LESSON GUIDE

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DESCRIPTION

The Big Apple--packed sidewalks, crowded subways, speeding taxis--millions of people racing in a million different directions, all at once. Getting around can be a physical and mental challenge even for the average person. Now close your eyes. This production is a documentary about friendship, love, adventure, and discovery. It's an intimate portrait of two young blind New Yorkers who daily embrace this city. Jamil (26) and Tamesha (24) met in fourth grade. Aided by Jamil's guide dog, they demonstrate everyday courage in a city that often doesn't "see" them. The co-directors, Amy Sewell and Catherine Fenton Bernath, call this film a "visual poem, not a pamphlet" and refer to Stevie Wonder's words that "just because a man lacks the use of his eyes doesn't mean he lacks vision."

BACKGROUND INFOMATION

People primarily learn through their visual sense, with some experts saying that 85% of learning comes from this sense. The absence of vision dramatically limits a child's or adult's understanding of his or her world, and the impact of a visual loss can be profound. When vision is diminished or distorted because of a visual impairment, the world's images are altered and the perception of those images is changed.

There are some who believe people with visual impairments have extraordinary senses of smell, taste, and touch. This is a misconception. All of us have the ability to efficiently use all of our senses to explore our environment and to make sense of our world--if only we are taught and encouraged to use them.

The child who is sighted is able to immediately decode his/her environment at a glance. However, the child who is blind or visually impaired must build his/her understanding of the object or scene through a combination of sensory input, instructional material adaptations, and assistive technology.

This resource guide will assist educators in creating a new understanding for sighted children that people who are blind or visually impaired are really more like them than they are different. It will open new avenues to understand the impact of blindness on all aspects of daily life and the capabilities of people who are blind or visually impaired.

VOCABULARY

1. Blind
2. Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP)
3. Long Cane
4. Guide Dog
5. Orientation and Mobility (O&M)
6. Low Vision
7. Independence
8. Stereotype
9. Prejudice
10. Brave
11. Courageous
12. Braille

SENSITIVITY AND SENSORY AWARENESS

Overview

What is blindness? The term blindness is used in reference to people who have no sight at all as well as those whose sight is so seriously impaired their vision cannot be corrected to 20/20. And blindness doesn't always mean total darkness. Many people who are considered blind have some light or object perception, which helps them when moving from place to place.

Other people who are called blind have some useful vision, but it is limited; they may not be able to drive a car, read regular print, or see the scenes on the screen at a movie theater. These people are considered to have low vision. In the classroom, these students might not be able to read the chalkboard from a distance, read the computer screen, or read regular print books without adaptable aids.

Eye care professionals use the term 20/20 to express normal visual acuity measured at a distance of 20 feet. If you have 20/20 vision, you can see objects at 20 feet the way you are supposed to see them. However, if you have 20/200 vision, you must be as close as 20 feet to see what a person with normal vision can see at 200 feet.

People are considered to have low vision if their acuity with corrective lenses is 20/70 or worse. They are considered legally blind if their visual acuity is 20/200 or less with the use of a correcting lens, or they have a 20 degree diameter (or less) of their field of vision. Legal blindness is based on corrected vision and is used for eligibility to certain programs by the federal and state government. So, you can see how someone could be legally blind and still have useable vision.

Vision Simulation Test

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED:

one 22 x 28 inch sheet of white poster board
several sheets of tracing paper
string or 10 pairs of shoelaces, 10 inch lengths
five pair of scissors
wax paper
one clear plastic bag
bubble plastic (available in mailing supply stores)
red and black markers
several containers of white glue
pencil/pens
scotch tape

Set-Up:

Explain to students that they will be making the simulators in two steps. In the first step, they'll prepare the basic form. In the second step, they'll fill in the eye openings.

- Make photocopies of the blindfolds and the patterns for the three types of low vision simulators.
- Using tracing paper under these copies, trace patterns on poster board. Trace two outlines on each pattern.
- Cut poster board apart with a traced outline on each section.
- Assemble all materials in a room with adequate work space. Distribute two traced outlines to be cut out, scissors, and four pieces of string or shoelaces to each participant.

Step One, Basic Forms

A. Cut out traced outlines. Cut only on solid lines. Cut out any eye openings shown. Cut tabs down to dotted line.

B. Fold tabs all in the same direction on the dotted line. Overlap tabs slightly and tape in place with scotch tape. Overlapping tabs will hold simulators off the face a little so that good hygiene will be maintained and infectious eye diseases will not be communicated.

