

## Characteristics

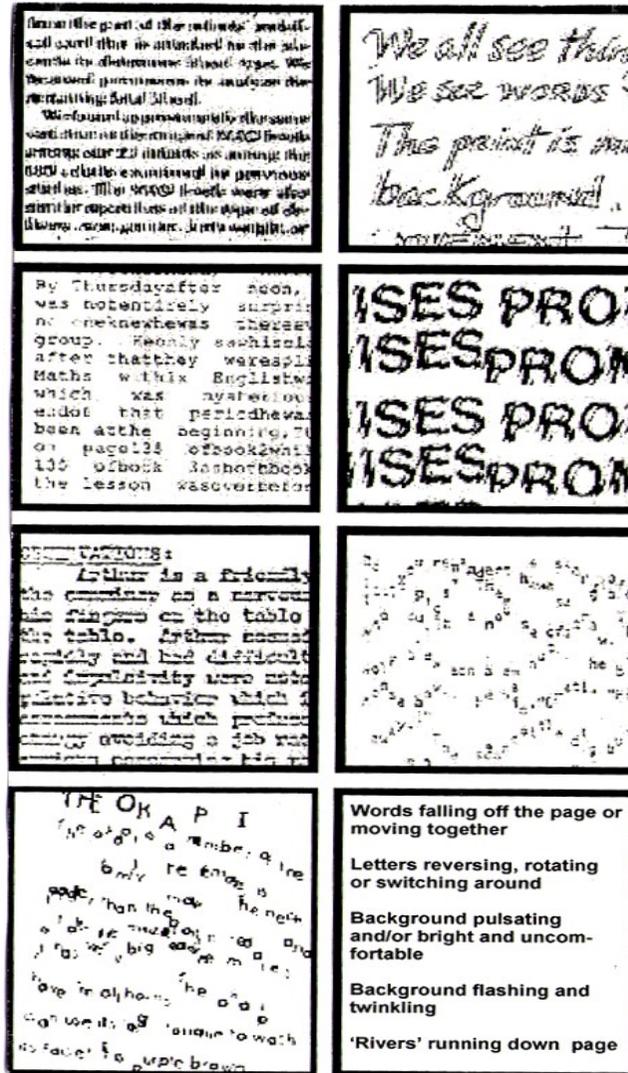
- Degree of symptoms vary from person to person.
- Sufferers may assume that the following symptoms are experienced by everyone. However, these are not 'the norm'.
- Child finds pages too bright
- Eyes get sore when reading
- Headaches during/after reading (including migraines)
- Print moving or blurring
- Non-existent patterns appear on the page
- Tiredness when reading

Any number or combinations of symptoms can be present. These may occur immediately or after a longer spell of reading.

### Look out for these signs when reading:

- Dislikes reading, especially aloud
- Reads slowly
- Poor comprehension
- Rubs eyes a lot
- Frequently loses place
- Misreads/skips words or lines
- Short concentration span/becomes restless
- Prefers a dim light
- Reverses words or letters
- Tires easily
- Moves closer to or away from a page

## What a person who suffers from visual stress might see when reading:



### Additional information

Children may prefer to write on coloured paper rather than white paper.

N.B. School test/exam papers should be printed on white paper if coloured overlays/tinted glasses are used.

## To make changes to the background colour of a PC computer screen and other parts of your display:

### Windows 2010

On the desktop follow the path:

Right click > Personalise > Colours > Accent Colours

This will allow you to make basic colour changes to the start menu, taskbar, action centre, title bars, window borders and change the app mode to dark or light.

### To change the colour in a Microsoft Word (2013 onwards) document only

Go to Design > Page Colour. Choose the colour you want under Theme Colours or Standard Colours. If you don't see the colour you want, select More Colours, and then choose a colour from the Colours box.

### To change the page colour in Microsoft OneNote

If you are accessing OneNote through GLOW Microsoft Teams you can change the page colour by clicking the 'View' tab > 'Page Colour' and choose from the colour palette available.

N.B. this does not affect printing.

## What to do if you think that a child may have visual stress?

- Check if the child wears glasses — if they don't, the ASN co-ordinator/Named Person should ask parents/carers to take them for an eye test at their local optician. The optician will provide parents with relevant information from the test and parents should give this to the school.
- Once the need for glasses has been established (or not), your EAST teacher will conduct the visual stress assessments. N.B. staff are required to undertake training in the identified visual stress assessments before they administer them.
- If appropriate, the ASN co-ordinator/Named Person may refer the child to the orthoptist at the VAROC\* clinic by completing a Request for Assistance form. This is forwarded by the ASN co-ordinator/Named Person to Rose Ford (EAST), who will then forward it on to the VAROC clinic.

*N.B. Generally, testing for visual stress with pupils under 8/9 years can be unreliable. In light of this the VAROC Clinic only accepts referrals for children aged 10 and above.*

\*The Vision & Reading Orthoptic Clinic,  
University Hospital,  
Ayr KA6 6DX

## For further information please contact:

For further information, parents/carers should contact their child's school in the first instance.

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## Further Reading

- [www.essex.ac.uk](http://www.essex.ac.uk) (For the work of Professor Arnold Wilkins)
- Reading Through Colour: How Coloured Filters Can Reduce Reading Difficulty, Eye Strain and Headaches—Arnold Wilkins
- Reading by the Colours—Helen Irlen

## See also:

Nadia Northway  
Visual Stress Clinic  
Dept of Vision Sciences  
Caledonian University  
Glasgow  
G4 0BA



**EAST AYRSHIRE SUPPORT TEAM**

**Information Leaflet**

# Visual Stress



**May also be known as:**

- Meares-Irlen Syndrome (MIS)
- Irlen Syndrome
- Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome (SSS)
- Vision Linked Stress Syndrome (VLSS)