

**Vision Australia Education Kit:
AusVELS Year 9**

A Sensory Experience: Blind Perspectives

This education kit is designed to provide activities for students that complement the Culture Victoria films 'Hidden From Sight' and 'In A Seeing World', and to fit in with parts of the Year 9 AusVELS criteria. Each activity is arranged around a theme taken from the films and links to further resources are provided where required.

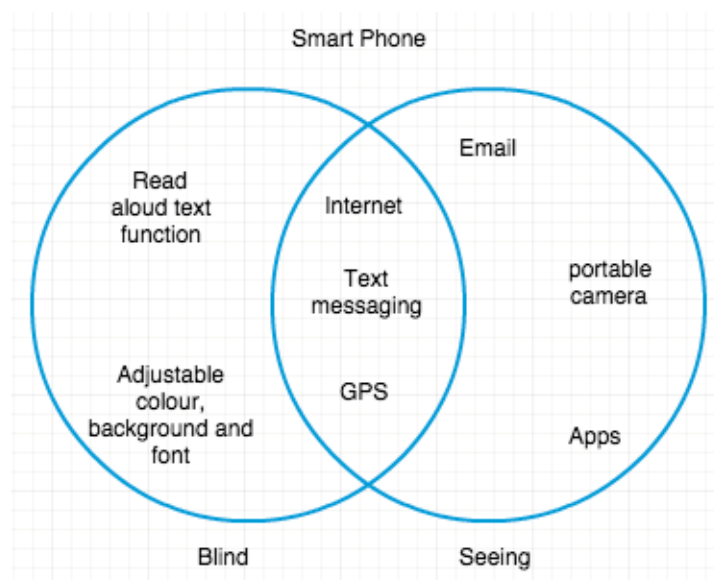
Theme: Technology

Advancements in technology have vastly changed the lives of people who are blind or have low vision. Using these films, students will discover some of the ways in which technology has improved the lives of people who are blind or have low vision, and will learn about the ongoing relationship between accessibility and technology.

Activity: Venn diagram brainstorm

In pairs or small groups students are asked to come up with a list of new technologies (eg. smart phones, GPS navigation, tablets) and the reasons these have made their own lives easier. They are then asked to create a second list of new technologies that have helped to improve the lives of people who are blind or have low vision. Students should then compare lists as a whole class and develop Venn diagrams to show how some of these technologies have improved the lives of both people with normal seeing abilities and those who are blind or have low vision.

Example using smart phones:



Students should discuss the advantages and disadvantages of such technologies, including the issue of affordability and accessibility.

Case Study: Accessibility functions

Students are asked to enable the accessibility functions on a piece of technology of their choosing – iPhone, iPad, smart phone, computer – and to produce a step-by-step guide on how to enable and use these settings for someone who has low vision or is blind. This guide should then be presented to the class.

Resources:

Culture Victoria Films: Hidden From Sight & In A Seeing World

<http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/a-sensory-experience/hidden-from-sight/>

<http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/a-sensory-experience/in-a-seeing-world/>

Essay: 'Eyes on Access: A Shared Vision', Maribel Steel

<http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/a-sensory-experience/eyes-on-access/>

Mac Apple accessibility

<https://www.apple.com/au/accessibility/ios/>

Word accessibility

<https://support.office.com/en-au/article/Hear-selected-text-read-aloud-ce9fb073-2a4d-44d2-95f7-6a532f0ab112>

Key AusVELS content:

This activity fits in with Level 9 Information and Communications Technology.

Information and communications technology:

Students build on skills developed in previous levels to share ideas with the teacher and others through a range of electronic communication means such as email, contributing to forums and SMS messaging. Students expand their skills in locating information on websites by using general and specialised directories. They refine their searching techniques to get more precise results by using within suitable search engines, proximity operators, which specify where one term in a document must appear in relation to another term. They develop knowledge and understanding about the ethical use of ICT through practical experience, observation of their own and others' behaviour, and by researching strategies for protecting vulnerable users from accessing or receiving unwanted information from the Internet.

Theme: Advocacy

There are many aspects to advocacy for blind and low vision people. These films explore some of the ways in which organisations like Vision Australia and government legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Act, have helped advocate for the rights of people who are blind or have low vision. These films also raise questions around the responsibilities of those who are blind or have low vision toward being their own advocates, and the role of society generally in enabling this form of self-advocacy.

Activity: Write and perform a play

Students are asked to write and perform a play using a situation where a blind person is being interviewed for a job. This play should have two outcomes:

1. The employer is apprehensive about how a blind person will fit into their workplace, but after exploring different options, including incorporating new technology and making changes to workplace practices, they employ the blind person successfully.
2. The employer is not willing to facilitate change or accommodate the blind person, citing too many obstacles and the blind person does not get the job.

In each scenario students need to highlight at least three obstacles and solutions to these obstacles. In the case of the blind person not getting the job, students should refer to the Disability Discrimination Act website and explain how the employer is illegally discriminating against the blind person.

Resources:

Culture Victoria Films: Hidden From Sight & In A Seeing World

<http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/a-sensory-experience/hidden-from-sight/>

<http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/a-sensory-experience/in-a-seeing-world/>

Essay: 'Eyes on Access: A Shared Vision', Maribel Steel

<http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/a-sensory-experience/eyes-on-access/>

Disability Discrimination Act Australia

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/guides/brief-guide-disability-discrimination-act>

Vision Australia Human Rights Statement online

<http://www.visionaustralia.org/about-us/who-we-are-and-what-we-do>

Key AusVELS Content:

This activity fits in with Level 9 Civics and Citizenship and Communication.