C. Pierce holes and tie strings to sides of simulators.

When everyone has completed the above directions, tell the group that they will be making different kinds of low vision simulators and blindfolds, and they need to follow your directions carefully.

Step Two, Simulators

Using Simulators to Explain Cataracts

Two simulators are needed, with both eye openings cut out.

A. Crumple and smooth out a small sheet of wax paper.

B. Cut four pieces of wax paper roughly an inch larger than the diameter of eye openings.

C. Glue pieces of wax paper to back of simulators covering the whole eye opening.

D. Write CATARACTS on front of simulators.

Using Simulators to Explain Macular Degeneration

A. Use the two simulators with one large eye opening and a smaller circle inside for macular degeneration.

B. Cut two pieces of clear plastic bag roughly an inch smaller in diameter than eye opening. Tape to the center of clear plastic so that there is only a rim of clear plastic to see through.

C .Write MACULAR DEGENERATION on front of simulators.

Using Simulators to Explain Glaucoma

A. Use the two simulators with one small eye opening for glaucoma.

B. Cut two pieces of clear plastic.

C. Glue plastic to back of simulators covering eye opening completely.

D. Write GLAUCOMA on front of simulators.

Discussion:

The simulators should give us the general impression of these eye conditions:

- General blurring is caused by cataracts.
- Tunnel vision is caused by glaucoma.
- Vision only around the edges is caused by macular degeneration.
- Blindness is simulated by the blindfolds. However, most people with vision problems have some usable sight.

Learning Activities

- Discuss with your students what they think blindness means. Simulate impaired vision with them, providing them with the materials to make poster board vision simulators. We don't want to emphasis limitations or lack of vision, but speak about what has to change with adaptations and learning styles for people who are visually impaired.

- Discuss what is needed for people like Jamil and Tamesha to have access to instructional materials, games, and community life. Be willing to invite community members who are blind or have low vision to discuss how they adapt and use skills to be active in their home, school, and work environments. Use the Blindspot "What is Alike and What is Different Venn Diagram?"**.**

- Discuss the eye conditions represented by the simulators. Have the students make a list of various eye conditions and research them through the Internet and library. One to include is Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP). Jamil was a premature infant, and his eye condition is ROP.

- Discuss eye acuity measures**.** Which is a more significant visual loss--acuity of 20/70 or 20/200? Why? Ask your school nurse to visit your class with his/her eye chart.

- Have your students work in teams of two. One should wear the simulators, while the other observes and assists. Then reverse their roles. Have them wear the simulators while attempting some common daily activities (e.g., reading a book or newspaper, pouring water from a pitcher to a cup, putting toothpaste on a tooth brush, completing a dot-to-dot picture, building a puzzle, taking notes from the blackboard, making a paper clip chain, making a sandwich, and wrapping a present). Ask the students how it felt to have to adapt to new situations, to identify problems they encountered while using the simulators, and to develop solutions.

- Discuss how Jamil and Tamesha enjoyed creating pottery. Ask your students to brainstorm what kind of adaptations may be needed for other hobbies. Have your students watch the ESPN Beep Baseball video at www.espn.go.com/swf/eticket/beep/beep.html. Contact the national office and find if there is a team in your area www.nbba.org/. Have students make contact with a Beep Baseball player and interview him/her.

- Read *Hailstones and Halibut Bones* to your students. This book of poetry about the colors of the spectrum will provide a new look at the wonders of color in our world. Go beyond naming colors. Ask your students to paint pictures that show how people use color to communicate meaning or

feelings describing the descriptions of the colors. Ask them to write a story about how their favorite colors look and feel.

- Invite a person who is blind or visually impaired to visit your classroom to talk with your students about the use and care of his/her guide dog. Use the guide dog etiquette section to the "Sensitivity to Blindness and Visual Impairment Solution Guide."

- Ask students if they know about description on videos for blind and visually impaired viewers. Explain that description is extra narration added to a video that translates images into spoken words. Watch Blindspot with description on the Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) Web site. Students can close their eyes or be blindfolded during this viewing. Do the students think description would help viewers who are blind? As sighted persons, do they like hearing the description?

