

# Scotopic Sensitivity (Irlen Syndrome)

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

A variety of problems can result from seeing a distorted page of words, numbers or musical notes or perceiving your environment in a distorted fashion. It can affect reading, writing, spelling, math, copying, reading music, working on a computer, night driving, driving, sports performance, comfort under fluorescent lights, and other areas of a person's life.

### ***LIGHT SENSITIVITY***

Bothered by glare, sunlight, headlights or streetlights. Discomfort or difficulty concentrating or working under bright lights or fluorescent lights. Some individuals become tired, others experience headaches, mood change, fidgety or an inability to stay focused with bright or fluorescent lights.

### ***PROBLEMS WITH WHITE HIGH GLOSS MATERIAL***

Some individuals find that they cannot read as long or with as good comprehension when material is on white paper. The white may be glarey or compete with the black print, making the letters less readable. The same problems can occur with numbers on math pages and musical pages.

### ***INEFFICIENT READING***

Difficulty reading print, numbers or musical notes. Problems may include print that shifts, shakes, blurs, moves, runs together, disappears or becomes difficult to perceive.

### ***SLOW READING RATE***

Inability to read groups of letters, number or words at the same time. This results in problems tracking, slow reading rate, word-byword reading, or an inability to skim and speed-read. Individuals often use their finger or a marker when reading.

### ***ATTENTION DEFICIT***

Problems in concentration while reading, writing, or working on the computer. May have difficulty staying on task, take frequent breaks, become restless, fidgety or tired.

### ***STRAIN OR FATIGUE***

Feeling strain, tension, tired, sleepy, or even getting headaches with reading and other perceptual activities. Strain can interfere with the ease of reading, studying, or even listening.

### ***POOR DEPTH-PERCEPTION***

Problem judging distance and spatial relationships accurately. May be unsure or have difficulty with such things as escalators, stairs, ball sports, or driving..

# What To Look For

## ***SIGNS IN READING***

- Poor comprehension
- Misreads words
- Reads in dim light
- Skips words or lines
- Reads slowly or hesitantly
- Takes breaks
- Loses place
- Avoids reading

## ***COMPLAINTS WHILE READING***

- Strain and fatigue
- Tired or sleepy
- Headaches or nausea
- Fidgety or restless

## ***WRITING CHARACTERISTICS***

- Trouble copying
- Unequal spacing
- Writing up or downhill
- Inconsistent spelling

## ***OTHER CHARACTERISTICS***

- Strain or fatigue from computer use
- Difficulty reading music
- Sloppy, careless math errors
- Misaligned numbers in columns
- Ineffective use of study time
- Lack of motivation
- Grades do not reflect the amount of effort

## ***DEPTH PERCEPTION***

- Clumsiness
- Difficulty catching balls
- Difficulty judging distances
- Additional caution necessary while driving

## CLIENT OBSERVATION FORM FOR IRLEN SYNDROME

Please complete and bring to your appointment. Please print.

Name	Age	Grade
Address	Phone	
Completed by	Date	

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CHARACTERISTICS *Please Circle Answer*

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*Are you light sensitive?*

Bothered by sunlight	Yes	No	?
Bothered by glare	Yes	No	?
Bothered by bright or fluorescent lights	Yes	No	?
Tired or drowsy under bright or fluorescent lights	Yes	No	?
Become anxious under bright or fluorescent lights	Yes	No	?
Get a headache from bright or fluorescent lights	Yes	No	?
Feel antsy or fidgety under bright or fluorescent lights	Yes	No	?
Harder to listen under bright or fluorescent lights	Yes	No	?
Performance deteriorates under bright or fluorescent lights	Yes	No	?
Feel like there is not enough light when reading	Yes	No	?
Feel like there is too much light when reading	Yes	No	?
Read in dim light	Yes	No	?
Use fingers or other marker to block out part of the page	Yes	No	?
Shade the page with your hand or body	Yes	No	?

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*Types of reading difficulties:*

Skip words or lines	Yes	No	?
Repeat or reread lines	Yes	No	?
Read for less than one hour	Yes	No	?
Lose place	Yes	No	?
Read in a "stop and go" rhythm	Yes	No	?
Omit small words	Yes	No	?
Poor reading comprehension	Yes	No	?
Read progressively worse as reading continues	Yes	No	?
Avoid reading	Yes	No	?
Avoid reading for pleasure	Yes	No	?

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*While reading or using a computer, do you:*

Rub eyes	Yes	No	?
Move closer to or further away	Yes	No	?
Squint	Yes	No	?
Open eyes wide	Yes	No	?
Incorporate breaks	Yes	No	?
Move around to reduce glare	Yes	No	?
Close or cover one eye	Yes	No	?
Move head	Yes	No	?
Read word by word	Yes	No	?
Unable to skim or speed read	Yes	No	?

