

# Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

## What is Low Vision?

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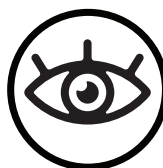


Low vision is reduced ability to see even with regular glasses, contact lenses, medicine, or surgery. Low vision can make everyday tasks, such as reading the mail or writing a grocery list, challenging. For your students, this could mean difficulty seeing assignments, reading textbooks, taking notes, and/or following visual aids. Other difficulties may include reading and interpreting facial expressions and body gestures. About 135 million Americans live with low vision.



### What tasks are difficult for those with low vision?

- Recognizing faces
- Tasks that are "close-up" such as cooking or sewing
- Picking out and matching colors
- Reading street signs and store names
- Everyday tasks around home or school because lights seem dim



### What can I do to help?

Keep in mind that those with low vision often have depression, anxiety, and confusion. Giving additional sensory information to your students with low vision may help to increase their success at school. Two examples might be:

- **SOUND:** Ring a bell to signal lunchtime.
- **TOUCH:** Use letters raised in felt or sandpaper so students learning the alphabet can feel the correct shapes.



### What can I do to compensate?

Several classroom adaptations can help students with low vision cope with the daily tasks in school. These include:

- Using large print
- Preferential seating (front row, good lighting)



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(cont.)

- Making lessons more auditory (audiobooks)
- Reading directions aloud to the student for assignments and tests
- Using computers with enlarged screens and/or fonts

For more information on low vision, contact the

National Eye Institute at:  
National Eye Institute, NIH  
2020 Vision Place  
Bethesda, MD 20892-3655  
(301) 496-5248  
<http://www.nei.nih.gov>

#### **Related Handy Handouts®:**

- [168 – Guidelines for Identifying Visual Perceptual Problems In School-Age Children](#)
- [409 – The Importance of Eye Coordination for Schoolwork and Play](#)

#### Resources

National Eye Institute, U.S. National Institutes of Health. Retrieved September 30, 2008, from <http://www.nei.nih.gov/index.asp>

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