- Ask students if they know about captioning for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. Blindspot is also captioned. Watch Blindspot with captions on the Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) Web site. There are children and adults in the world who have both a vision loss (needing description) or a hearing loss (needing captions). Some people have both a vision and hearing loss (usually described as deaf-blind) and need both captioning and description.

MEET AND GREET A PERSON WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Overview

Blindspot tells the story of two young adults living in New York City who have aspirations to live a fulfilling life. Jamil and Tamesha have similarities and differences in their approaches to reach this goal. Their aim is to be independent and an integral part of their community. They tell their stories of who they are, what they want to achieve, the challenges faced by people with visual impairments, and how to overcome accessibility barriers and enjoy the common pleasures of life.

Jamil and Tamesha challenge the viewing audience to look at them as people like anyone else, as opposed to seeing them as two blind young adults. They invite us to understand who they are and the many ways they are changing society's views about people who are blind or have low vision.

Learning Activities

- Connect Jamil and Tamesha's world to your students' own life experiences. Have students use the "Blindspot Community Experiences Chart" provided in the guide and write their observations during the video presentation. Exchange ideas by either pushing pause or waiting until the end.

- With students in groups, divide the vocabulary words and have them go to the library or to the Internet and research the terms. Students could write the definitions and revisit Blindspot to decide where they see and hear that word being used in the movie. Students should use the "Blindspot Community Experiences Chart" as a guide to their work.

- Have your students read books with story characters that are blind or have low vision and give a report to the class. Use the new DCMP Children's Literature Featuring Characters Who Are Blind or have Low Vision.

- Have your students watch the educational DVD *What Do You Do When You See a Blind Person?* and a YouTube video from the Texas A&M students: *Greeting and Interacting With a Blind or Visually Impaired Individual* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P368_AsiMkA
  Discuss the stereotypes they see in the films, and brainstorm better ways to make everyone feel welcome.

- Ask your students to research the types of adaptations or inventions that have been designed so people who are blind or visually impaired are able to enjoy independence. Invent America! is a national contest for designing inventions. Have your students think of inventions that might make the life of blind and visually impaired people easier. Contact your principal for more information about the contest.

- Discuss the unique travel and orientation skills of people who are blind or visually impaired. Along with using the long cane or guide dog to travel, these people use a technique called the "sighted guide," whereby a person with sight serves as a guide to a person who is blind. (See the Sighted Guide Techniques below).

- Call your local school district to ask for an Orientation and Mobility (O&M) specialist to visit your class to show sighted guide techniques, a variety of long canes, and optical devices that are designed for indoor and outdoor orientation skills development.

- Introduce the topic of being sensitive to all people's needs. Discuss what it would be like if their friends ignored them, felt uncomfortable around them, or treated them differently. Hints for discussion:

  The next time I meet a blind person, I will...
  When I meet someone different than myself I will now...
  What has the story of Jamil and Tamesha taught you?
  What does courage mean to you?

Sighted Guide Techniques

• Tell your students to always identify themselves verbally to the person who is blind or visually impaired to offer sighted guide assistance.

• If their assistance is wanted, allow the person who is blind or visually impaired to reach for their arm. Start by tapping the back of their hand against the hand of the person they are guiding. The person will then take hold of their arm just above their elbow.

• Relax and walk at a normal pace. Remind them to stay one step ahead of the person who is blind or visually impaired, except at the top or bottom of stairs or when crossing the street. At these places, stand alongside the person being guided, and then begin to walk one step ahead.

• Explain what is coming, e. g. "stairs up or stairs down." At doorways the guide goes first.

• Have your students work in teams of two. One child should be blindfolded, and the other should act as the sighted guide. Make sure they reverse the roles. A good way to experience the sighted guide technique is to have them tour the school area. As they walk, have the child under blindfold locate places by smell, touch, or hearing (e.g., cafeteria, gym, art room, etc.). Adult supervision should be available at all times. Watch for stairs and curb drops.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you would like to invite a person who is blind or visually impaired to your school, contact the American Council of the Blind, the National Federation of the Blind, and the U.S. Association of Blind Athletes. They will provide information about their local community chapters and activities.

AFB CareerConnect offers mentor connections throughout the country. There may be a mentor available in your area. These experts can discuss the unique skills of a guide dog for the blind, the safe and effective techniques of cane travel, the importance of literacy and reading Braille, and general topics like living to your full potential with blindness.

