



# National Ophthalmic Week

St John Ambulance Australia

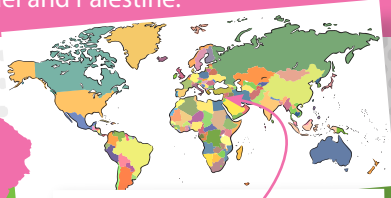
8-12yrs

## St John—helping people in Palestine see

### Did you know...

... that Australia is a very lucky country. In Australia we can easily go to the supermarket and buy good food. We can turn on the tap and have hot and cold water. We can go to the doctor or hospital when we are sick.

Life in some places of the world is much harder than in Australia. In Palestine, a place located in the Middle East (about 17 hours by plane!), many people cannot go to the doctor or a hospital. This might be because the people do not have a lot of money to pay to see a doctor or because it is not safe to go outside of their homes due to fighting between the countries, Israel and Palestine.



Israel & Palestine

### Ahmed's story

Meet Ahmed Elnajar. Ahmed lives in the Gaza Strip in a refugee camp with his parents, two brothers and three sisters. His house is very small and crowded, and it only has two rooms. His father is not working, so there is no money to spend. Sometimes it is hard to buy good food.

One day, Ahmed was out playing with his friends when a stone hit his right eye. After this, Ahmed started having problems seeing clearly. Ahmed's father was worried about Ahmed because the other kids were teasing him at school because he couldn't do his school work and he didn't play sports well anymore. So his father took him to the local eye clinic to see what was wrong. The clinic doctor said that Ahmed had developed a cataract in his eye (we will talk about what cataracts are a bit later). Ahmed then had an operation at the clinic to try and fix his eye, but it didn't work. It didn't look like Ahmed would be able to see properly again. This was very upsetting for Ahmed and his family.

Someone said to Ahmed's father that he should take Ahmed to the St John Eye Hospital because you do not need to pay them and they have helped many people. So Ahmed's father took Ahmed to the St John Eye Hospital to see the doctors and nurses there. Ahmed was told he needed to have an operation straight away. St John's eye doctors took out the cataract that was stopping him from seeing clearly and replaced it with a special lens that would help Ahmed see properly.

### Talking point

Imagine if you couldn't see a doctor or go to the hospital when you needed to? What would you do if you were sick?

In Palestine, many children have health problems, especially with their eyes making it hard for them to see—this is called eye disease and there are many different types of eye problems. A lot of eye disease happens because of health problems like diabetes and not being able to have healthy food. These problems are also made much worse by not being able to see a doctor or go to hospital easily.

Each year, St John Ambulance Australia raises money to support the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. This eye hospital has been around for hundreds of years and it now helps the people living in Palestine who can't pay to see an eye doctor or go to hospital. Nurses from the Hospital even come to the homes of people who can't get to the hospital. This is why your help during Ophthalmic Week matters.



Ahmed

### Ahmed playing soccer after his operation.



### Talking point

Can you imagine what Ahmed's life is like? How is it different to yours?

### Talking point

How do you think Ahmed felt about being teased because of his eye problem?

The operation was a great success! Ahmed can now play with his friends and read and write well at school. Ahmed and his family are very grateful for the help that St John gave them. The St John Eye Hospital has changed Ahmed's life.

## What are cataracts?

Can you imagine looking at the world through a heavily smudged or dirty window? Cataracts can develop because of diseases (like diabetes) or accidents (like getting a chemical in the eye or having an injury like Ahmed's). There are also things that increase the risk of developing cataracts—like smoking, an unhealthy diet and not wearing sun glasses. This is why it is important to always have a healthy lifestyle and diet and keep your peepers shielded from the sun with a good pair of sunnies!



This is what it is like to live with a mild case of cataract blindness. Cataracts can become much worse; they can even cause blindness—a total blackout.

## Activities

### Activity 1—Life with cataracts

You are going to spend a little time learning what it feels like to walk in Ahmed's shoes and live with cataracts.

#### Step 1—Pair up.

#### Step 2—Make your glasses

You and your partner are going to create a pair of special glasses. These glasses are not normal though. They won't help you see better. Instead, they are going to be a bit like looking through the dirty window we talked about before.

Your leader will give you a worksheet for your glasses and they will have some materials available.

Decorate your glasses if you have time. Then cut out the glasses by following the black line. You need to cut out where the lenses would be (the parts of the glasses that you see through). Your leader will give you some clear cellophane. Stick enough cellophane on the back of your glasses (your leader will have glue or tape). This becomes the lens. Do this for both sides.

