

Descriptions Of What It Is Like For Someone With Irlen Syndrome To Read

These are excerpts from essays written by students of mine during Fall Semester 2007 in answer to the question of what it feels like when they read.

“While reading I don’t experience feelings or sensations. The closest thing to feelings are “How much longer?” or “How many more pages?” After reading for a long period of time the words on the pages all seem to swirl together like the teacups at Disneyland. This causes major headaches and what my mom says is irritability. Very rarely do I get nauseous from reading but sometimes my headaches turn to migraines which does cause nausea.”

“Reading for me is not always easy. I have a hard time remembering what I read, and the longer I read the harder it gets. The words start to get blurry and sometimes move around the page. This tends to make me not want to read. When I am required to read, I usually go up to my room where it is quiet. I have learned that if I read small sections at a time and then make notes, I have a better chance of remembering what I have read.”

“I don’t like my light on bright, so I keep it dim. If it’s too bright, I also tend to get a headache. I can’t read for a long time. When I read for a long time it also makes me get a headache. My eyes start seeing the pages to be blurry.”

“When and if I read for a long time the print in the book gets smaller and smaller until I can’t see them anymore. Since I hardly read anymore this happens earlier in the books. The reading also gives me a slight headache. But this only happens on rare occasions like when I think about what is happening in the book really hard.”

“Reading anything for a long amount of time has always given me the same repeated feelings and sensations. For example, if I was reading a book for more than a couple of minutes, the words on the page would slowly appear smaller. Also, the words would begin to blur, and after a couple more lines, I am unable to read a thing on the page. When things like that occur, the only possible solution I have learned that personally works for me, is to rest my eyes on anything with bright color, such as looking out my window and seeing a colorful garden, and when I get back to the book, everything appears better. Reading for a long amount of time also can cause nausea, occasionally.”

“Teachers have told me that my reading comprehension level is low so I can’t stay interested. When I read for long periods of time I usually get bored and have trouble remembering what is going on in the story because I am too busy thinking of other things. Sometimes when I read for too long I get headaches. My preferred spot for reading is a quiet place where I can concentrate and not be distracted. It also helps if I have good lighting.”