Also, your class can learn about how children who are blind or have low vision are taught. To arrange a visit from a teacher of the visually impaired (TVI) from your community, call your school district's special education department or call the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER). They will be able to explain more about teaching children with visual impairments and assistive technology.

VIDEO RESOURCES

All of America can watch Blindspot on YouTube. Or, parents and teachers not wishing to visit YouTube may watch it on the Described and Captioned Media Program Web site:

- Described version
- Captioned version

The educational video *What Do You Do When You See a Blind Person?* is a humorous look at myths and misconceptions about people who are blind or visually impaired. It is available with or without audio description and captions for $49.95 through AFB Press at www.afb.org.

Have your students watch an ESPN story online and discuss what is alike and different with the game of Beep Baseball and the typical game of baseball. www.espn.go.com/swf/eticket/beep/beep.html

Enjoy the informative YouTube Video *Greeting and Interacting With a Blind or Visually Impaired Individual* for some quick pointers. www.youtube.com/watch?v=P368_AsiMkA

DIRECTORY LISTING

The organizations listed below will provide additional information about visual impairments, Braille awareness, and sensitivity to people with visual impairments.

American Council of the Blind (ACB): www.acb.org
American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) CareerConnect: www.careerconnect.org
American Printing House for the Blind (APH): www.aph.org
Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER): www.aerbvi.org
Described Caption Media Program (DCMP): www.dcmp.org
National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI): www.spedex.com/napvi/
National Beep Baseball Association (NBBA): www.nbba.org
National Federation of the Blind (NFB): www.nfb.org
U.S. Association of Blind Athletes (USABA): www.usaba.org

FACT SHEETS AND BOOKS

Children's Literature Featuring Characters Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision

O'Neill, M. (1961). *Hailstones and Halibut Bones*. New York: Delacorte Press

"Sensitivity to Blindness and Visual Impairments Solution Guide" (attached)

SUPPLIES

- Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) Division 7 makes and sells low vision simulator goggles. The cost is $30 each or $125 for a set of five. Contact Marshall Flax, Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired, 754 Williamson Street, Madison, WI 53703, (608-237-8107)

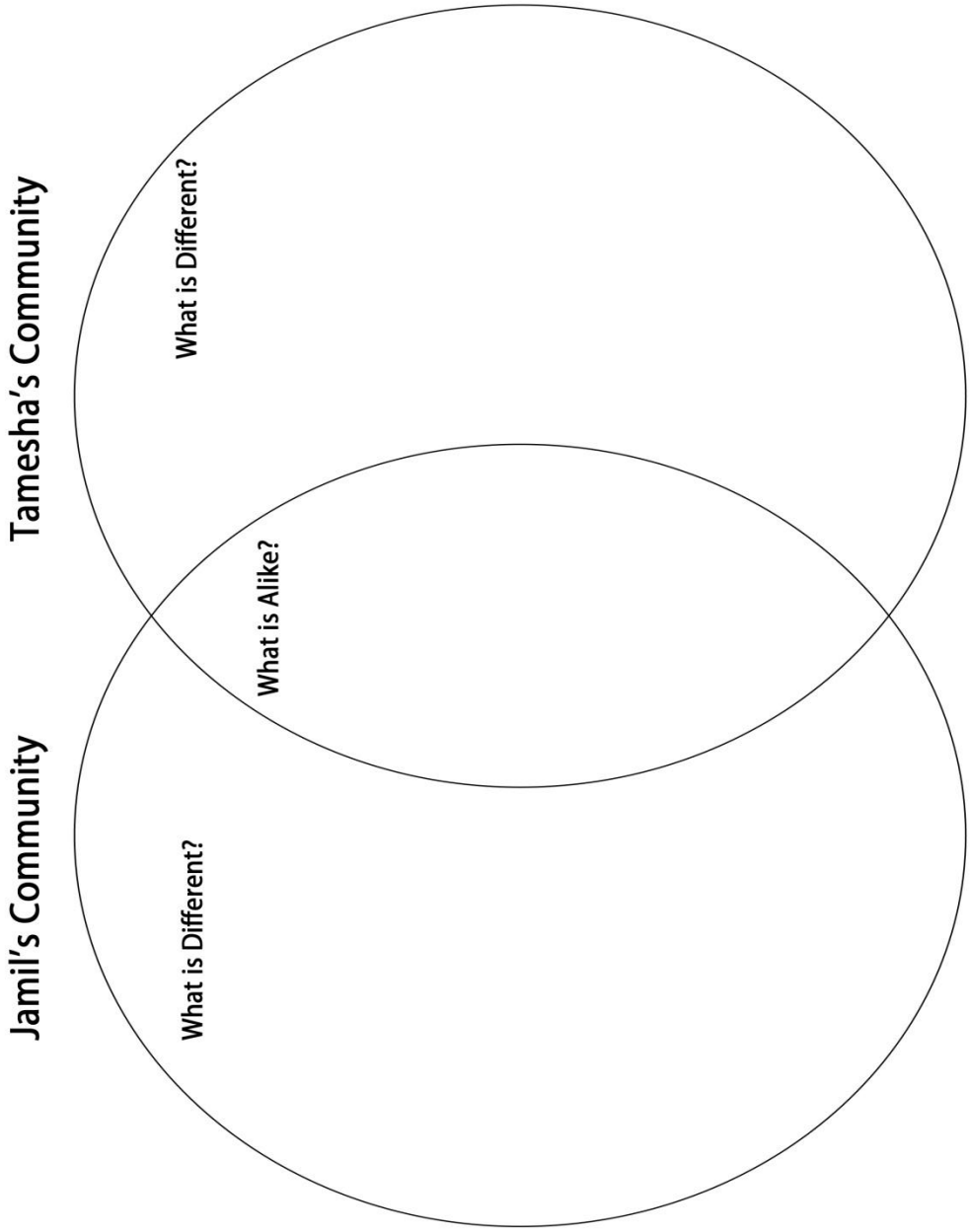
- National Industries for the Blind offers plastic Eye Simulator Cards for free. Contact them at 1310 Braddock Place, Suite 200, Alexandria, Virginia 22306 (703-310-0356) CMcGuirk@nib.org. By putting the card to your eye, visual conditions from several eye diseases are simulated.

