

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

A student with a visual impairment is one whose vision interferes with functioning in a regular school program or, for preschool- age children, in learning tasks. Visual impairment is determined on the basis of a current examination by an ophthalmologist or optometrist.

Instructional Method / Delivery	Accommodations
Discussion / Questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call on visually impaired student by name to participate in discussion. • Make sure everything that is visually displayed is verbally described. • Provide the students with a printed outline so the discussion can be more easily followed.
Independent Worksheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide worksheets to VI teacher in advance to be enlarged, scanned, Brailled, tactually adapted, or put on cassette tape. • Some visually impaired students use laptop computers with screen magnification, screen readers or other voice output tools. Worksheets in an electronic file can be independently accessed with these tools. • Most schools have copiers with magnification capabilities to enlarge the worksheets. Check with student or VI teacher to determine the size magnification needed. • Allow students to work in pairs to complete worksheets. Pair the visually impaired student with a print reader. • Keep the format of the document visually clear and uncluttered. • Some students use a CCTV to view classroom materials. Make sure the copy is clearly and simply formatted for easier viewing.
Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check students IEP to determine the accommodations needed in testing situations. • Provide assessments to the VI teacher in advance to be enlarged, scanned, Brailled, tactually adapted, or put on cassette tape. • The visually impaired student frequently needs extra time (time and a half is considered acceptable) to complete tests. Build this time into the testing schedule. • Tests may be read to the student and/or answers may be recorded by the reader. • Consider the use of oral examinations. • Bubble-in answer sheets are difficult for low vision students to use. Allow student to write or record his answers on a separate sheet. Multiple choice answer sheets are available in Braille from American Printing House for the Blind (www.aph.org).

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Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of tape-recorded instructions is helpful to many blind and lowvision students. • Provide materials in large print, electronic, Braille, or tactual formats. • Consult with the VI teacher to adapt Center activities.
Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be helpful to give the student project assignments as far in advance as possible. Advance notice will allow time for adapting or ordering research or project materials. For example, encyclopedia articles can be ordered in Braille (free) from the ROSE Project at 1- 800-777-8552 (www.seedlings.org). • Have students work in groups. Depending on the abilities of the student, he or she can be the note taker or the typist for the group. • Include sample projects that the student can refer to.
Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports can be given verbally, written, or typed. • Braille readers have better access to research materials via the Internet. Some students use computers with voice output, refreshable Braille displays or screen magnification. • If locally available (media center) print resource items are to be used, consult with the VI teacher about the need for items to be enlarged, scanned, brailled, tactually adapted, or put on cassette tape.
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with VI teacher on any optical devices the student may use to read printed materials. Allow extra time for low-vision readers as they may experience eye fatigue. • Provide information on reading materials in advance to the VI teacher so these materials can be ordered in the appropriate format. • Provide reading materials to the VI teacher in advance to be enlarged, scanned, Brailled, or recorded on tape. • Textbooks and books commonly used in educational settings are available on recorded tapes through Recording for the Blind and Dyslexia (WWW.RFBD.ORG). Students must be registered before ordering texts. • Recreational books in recorded or Braille format can be ordered through the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped(lcweb.log.gov/nls/). This is a free service. Student must be registered before ordering. • The local county library system may have many common texts already on audiocassette.

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Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some low-vision students use dark, bold, or raised lined paper for writing assignments. • Some students use a typewriter or a computer for written assignments. • Braille readers may Braille their assignments and ask the VI teacher to transcribe it into print. Meet with all involved parties to set time lines for the materials to be converted and given to you. • Some Braille readers use an electronic Braille note taker, such as a Braille' N Speak, for written assignments. The assignment is input in Braille and then translated into a print copy for the classroom teacher to grade.
Drawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitute another activity for drawing. For example, making a tactual model or writing a narrative description. • Use a screen board. Tape a piece of screen or coarse sandpaper to a clipboard. Put a thin sheet of paper over the screen; use a crayon to mark on the paper. The crayon marks can then be felt. • Use Wikki Sticks for making simple drawings. • Provide the materials to the VI teacher in advance so an accessible version can be created and made available to the student. Electronic materials can be viewed and annotated/completed.
Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the abilities of the visually impaired student, they can be the note taker, the typist, or the speaker for the group.
Note-taking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually impaired students may take notes on their Brailier, electronic Braille note taker, computer, or may use a cassette recorder. • Any notes written on the board should be said aloud for the visually impaired student. • The visually impaired student should be seated as close to the display as possible. • Keep the information in a visually simple and organized format for all students with visual perceptual difficulties. • Use high contrast writing tools when using the overhead, chalkboard, or dry erase board. • Use of a Smart Board that is attached to the student's or a classroom computer can provide the student with an accessible version of the notes. • Use of a Smart Board with text conversion software would enable the student to access the electronic version of the notes with a screen reading or voice output program.

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Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow the low-vision student to stand next to or beside the presenter.• The presenter should avoid standing with his back to a window or bright light source to avoid glare.• Allow the low-vision or blind child to touch any tactual items being presented either before or during the presentation.• Some students may use telescopic devices for distance viewing. Check with the student.
Computer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure the computer systems to be used by the students visual impairments has the monitor at eye level and it is positioned so the students can view it at close quarters.• Some students need only a small amount of magnification, which may be available on the accessibility menu of the computer.• Some low-vision readers use a screen magnification program to access the computer screen.• Some students with visual impairments use screen readers, text readers, or other voice output devices to provide them information about the contents of the screen• Some Braille readers use a voice output program or a refreshable Braille display to access the computer screen.• Provide headphones to the student so they can more effectively understand the speech output device of their computer by limiting extraneous noise and to limit the distraction experienced by other students from the VI student's computer's constant speech feedback.
<p>* If the accommodations do not seem appropriate for the student, remember to check other disability areas.</p>	