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*Do you feel strain, fatigue, tired, or have headaches when:*

Reading	Yes	No	?
Listening	Yes	No	?
Doing paper and pencil tasks	Yes	No	?
Working on the computer	Yes	No	?
Watching TV or movies	Yes	No	?
Copying material	Yes	No	?
Doing math assignments	Yes	No	?
Playing video games	Yes	No	?
Writing long assignments	Yes	No	?
Doing visually intensive activities like needlepoint, sewing, cross stitching, etc.	Yes	No	?
Working under bright or fluorescent lights	Yes	No	?

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*Handwriting*

Write up or down hill	Yes	No	?
Unequal or no spacing between letters or words	Yes	No	?
Unequal letter size	Yes	No	?
Unable to write on the line	Yes	No	?
Difficulty with scantron answer sheets	Yes	No	?
Leave out words, letters, or punctuation marks	Yes	No	?

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*Attention/Concentration:*

Problems concentrating with reading or writing	Yes	No	?
Easily distracted when reading or writing	Yes	No	?
Easily distracted when listening	Yes	No	?
Daydreams in class	Yes	No	?
Problems staying on task	Yes	No	?
Problems starting tasks	Yes	No	?

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*Copying*

Lose place (book, chalkboard, whiteboard, overhead)	Yes	No	?
Leave out words (book, chalkboard, whiteboard, overhead)	Yes	No	?
Slow (book, chalkboard, whiteboard, overhead)	Yes	No	?
Incomplete (book, chalkboard, whiteboard, overhead)	Yes	No	?
Careless errors (book, chalkboard, whiteboard, overhead)	Yes	No	?
Blink or squint (book, chalkboard, whiteboard, overhead)	Yes	No	?
Difficulty refocusing	Yes	No	?
Difficulty copying things onto computer or typewriter	Yes	No	?

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*Writing:*

Disorganized	Yes	No	?
Problems with punctuation	Yes	No	?
Problems proofreading	Yes	No	?
Leave out letters or words	Yes	No	?
Write without rereading	Yes	No	?

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*Mathematics:*

Misalign digits in number columns	Yes	No	?
Difficulty seeing numbers in the correct column	Yes	No	?
Sloppy or careless errors	Yes	No	?
Use finger, graph paper, or other marker when working with columns of numbers	Yes	No	?
Difficulty seeing signs, symbols, numbers, decimal points	Yes	No	?
Reversals of numbers	Yes	No	?

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*Music:*

Problems sight reading the notes	Yes	No	?
Prefer to memorize rather than read music	Yes	No	?
Prefer to play by ear	Yes	No	?
Use finger to track notes	Yes	No	?
Lose your place	Yes	No	?
Trouble reading the notes	Yes	No	?
Difficulty interpreting the music notations	Yes	No	?
Little progress in spite of regular practice	Yes	No	?

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*Depth Perception:*

Difficulty getting on and off escalators	Yes	No	?
Clumsy	Yes	No	?
Bump into table edges or door jams	Yes	No	?
Difficulty walking up and/or down stairs	Yes	No	?
Difficulty judging distances	Yes	No	?

Drop or knock things over	Yes	No	?
As a child, accident prone or have bruises on your shins	Yes	No	?
When walking next to someone, do you drift into the person	Yes	No	?
When walking, do you feel dizzy or light headed	Yes	No	?
Difficulty getting on or off moving objects	Yes	No	?

*Driving:*

Difficulty parallel parking	Yes	No	?
Do you feel like you will hit the car in front when parking	Yes	No	?
When parking, do you hit the curb or leave too much space	Yes	No	?
Difficulty judging when to turn in front of oncoming traffic	Yes	No	?
Uncertain about making lane changes	Yes	No	?
Extra cautious when making lane changes	Yes	No	?
Are the passengers tense when you make lane changes	Yes	No	?
Do passengers tell you that you tailgate	Yes	No	?
Are you overly cautious, leaving extra room between you and the car ahead	Yes	No	?

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*Sports Performance:*

As a child, problem catching a small fly ball	Yes	No	?
Trouble following the ball when watching sports on TV such as tennis, football or basketball	Yes	No	?
When watching sports on TV, can you follow the ball but not see anything else	Yes	No	?
Difficulty playing pool	Yes	No	?



Difficulty knowing when to hit the ball when playing tennis	Yes	No	?
Trouble learning how to ride a bike	Yes	No	?
Trouble jumping rope? Jump in at the wrong time or jump into the rope	Yes	No	?
Trouble playing games such as volley ball or four square	Yes	No	?
On playground equipment such as rings or bars, was it hard to go from one to the other	Yes	No	?

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#### *Fatigued In A Car*

Become drowsy when you are a passenger	Yes	No	?
Become drowsy when driving	Yes	No	?
Bothered by chrome on cars	Yes	No	?
Bothered by glare off the windshield of the car in front of you	Yes	No	?
Bothered by headlights and street lights	Yes	No	?
Avoid driving at night	Yes	No	?
Have night blindness	Yes	No	?

If you answered yes to three or more of these questions in any **one** of the above sections, then you might be experiencing the effects of a perception problem called Scotopic Sensitivity/Irlen Syndrome.