- National Beep Baseball Association offers Beep Baseball equipment resources. www.nbba.org/equipment.htm

BLINDSPOT | What is Alike and What is Different?

Venn Diagram

Jamil's and Tamesha's life experiences in New York City are alike in some ways and different in other ways. Complete the Venn diagram below to show the similarities and differences between the two experiences of our new young friends. Compare these notes with your own lifestyle and that of your classmates.



SOLUTION GUIDE

What Are The Basic Points People Should Know About People Who Are Blind Or Visually Impaired?

Speak directly to visitors who are visually impaired, not through a companion.

Words such as "look" and "see" are appropriate as they are a part of everyday language.

Tell the person you are extending your hand to shake his/her hand.

Speak about a person with a visual disability by referring to the person first and then to the disability (a person who is blind).

What Should People Know About Sighted Guide Technique?

Identify yourself to offer sighted guide assistance. First, ask the person if they would like sighted guide assistance.

If your assistance is accepted, allow the person you are guiding to reach for your arm. To do so tap the back of your hand against the hand of the person you are guiding. The person will then grasp your arm directly above the elbow.

Relax and walk at a comfortable normal pace. Stay one step ahead of the person you are guiding, except at the top and bottom of stairs and to cross streets. At these places, pause and stand along side of the person you guide. Then resume travel by walking one step ahead of the person you are guiding. Always pause when you change directions, step up or step down.

To guide a person who uses a long cane, do not interfere with the cane's operation.

It is helpful, but not necessary, to tell the person you are guiding about changes in terrain, stairs, narrow spaces, elevators, and escalators.

As you move through the room, let the visitor take your arm. Keep your arm in a relaxed "L" shape near your body or down by your side. Remember--someone who is visually impaired will be following the motion of your arm, so try to avoid jerking or swinging motions.

While moving through the room, let the visitor know which direction you will be taking (to the right or left). Someone who is visually impaired will not know where "over there" is if you are pointing.

When you stop to look at an object, let the visitor know that you are stopping.

When you are ready to proceed, let the visitor know to take your arm.
Don't let a congested location deter you from that location. Simply let the visitor know if you will be moving through "traffic."

Should you be called away, tell the visitor where to wait and when you will return.
If you are not sure whether a blind person needs help, JUST ASK!!

What Should People Know About Dog Guides?

If the visitor is accompanied by a dog guide:

Ask the dog guide's name.

Dog guides are working dogs, **so don't pet them or feed them**.

Some people will permit you to pet their dog when he/she is not working and the harness is off, but it is important to ask.