Your leader will have some Vaseline and black textas. On the front side of your glasses (so that the materials don't get into your eyes), put a few black splotches on the right lens (smudge them a bit), then smear some Vaseline over it. Leave the left lens untouched. Make sure you wash your hands after you have finished!

#### Talking point

When you've finished having turns, your leader will ask you to come back to the big group. Your leader will ask you how it felt to wear the glasses. Your leader will ask you to think about what kinds of things you would stop doing in your life if you had cataracts.

### Step 3—Walking in Ahmed's shoes

Your leader is going to give you a special task (or tasks) that you need to do with your glasses on. When you are completing the task(s), think about what it's like doing the task with and without the glasses.

### Activity 2—What is it like to be vision impaired?

Grab a partner. You're going to have a three-legged race. Your leader will have some bandages ready so that you can tie yourself to your partner. They will also have blindfolds to give you.

The first time, you will have the race without the blindfold. This second time though, you will be blindfolded.

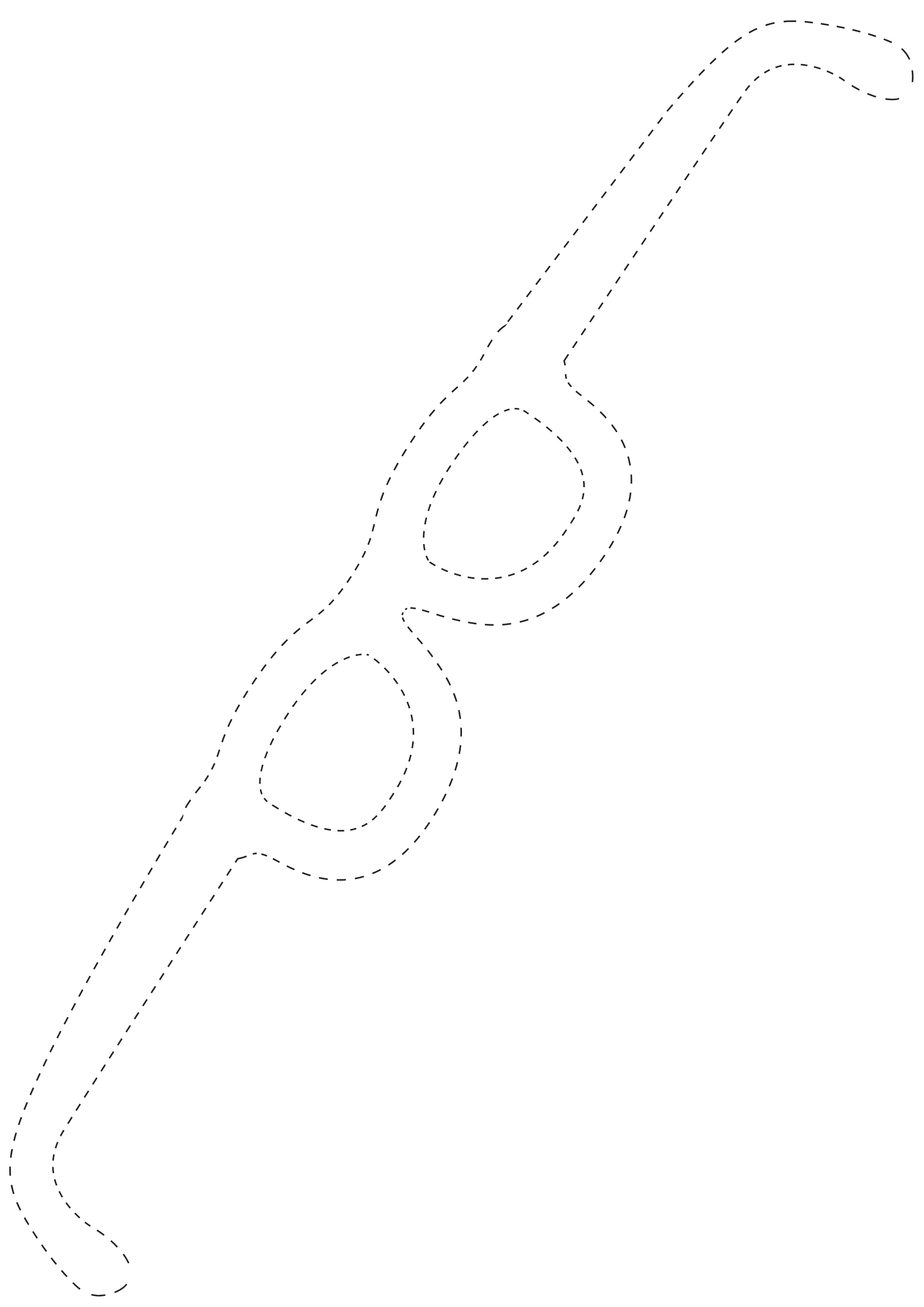
#### Talking Point

What was it like to do the race blindfolded? What do you think it would be like living with total blindness? What things might help a blind person in their day-to-day life? Talk about it in the big group.

