

At this time of year, the schools have tests of all kinds for the children. Reading and writing tests, math skills tests, and tomorrow, there will be hearing and vision tests for the whole school. If you think about it, the two last mentioned tests are fundamental; if a child cannot hear or see properly, he will have a very hard time in school. My youngest son had a vision test today with an eye specialist. He had had a reading test the other day that raised a few questions about his eyes. His eyes are very sensitive to the white and black contrast of the print and the paper. It was found that when a blue plastic sheet was put on top of a text, then he could see the words clearly and read properly. This is considered a syndrome of the eye called Scotopic Sensitivity. I had never heard of it. It is a newly found syndrome, apparently. It is so new that some eye specialists don't take it seriously. Well, I bought some blue plastic to help my son read without getting frustrated, and I also made an appointment for a thorough eye test. We arrived at the clinic, where my son was first tested by a nurse. She asked me questions, put drops in Robert's eyes to dilate(2) them, and then left us in a room full of fascinating eye equipment. Robert and I both looked around and wondered how the doctor was going to use the devices(1) that were hanging here and there. Finally, the doctor came in and immediately started testing Robert's eyes. He put one metal device up to Robert's face and asked him to look into it and to tell him what he could see. He did the same with another larger piece of equipment, and wrote down a few things while Robert was talking. It turns out that his eyes are fine, but he is a little far-sighted(3). We become more near-sighted as we mature, so reading isn't such a strain. He gave us the option of Robert having glasses for school, until his near-sightedness develops. Thank goodness there is no real problem with his eyes. It's definitely worth having a test so you know what your options are.

Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary: A device, near/far-sighted, to dilate, parts of the eye: pupil, iris, white, bags, eye lids, eye lashes.

1. A device can be a tool, or a piece of equipment.
2. I have no problem seeing far away because I am far-sighted.
3. The nurse put drops in my eyes to dilate them; his pupils got really big, and they were very sensitive to light for a few hours after that.

4. The fascinating eye has many parts. The pupil is the black center of the eye which regulates the light going into the eye. The pretty colored circle is the iris. This is surrounded by a white area which we just call 'the white of the eye' in English. The eye is protected by the two eye lids. The row of hairs on each eye lid is called 'the eye lashes' which also protect the eye. And if you don't sleep enough, you might get 'bags' under the eyes which are also called dark circles, even though they are actually semi-circles.