What Do People Need To Know About Describing Objects?

85% of all learning comes to people through visual communication.

To describe an object:

Think about what you would want to know about an object.

There is no "right" way to describe information--so relax!!

If you can, place the object in the visitors hand or place his/her hand on the object.

Start by saying what the object actually is and then add descriptions (color, shape, size, etc.).

Use everyday language.

Don't worry about the exact size of an object.

Use good descriptive terms such as fire engine red, sunshine yellow, and soft pink.

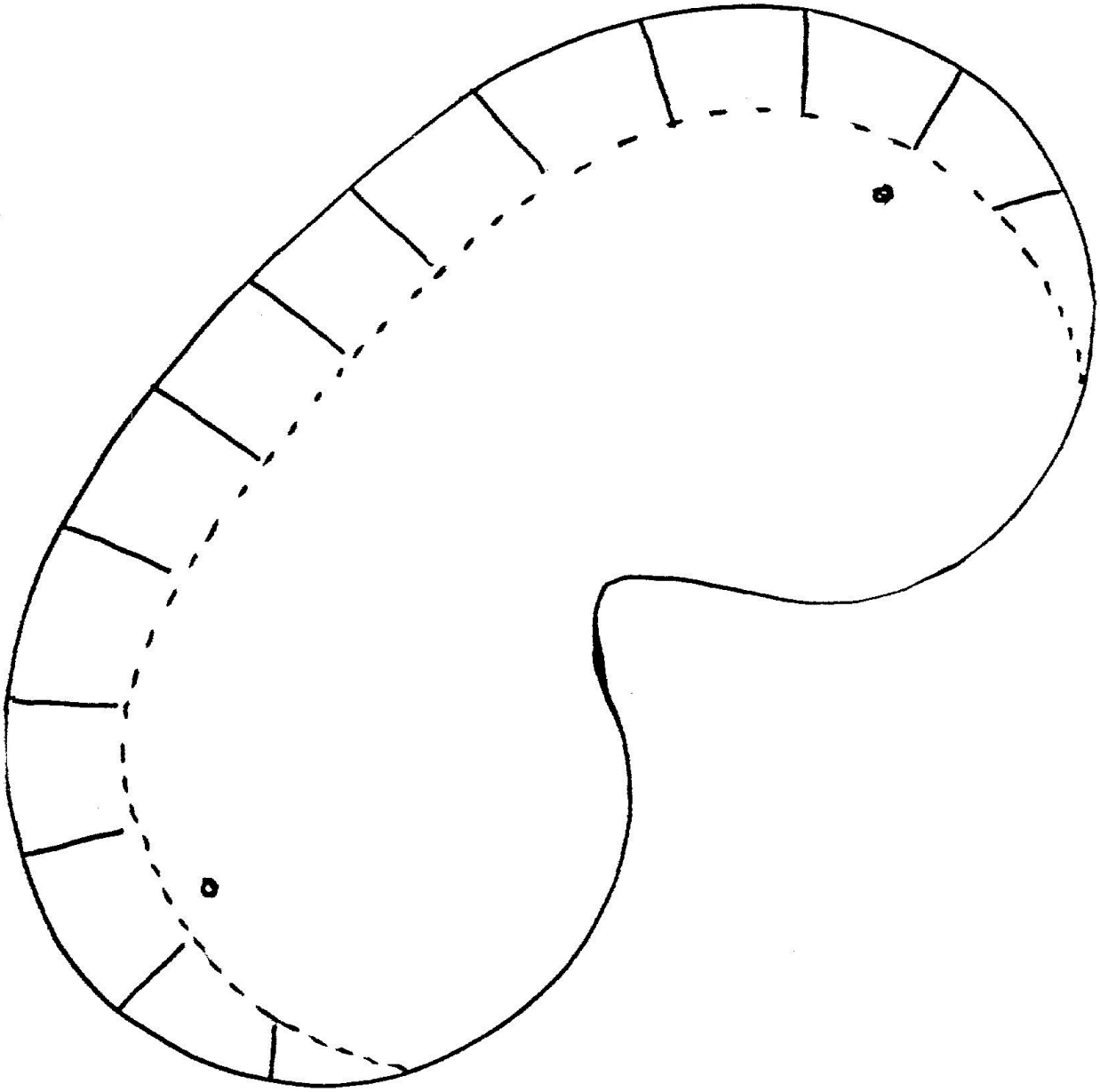
Words such as "look" and "see" are appropriate as they are a part of everyday language. Ask yourself--would I be able to picture this object based on the description I just gave?