Civics and Citizenship:

Students investigate the nature and history of the concept of human rights. They become aware of national and international legislation designed to protect those rights. They explore human rights issues at the national and international level, including an investigation of the human rights of ATSI communities and other groups within Australia.

They explore key elements of modern democracy, such as the origins, purposes, objectives and constituencies of political parties, and the characteristics and operation of the electoral system. Students consider the ways that these allow citizens to participate in governance and how well these elements support democratic principles and values. They consider other processes for influencing the views and actions of others; for example, through participation in organisations such as unions, environmental and other interest groups. They consider the role of the media in a democratic society and the importance of a free press.

Communication:

Students explore the relationship between language and power. As their understanding of this concept develops, they apply their understanding when developing their own presentations.

Theme: Vision Australia

Vision Australia is a non-profit organisation providing blindness and low vision services in Australia. After viewing these films, looking through the historic images and reading the accompanying essay, students are asked to review the history of Vision Australia and some of the challenges the organisation and people who are blind or have low vision have faced in the past. Looking at the way the organisation has grown and changed over time should give students an insight into the lives of people who are blind or have low vision.

Activity: Timeline and digital story

Students are asked to create a timeline of events based on the history of the organisation, and to illustrate the timeline using some of the historic images on the Culture Victoria website. They should also include parallel events occurring within Australian history for wider historical context.

Students can then create a short digital story exploring one aspect of this history, such as the foundation of the Braille Library, Matilda 'Tilly' Aston, the general history of Vision Australia or a comparison history of how people who are blind or have low vision lived then and now. Students should make sure their presentations are also accessible for people who are blind or have low vision.

Resources:

Culture Victoria Films: Hidden From Sight & In A Seeing World

<http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/a-sensory-experience/hidden-from-sight/>

<http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/a-sensory-experience/in-a-seeing-world/>

Essay: 'Eyes on Access: A Shared Vision', Maribel Steel

<http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/a-sensory-experience/eyes-on-access/>

Culture Victoria Historical Images

<http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/a-sensory-experience/>

Vision Australia website

<http://www.visionaustralia.org/>

Encyclopedia of Melbourne

<http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM01567b.htm>

[Living in a sensory world exhibition](#)

<https://www.visionaustralia.org/about-us/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/our-history/living-in-a-sensory-world-exhibition>

Matilda 'Tilly' Aston

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/aston-matilda-ann-5078>

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0416b.htm>

Key AusVELS content:

This activity fits in with Level 9 History.

History

The content provides opportunities to develop historical understanding through key concepts, including evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy, significance and contestability. These concepts may be investigated within a particular historical context to facilitate an understanding of the past and to provide a focus for historical inquiries.

Theme: Reflection

After watching these films students should have a much clearer idea of the challenges people who are blind or have low vision have faced in the past and how changes in technology, as well as organisations like Vision Australia, have improved their lives. This final section asks students to review the information in these films, as well as the historic images, essays and information gathered online, to think about some of the challenges and obstacles faced by people who are blind or have low vision today.

Activity: In depth study

After reviewing the films and historic images, students are asked to investigate one of three topics in depth:

- Employment – *why do people who are blind or have low vision face employment issues?*
- Education – *what are some of the challenges that people who are blind or have low vision face in regards to access to education?*
- Independent travel – *How would a person who is blind or has low vision travel to your school? What are some of the challenges they would face?*

Students can present their findings in a variety of ways including:

- an essay
- a slideshow presentation
- a poster
- a digital story
- an illustrated map

Resources:

Culture Victoria Films: Hidden From Sight & In A Seeing World

<http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/a-sensory-experience/hidden-from-sight/>

<http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/a-sensory-experience/in-a-seeing-world/>

Essay: 'Eyes on Access: A Shared Vision', Maribel Steel

<http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/a-sensory-experience/eyes-on-access/>

Google Map Maker

<http://www.google.com.au/mapmaker>

Map creation tools

<http://elearningindustry.com/the-5-best-free-map-creation-tools-for-teachers>

Key AusVELS Content:

This activity fits in with Level 9 Civics and Citizenship and Science.

Civics and Citizenship:

Students investigate the nature and history of the concept of human rights. They become aware of national and international legislation designed to protect those rights. They explore human rights issues at the national and international level, including an investigation of the human rights of ATSI communities and other groups within Australia.

They explore key elements of modern democracy, such as the origins, purposes, objectives and constituencies of political parties, and the characteristics and operation of the electoral system. Students consider the ways that these allow citizens to participate in governance and how well these elements support democratic principles and values. They consider other processes for influencing the views and actions of others; for example, through participation in organisations such as unions, environmental and other interest groups. They consider the role of the media in a democratic society and the importance of a free press.

Science as a Human Endeavour:

- *Students explore how scientific understanding is contestable and refined over time through a process of review by the scientific community*
- *Advances in scientific understanding often rely on developments in technology and technological advances are often linked to scientific discoveries*
- *Advances in science and emerging sciences and technologies can significantly affect people's lives*