**Like this topic? Then why not complete the Eye Health Interest Badge? Talk to your leader about it today!**

#### Bibliography

[http://www.hollows.org.au/Assets/Files/info\\_sheet\\_cataract\\_blindness.pdf](http://www.hollows.org.au/Assets/Files/info_sheet_cataract_blindness.pdf)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intraocular\\_lens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intraocular_lens)  
<http://kidshealth.org/kid/growup/conditions/cataracts.html#>  
[http://www.rsb.org.au/Vision\\_Information/Cataracts.aspx](http://www.rsb.org.au/Vision_Information/Cataracts.aspx)  
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs282/en/>  
Image of cataract vision: Royal Blind Society





**St John—helping people in Palestine see**

***In celebration of National Ophthalmic Week***

## **Trainers' Guide**

**Target audience for course: 8–12 year olds**

## » Icons used

Below is the icon that will be used throughout this Trainers Guide:



This icon will alert you to your tasks as the trainer for this National Ophthalmic Week Workshop.

## » Reading and resources

The National Ophthalmic Week *St John—helping people in Palestine see* resource for ages 8 to 12 will be the main resource used in this short workshop.

## » Duration

The nominal duration of this course is approximately one hour.

## » Equipment

Trainers Guide

Handout (8-12)

Photocopies of the Glasses Template—attached, print as many as you will need for your group

Vaseline/petroleum jelly

Black markers

Textas, stickers, pencils

Clear cellophane

Glue or tape

Scissors

Triangular bandages (enough for one per learner)

# St John—helping people in Palestine see

[8–12]



Read the following introduction to your Juniors.

## Did you know...

... that Australia is a very lucky country. In Australia we can easily go to the supermarket and buy good food. We can turn on the tap and have hot and cold water. We can go to the doctor or hospital when we are sick.

Life in some places of the world is much harder than in Australia. In Palestine, a place located in the Middle East (about 17 hours by plane!), many people cannot go to the doctor or a hospital. This might be because the people do not have a lot of money to pay to see a doctor or because it is not safe to go outside of their homes due to fighting between the countries, Israel and Palestine.



## Ask the juniors to think about and answer the following question:

Imagine if you couldn't see a doctor or go to the hospital when you needed to? What would you do if you were sick?

In Palestine, many children have health problems, especially with their eyes making it hard for them to see—this is called eye disease and there are many different types of eye problems. A lot of eye disease happens because of health problems like diabetes and not being able to have healthy food. These problems are also made much worse by not being able to see a doctor or go to hospital easily.

Each year, St John Ambulance Australia raises money to support the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. This eye hospital has been around for hundreds of years and it now helps the people living in Palestine who can't pay to see an eye doctor or go to hospital. Nurses from the Hospital even come to the homes of people who can't get to the hospital. This is why your help during Ophthalmic Week **matters**.



**Explain** to the Juniors that you are going to read them a story about Ahmed, a young boy in Palestine who needed some extra special help from eye doctors at the St John Eye Hospital.

## Ahmed's story (case study)

Meet Ahmed Elnajar. Ahmed lives in the Gaza Strip in a refugee camp with his parents, two brothers and three sisters. His house is very small and crowded, and it only has two rooms. His father is not working, so there is no money to spend. Sometimes it is hard to buy good food.



## Ask the Juniors to think about and answer the following question:

Can you imagine what Ahmed's life is like? How is it different to yours?

One day, Ahmed was out playing with his friends when a stone hit his right eye. After this, Ahmed started having problems seeing clearly. Ahmed's father was worried about Ahmed because the other kids were teasing him at school because he couldn't do his school work and he didn't play sports well anymore. So his father took him to the local eye clinic to see what was wrong. The clinic doctor said that Ahmed had developed a **cataract** in his eye (we will talk

about what cataracts are a bit later). Ahmed then had an operation at the clinic to try and fix his eye, but it didn't work. It didn't look like Ahmed would be able to see properly again. This was very upsetting for Ahmed and his family.