BLINDSPOT | Community Experiences

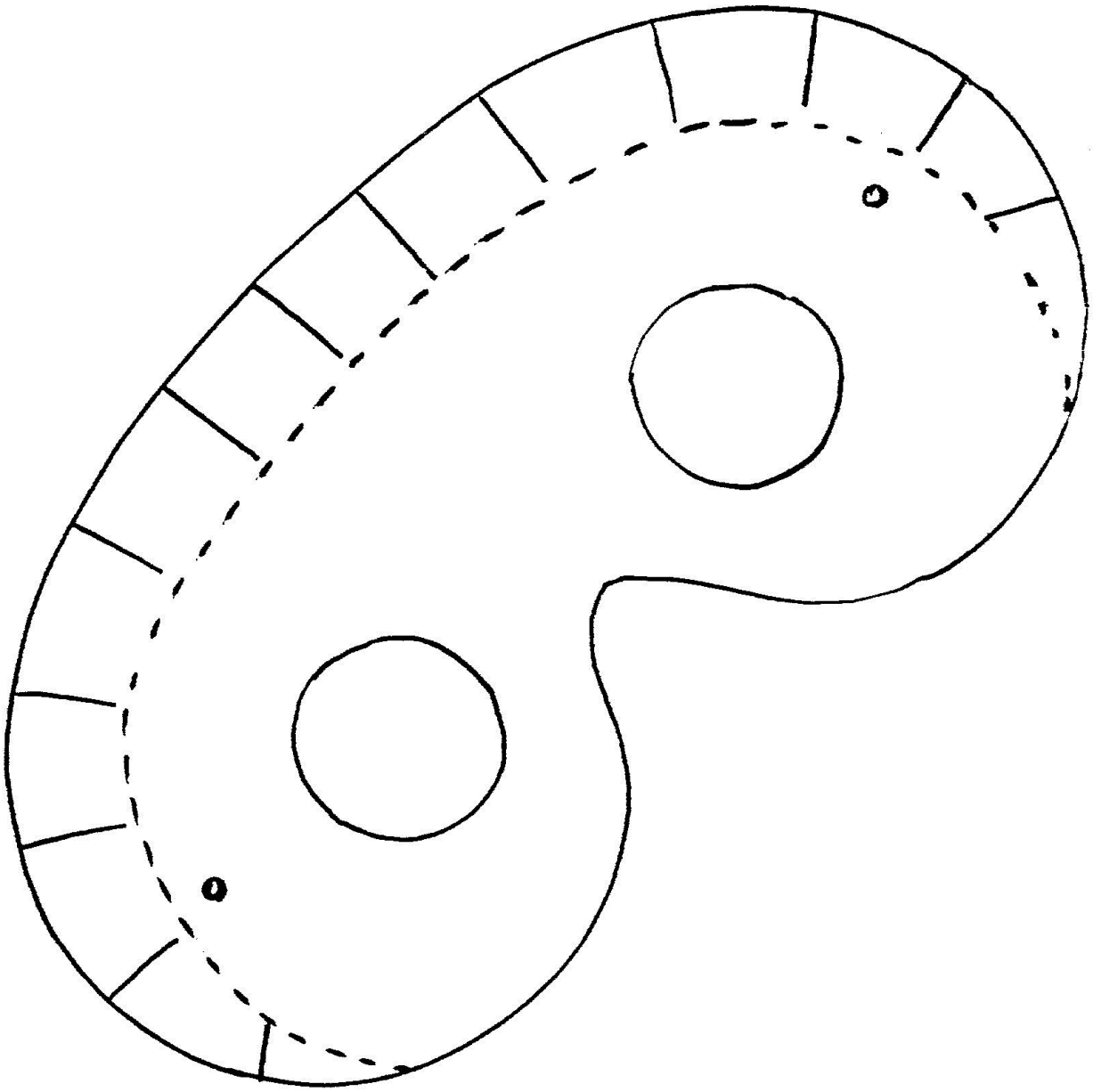
Use this handout to take notes on what you learned about Jamil's and Tamesha's community.

