



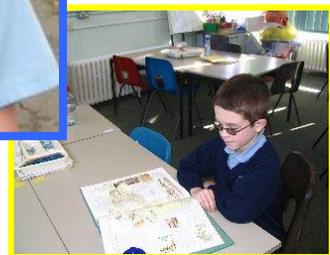
# Introduction to Irlen Syndrome



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



Parental permission obtained



## Guide for professionals

[www.readingbycolour.org.uk](http://www.readingbycolour.org.uk)

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# 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 Charity  
Folkestone Complementary Health Centre  
4 West Cliff Gardens  
Folkestone  
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CT20 1SP**

Telephone us on 020 323 995 96 (skype)  
( Please leave a message if we are unavailable, we will get back to you)

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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 dismissed the teacher as a nervous, high-strung youngster. He was restless, frequently tapping his fingers on the table and wiggling his feet, but he endeavored to work obediently by the table. Arthur seemed to be making a good effort on all the test items, but he worked rapidly and had difficulty maintaining his attention for any length of time. Some factual and knowledge items were noted. Arthur appeared to read at an average level, according to the relative behavior which indicated correct responses, making errors, and vocalizing responses which produced falsely favorable conditions. Arthur appeared considerably more evasive in a job rather than accepting the responsibility for the same. He was quite

Blurry and wash-out

Rubinson and Conway (1988) published a report on significant improvement in subjects using the Leontine method of forward-backward, basic and advanced reading comprehension, reading accuracy, but not in rate of reading. Adde and Wood (1987) evaluated the results of a ten-week program on 23 remedial high school students and 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.



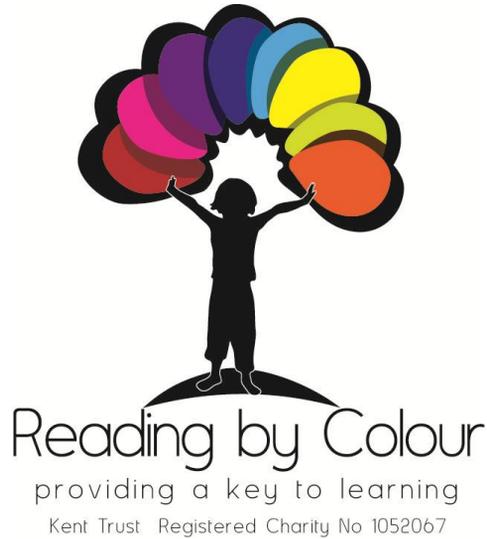
Each individual has their own symptoms and colour needs. The colours must be precise for each person otherwise they will not work efficiently. Filters are not the same colour as the overlays.



**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.



# 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 African 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 you

Entrance 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



<u>Do you have trouble following the ball on TV sports shows?</u>	yes	no
<u>Are you accident prone?</u>	yes	no
<u>When walking do you feel dizzy or light headed?</u>	yes	no
<u>Did you have problems skipping or jumping a rope when younger?</u>	yes	no
<u>Did you have trouble colouring inside the lines?</u>	yes	no
<u>Did you have problems cutting on the lines?</u>	yes	no
<u>Do you feel dizzy on heights or ladders?</u>	yes	no

Instructions: Think about what reading is like when you get to point when you want to stop

**C (i). Effects on reading** Circle round the word that applies      yes      no  
not sure

**When reading:**

<u>Do you skip lines by mistake?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you lose your place?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you misread words?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you skip words by mistake?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you reread the same line by mistake?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you avoid reading or reading out loud?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you tend to read word by word?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Does white or glossy paper bother you?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you take in information you read?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you need to look away or take breaks?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Are you easily distracted/restless/fidgety?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Does reading seem to get worse with time?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Do you use something to keep your place?</u>	yes	no	not sure
<u>Is it difficult to remember what you read?</u>	yes	no	not sure



### **C(ii). Physical symptoms**

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

Do your eyes feel tired or strained? yes    no    not sure

Do they get red or watery? yes    no    not sure

Do they hurt, ache or burn? yes    no    not sure

Do they feel dry, sandy, scratchy or itchy? yes    no    not sure

Do you rub your eyes or around your eyes? yes    no    not sure

Do you feel tired or drowsy? yes    no    not sure

Does your head feel different or strange? yes    no    not sure

Do you have a headache, or is one coming on? yes    no    not sure

Do you feel sick or dizzy? yes    no    not sure

Do you squint or frown? yes    no    not sure

Do you open your eyes wide to see words? yes    no    not sure

Do you blink a lot? yes    no    not sure

Do you move closer/further away from the book? yes    no    not sure

Do fluorescent/bright lights make reading harder? yes    no    not sure

### **Section D:**

#### **When copying do you copy:**

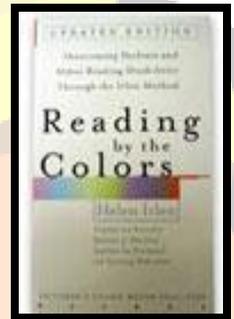
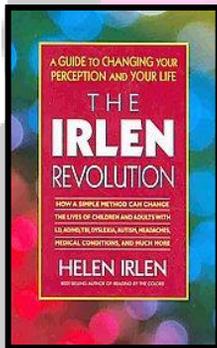
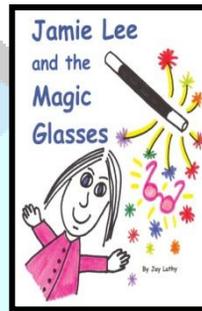
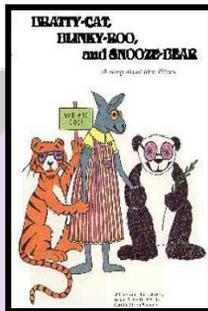
one word at a time? do you lose your place?

more than one word? do you misspell words?

less than one word? do you leave out words/lines?



## More reading and research (9)



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