Someone said to Ahmed's father that he should take Ahmed to the St John Eye Hospital because you do not need to pay them and they have helped many people. So Ahmed's father took Ahmed to the St John Eye Hospital to see the doctors and nurses there. Ahmed was told he needed to have an operation straight away. St John's eye doctors took out the cataract that was stopping him from seeing clearly and replaced it with a special lens that would help Ahmed see properly.

The operation was a great success! Ahmed can now play with his friends and read and write well at school. Ahmed and his family are very grateful for the help that St John gave them. The St John Eye Hospital has changed Ahmed's life.



### **Talking point**

How do you think Ahmed felt about being teased because of his eye problem?



## What are cataracts?



### Ask the Juniors to think about the following question:

Can you imagine looking at the world through a heavily smudged or dirty window? (ask the Juniors to refer to their worksheet and look at the following picture)



Then **read** the following:

Cataracts can develop because of diseases (like diabetes) or accidents (like getting a chemical in the eye or having an injury like Ahmed's). There are also things that increase the risk of developing cataracts—like smoking, an unhealthy diet and not wearing sun glasses. This is why it is important to always have a healthy lifestyle and diet and keep your peepers shielded from the sun with a good pair of sunnies!

## Activity corner

### Activity 1—Living with cataracts



In the following activities, the Juniors are going to spend a little time learning what it feels like to walk in Ahmed's shoes and live with cataracts and to be vision impaired. **Explain** the following activity to them.

#### Step 1—Pair up

Instruct the Juniors to partner up. This is an activity for pairs. You might need to allocate pairs depending on your group.

#### Step 2—Make the glasses

The Juniors are each going to create a pair of glasses. These glasses are not normal though and will not help Juniors to see. Instead, they will imitate the dirty window mentioned above.

Handout the glasses worksheet. You will need:

- textas/markers/pencils
- scissors
- clear cellophane
- Vaseline/petroleum jelly
- black markers
- glue or tape

Ask the Juniors to decorate their glasses (time permitting), and cut them out following the black line. They will need to cut out where the lenses would be and then paste some clear cellophane on the inside to become the lenses.

Ask the Juniors to put a few black splotches on the right lens and smudge it. This needs to happen on **the front side of their glasses** (so that the materials don't get into their eyes), then smear some Vaseline over it. Leave the left lens untouched.

#### Step 3—Walking in Ahmed's shoes

Give the Juniors a special task (or tasks) that they need to do with their glasses on. Choose from the list below or create your own tasks:

- tying shoe laces
- making a vegemite sandwich
- reading a passage out of the Junior Handbook to a partner
- counting money
- playing a game of soccer (use the Ophthalmic Week beach ball)
- bandaging an ankle



- making a sling.



### Group Discussion

When the Juniors have finished having turns, ask them to come back to the big group. Ask the Juniors how it felt to wear the glasses. Get the Juniors to think about what kinds of things they would stop doing in their life if they suffered from cataracts.

## Activity 2—What is it like to be vision impaired?

Ask the Juniors to pair up. They are going to have a three-legged race.

You will need:

- several triangular bandages (so they can tie themselves to their partner).
- more triangular bandages (as blindfolds).

The first time, Juniors will race without the blindfold. This second time they will be blindfolded.



### Group Discussion

You might ask the following questions of the Juniors:

- What was it like to do the race blindfolded?
- What do you think it would be like living with total blindness?
- What things might help a blind person in their day-to-day life?



### Conclusion

Give the class 30 seconds to think of something they have learnt in today's class and ask them to report back.

Make sure they recall all topics between the participants. If they miss a topic, ask them specifically. (Topics that should be covered: Palestine, St John Eye Hospital, cataracts, living with a visual impairment.)

### Other activity ideas

Got a bit more time on your hands? Then why not:

- Have someone from the Guide Dog Association visit your group to explain how guide dogs are trained and what they are for
- Ask a representative from Vision Australia or the Fred Hollows Foundation in your area come and speak to your group about the work they do
- Ask an optometrist or ophthalmologist in your area to come and speak to your group about eye health.

*Like this topic? Why not consider completing the Eye Health Interest Badge in your Division?*

### Bibliography

[http://www.hollows.org.au/Assets/Files/info\\_sheet\\_cataract\\_blindness.pdf](http://www.hollows.org.au/Assets/Files/info_sheet_cataract_blindness.pdf)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intraocular\\_lens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intraocular_lens)  
<http://kidshealth.org/kid/grownup/conditions/cataracts.html#>  
[http://www.rsb.org.au/Vision\\_Information/Cataracts.aspx](http://www.rsb.org.au/Vision_Information/Cataracts.aspx)  
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs282/en/>  
 Image of cataract vision: Royal Blind Society