	Jamil	Tamesha
Messages They Live By		
Reading and Writing Skills Used		
Travel and Mobility Skills Used		
Activities They Take Part in During Their Day		
Technology, Books, and Devices Used		
Their Friends and/or Families		
Other		

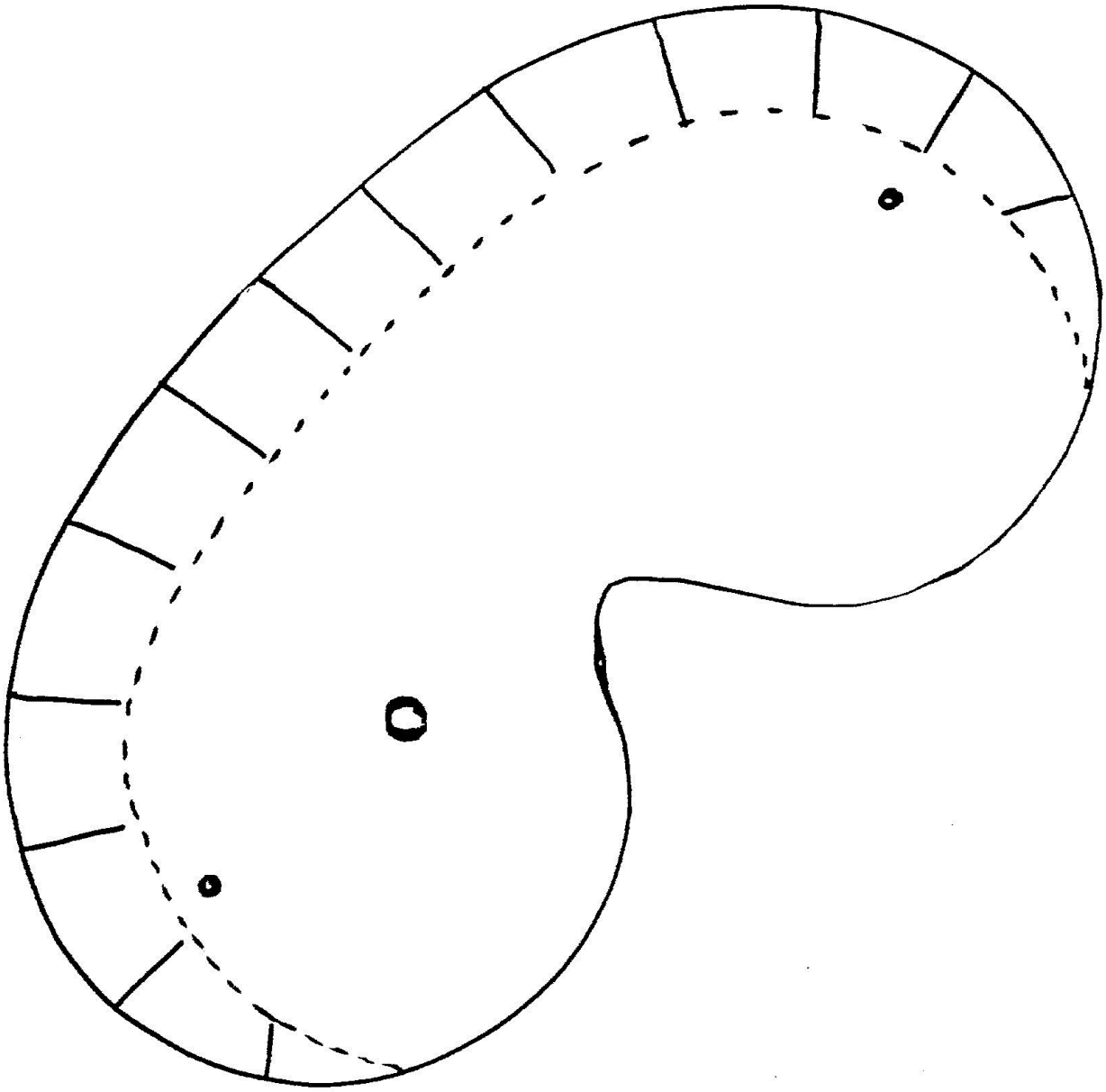
BLINDSPOT | Pattern For Total Blindness Simulator



BLINDSPOT | Pattern For Cataract Simulator



BLINDSPOT | Pattern For Glaucoma Simulator



BLINDSPOT | Pattern For Macular Degeneration Simulator