Colored Overlays are Approved Accommodations on US State and Standardized Tests

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Colored overlays are listed as an approved accommodation for the SAT and AP exams, as well as most state and standardized tests, reports the Irlen Institute. This allows students with visual processing problems such as Irlen Syndrome and visual stress to use color overlays on US standardized tests.

Colored overlays are transparent colored plastic sheets that come in different colors ranging from yellow to blue and are simply laid over reading materials to help improve reading comfort, clarity, and stability.

These reading accommodations and the theory behind them have been have been studied by many accredited Universities. ?My research studies have identified Irlen Syndrome as a primary reason that students avoid reading and struggle with reading and learning. With the appropriate colored transparencies, college students gained nearly four grade levels in reading and middle school students gained from one year to five years in reading,? reports Dr. France Morrow, Adjunct Professor of Psychology, Washington State University.

Colored overlays help reduce strain and fatigue on the eyes and can reduce headaches. They also have

been shown to improve comprehension, help keep a reader?s place, and allows for faster and longer reading with comfort.

For students who regularly use colored overlays in the classroom to address visual stress and visual processing problems, there are often questions and anxiety about whether they will be allowed to use this assistive technology on state and standardized tests. The use of colored overlays on state standardized tests and college boards is generally allowed, but it is important to check with the specific testing organization to confirm their policies. In most cases, the student must provide documented use of colored overlays in the classroom in the form of an IEP or 504 plan.

If a student needs to use colored overlays during testing, it is important to communicate this need to the testing organization well in advance and provide any necessary documentation or evidence to support the request. The testing organization may have specific procedures in place for accommodating such requests, such as providing the student with colored overlays during the test or allowing the student to bring their own.

Colored overlays can be helpful for individuals with certain visual processing issues, such as Irlen Syndrome, by reducing neurological stress and making it easier to read and comprehend text. Irlen Syndrome is a type of visual or perceptual processing disorder that causes difficulty interpreting visual information. This should not be confused with problems involving sight or vision. When an individual suffers from Irlen Syndrome, their brain has difficulty processing certain wavelengths of light.

The College Board in the United States, lists colored overlays as an accepted accommodation on all standardized tests and college entrance exams, including the SAT and AP exams. See other accommodations offered by the College Board of the United States here: https://accommodations.collegeboard.org/typical-accommodations/other.

Most states offer color accommodations for instruction and assessment. For online/computer assessments, contrast/color choices are available, and for paper-based assessments, colored overlays are available. Most states require that color accommodations be used for both instruction and assessment throughout the year, as well.

It is also important to note that the use of colored overlays may not be a suitable accommodation for all individuals with visual processing issues, and other accommodations such as extended time or an in-person reader may be more appropriate.

To learn more about how to request the use of colored overlays on state or standardized testing, visit your state's appropriate testing website.

About Irlen Institute: Irlen Institute was founded by Helen Irlen in 1983. Since its founding, the institute has helped over a million people worldwide through its comprehensive diagnostic process and innovative technology.

?Our comprehensive diagnostic process is intended to help you gain awareness and understanding of the challenges you have faced, and help you take the next steps in your own future success,? says Sandra Irlen Tosta, Spokeswoman for the Irlen Institute. ?We believe in personalized care and individualized solutions because we know that everyone?s brain is different. We?re proud to say that it is the ability to address these individual differences that makes our solutions so successful.?

To learn more about the Irlen Institute, visit their website or contact Sandra Irlen Tosta at sandy@irlen.com or (562) 496-2550. The Institute headquarters are located in Long Beach, California.

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