



Published in several of Pat Wyman's books and excerpted from the upcoming book by Pat Wyman, M.A.

*Study Skills Made Easy*

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## **SKILLS NEEDED FOR READING – Their Effect on Reading, Vision and Academic Success**

The following is a list of skills needed for academic success and when you read these, you can truly understand how your child's or students' visual skills are affecting everything they do, including sports.

<b>VISUAL SKILL</b>	<b>EFFECTS ON READING</b>
1. Visual Acuity-the ability to see clearly at near and far distances	Students with poor acuity may have difficulty copying from the chalkboard or overhead; will not do well in sports; have trouble with reading and copying from books to paper.
2. Tracking-the ability to follow a line of print across the page and to fix the eyes on the appropriate point when finished, then begin following the next line; the ability of the eyes to follow a moving object accurately and smoothly.	With poor tracking skills, students may lose their place when reading and read more slowly, often using a marker or their fingers to keep their place.
3. Eye-Teaming or Binocularity-the ability to coordinate and align the eyes together; eye alignment at both near and far distances.	If this skill is not adequate, students may develop either <i>exophoria</i> , which is a tendency for the eyes to deviate outward, or <i>esophoria</i> , a tendency for the eyes to deviate inward. Tires easily, covers one eye.

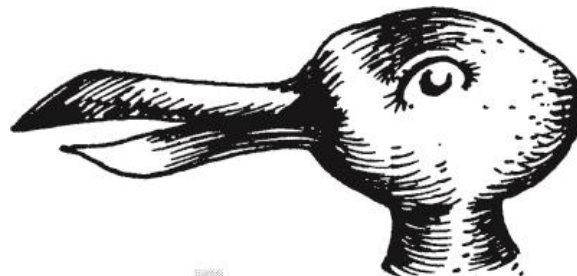
<p>4. Focusing-the ability of the eye to adjust the lens power to provide maximum clarity at various distances; looking quickly from near to far and back again without any blurring or discomfort.</p>	<p>Students with a focusing problem will have trouble copying from a book, chalkboard, or overhead projector, and may work too close to the paper or the book.</p>
<p>5. Convergence and Divergence-the ability of the eyes to turn inward or outward and look at objects close up, then far away, and back again; these skills are closely related to eye-focusing skills; when reading, the eyes must be turned inward toward each other and aimed at the reading task.</p>	<p>Weakens the ability to read for longer periods of time; may reduce comprehension. Students with convergence problems may often try to avoid reading or have a short attention span. May lose their place, omit small words, or confuse small words such as <i>the, that, what</i>, and so on.</p>
<p>6. Eye-Hand Coordination or Visual-Motor Integration-the ability of the vision system to coordinate the information received through the eyes to monitor and direct the hands; essential for handwriting, copying from the board, and in sports.</p>	<p>These students often have poor pencil grip, handwriting, and spacing between words, write up or downhill, and have poor posture.</p>
<p>7. Peripheral Vision-the ability to fixate on an object and be aware of what is around it at the same time.</p>	<p>Poor peripheral vision hinders eye movement from word to word and to the next sentence. Personal safety also involves peripheral vision-for example, bicyclists need good peripheral vision to be aware of oncoming cars.</p>

## **Additional Visual and Visual-Motor Skills**

If the student is visually and perceptually impaired in any way, his or her academic progress may suffer unless the skills are adequately trained. At a minimum, the following skills will determine whether a student is prepared for the demands of the classroom.

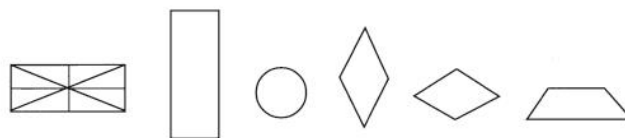
**Directionality** – an important skill for academic success.

In English, we read from left to right, and this visual reflex must be developed. A good measurement of this is to look at the drawing below from Robert H. McKim's *Thinking Visually?*



If the visual reflex is from left to right, a duck will be seen. If it is from right to left, a rabbit will be seen. A student must learn to tell left from right to learn to read. All other directions must be learned also. This is a skill that can be easily taught.

