the kerb do you hit the kerb?	yes	no
Do you hesitate when getting onto an escalator or feel funny or ill?	yes	no
Do you have difficulty with ball games?	yes	no



C(ii). Physical symptoms

Circle round the word that applies yes no not sure
 At the point when you stop reading:

<u>Do your eyes feel tired or strained?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do they get red or watery?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do they hurt, ache or burn?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do they feel dry, sandy, scratchy or itchy?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you rub your eyes or around your eyes?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you feel tired or drowsy?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Does your head feel different or strange?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you have a headache, or is one coming on?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you feel sick or dizzy?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you squint or frown?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you open your eyes wide to see words?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you blink a lot?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you move closer/further away from the book?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do fluorescent/bright lights make reading harder?</u>	yes	no	not sure

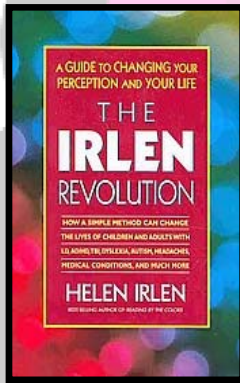
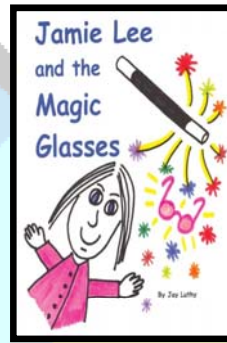
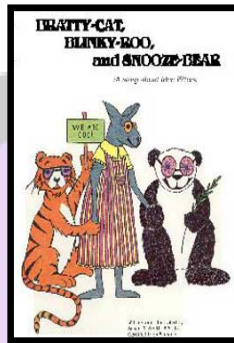
Section D:

When copying do you copy:

one word at a time?	do you lose your place?
more than one word?	do you misspell words?
less than one word?	do you leave out words/lines?



More reading and research (9)



www.readingbycolour.org.uk

www.irlen.co.uk

www.rogerwheaton.com www.amenclinics.com www.readingandlight.com



