

Half of world population will be short-sighted

24th February, 2016



Researchers predicted in a new report published in the journal *Ophthalmology* that by 2050, half of the world's population will be short-sighted. The medical term for this condition is myopia. It is also known as near-

sightedness. It is when we have difficulty focusing on objects that are far away from us. The researchers say that around 4.8 billion people will suffer from myopia. This is a seven-fold increase in cases from 2000 to 2050. Sixty years ago, around 15 per cent of the Chinese population was short-sighted. Now, almost 90 per cent of Chinese teenagers and young adults have trouble seeing faraway objects. A recent survey found that up to 95 per cent of teenagers in South Korea are near-sighted.

The researchers said they could not pinpoint definite reasons for this phenomenon and say it could be a combination of factors. They did say that looking at computer screens and mobile phones could be a leading cause. Researchers said the sudden rise in myopia may be linked to "lifestyle changes resulting from a combination of decreased time outdoors and increased near-work activities". Science journalist Sarah Zhang said, "spending time outdoors, especially in early childhood, reduces the onset of myopia". Professor Kovin Naidoo, a co-author of the report, offered some advice. He said: "You could spend a long time reading computers and screens, but also spend two hours outdoors."

Sources: *ScienceAlert.com* / *Wikipedia.org* / *Treehugger.com*

Writing

Short-sightedness is worse than far-sightedness. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

researchers / journal / short-sightedness / medical / focusing / population / survey / reasons / combination / factors / outdoors / science / journalist / childhood / advice

True / False

- Researchers said half the world would be shortsighted within 10 years. T / F
- The medical name for near-sightedness is myopia. T / F
- Around 4.8 billion people will be short-sighted by 2050. T / F
- Almost half of South Korean teenagers are near-sighted. T / F
- Researchers say the rise in short-sightedness is only due to computers. T / F
- Researchers say spending less time outdoors affects our eyesight. T / F
- A journalist suggested children should spend more time indoors. T / F
- The report's co-author said people needed to spend 2 hours outdoors. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. predicted | a. occurrence |
| 2. term | b. distant |
| 3. objects | c. exact |
| 4. faraway | d. name |
| 5. found | e. main |
| 6. definite | f. discovered |
| 7. phenomenon | g. particularly |
| 8. leading | h. forecast |
| 9. especially | i. guidance |
| 10. advice | j. things |

Discussion – Student A

- How good is your eyesight?
- What do you think of wearing glasses?
- Which are better, glasses or contact lenses?
- What do you think about what you read?
- Do you think scientists will be able to cure myopia?
- Why are people from some countries more short-sighted?
- What problems does near-sightedness cause?
- What problems does far-sightedness cause?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. The medical term for this | a. for this phenomenon |
| 2. focusing | b. seeing faraway objects |
| 3. This is a seven- | c. childhood |
| 4. have trouble | d. condition is myopia |
| 5. 95 per cent of teenagers in South Korea | e. rise in myopia |
| 6. pinpoint definite reasons | f. of factors |
| 7. it could be a combination | g. are near-sighted |
| 8. the sudden | h. outdoors |
| 9. especially in early | i. fold increase |
| 10. spend two hours | j. on objects |

Discussion – Student B

- Why do you think more and more people have failing eyesight?
- Are you worried about your eyesight worsening?
- Do you spend too long looking at screens?
- Would it be easy for you to spend more time outdoors?
- Should children be made to spend more time outdoors?
- How good is your lifestyle for your eyes?
- What other things are affecting our eyesight, besides screens?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Spelling

- published in the auonljr Ophthalmology
- The dImceai term for this
- have difficulty ugncofis on objects
- This is a vnsee-lodf increase
- have trouble seeing wyraaaf objects
- A recent esvury
- they could not pinpoint entifeid reasons
- it could be a bcntonioiam of factors
- eliltsyef changes
- Science tnloiajrus
- calipeslye in early childhood
- spend two hours souoodtr

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. j	4. b	5. f
6. c	7. a	8. e	9. g	10. i

Role Play

Role A – Babies

You think babies are the best things to look at. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these to look at (and why): the sky, movies or art.

Role B – The sky

You think the sky is the best thing to look at. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these to look at (and why): babies, movies or art.

Role C – Movies

You think movies are the best things to look at. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these to look at (and why): the sky, babies or art.

Role D – Art

You think art is the best thing to look at. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these to look at (and why): the sky, movies or babies.

Speaking – Look

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things to look at at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| • babies | • flowers |
| • tropical fish | • movies |
| • the sky | • art |
| • kittens | • mountains |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.