**Form Perception** – the ability to see forms clearly and be able to re-create or copy them. Form perception enables a student to discriminate between likenesses and differences. If a student cannot do this accurately, he or she cannot be expected to perceive letters, words, and sentences accurately, let alone make meaning from what is seen. Without this skill a student may reverse letters or words. Form perception can easily be tested by having a student copy the shapes below.





**Visual Memory** – the ability to recall a visual image. The image may be the symbols that compose the word itself or a picture of what the word depicts. A student will not learn to read or do other classroom work without developing good visual-memory skills.

**Visualization** – the ability to see things in the mind's eye. Many experts believe that the ability to visualize is closely linked to the ability to think. It is the ability to abstract from specifics. For academic success, this ability is essential. Brain research indicates that memory is more efficient when pictures are created and accessed (see page 16).

**Figure Ground** – the ability to separate the primary figure from the background. Students who have difficulty doing this will be unable to find words or objects hidden in background patterns; may appear clumsy, bumping into things; and may not be able to sustain reading for longer periods of time due to the visual stress of separating the print from the background on which it appears.

**Visual Closure** – an interpretive skill that allows a person to quickly identify the difference in similar items and make meaning from them. For example, visual closure is needed to tell the difference between a *C* and an *O*; *that* or *what*, and so on. Students who do not have this ability may see an "o" and think it is a "c."



Discussion	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x				x	x	
Demonstration	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Movies, TV	x	x		x		x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Physical Education Dancing	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Art, Crafts	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Play	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Computers	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	X
Taking Notes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

**For a student to copy a simple sentence from the chalk- board the following skills are involved:**

1. pointing eyes at the chalkboard
2. using figure-ground skills to separate out the material to be copied
3. focusing at a distance
4. coordinating eyes to work together
5. tracking
6. putting the information into visual memory
7. Re-focusing eyes up close
8. pointing eyes up close
9. using figure ground on the page
10. tracking across the page while writing
11. getting information out of visual memory
12. using eye-hand coordination skills

If a student lacks any one of these skills, his or her work in copying is not at the expected levels. He or she may write uphill, have poor spacing, miscopy, leave out words, and so on. More on next page...

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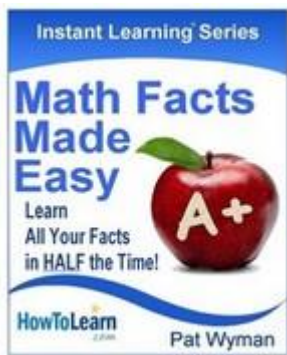
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Reading specialists and many eye doctors have long recommended placing colored overlays (tinted plastic sheets to cover the entire printed page) on your book or over your computer screen to reduce visual stress when reading. Studies show they have increased reading levels by more than a year in just one week! (IMPT – do not use the ruler size overlays –they distort the page for readers who have perceptual problems).

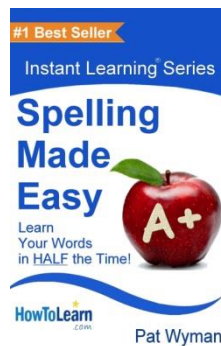
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## Other titles by author Pat Wyman



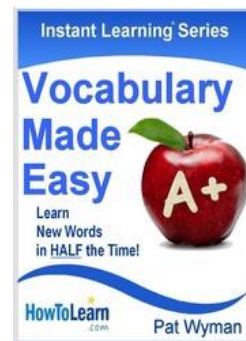
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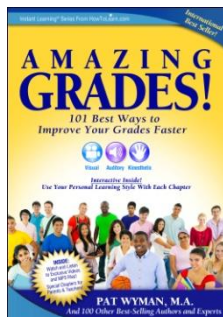
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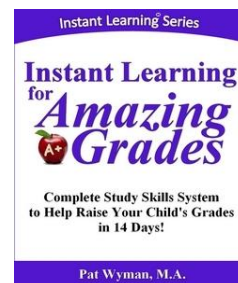


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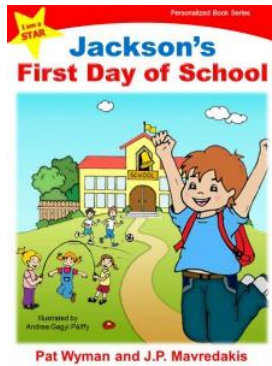
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