

# INTRODUCTORY LESSON AND EXERCISE FOR STUDENTS: ALL LEVELS

## Describe what you think it's like to be blind or visually impaired?

### TEACHERS:

**Lead with questions to have students describe:** how they'd get around, how they would find things (at home and even their classrooms at school, as well as how they'd be treated by others (would it be any different?)

### TEACHERS:

You can either break your students down into groups/teams where you assign them one of these 3 scenarios, or have the class discuss all of them together.

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

We are all familiar with our own homes: the layout, how to get from room to room, where things are stored, etc. We're used to getting around without a problem.

### Now, imagine that you had an accident and lost your eyesight.

- **Scenario I:** Imagine you've been invited to sleep at a friend's house. *What would you need your friend to tell you once you got there so that you would feel comfortable?*
- **Scenario II:** You're invited to a party. You're choosing which clothes to wear. *How will you know what you're choosing?*
- **Scenario III:** You go to the supermarket to buy a few things. You need to get 2 cans of tuna fish, a large Italian bread, spaghetti, and paper towels. *How will you know what item you're holding in your hand so you're sure you're buying the right thing? When you get to the cash register, how will you know how much money you're handing the cashier?*

### TEACHERS:

ONCE your students have discussed these 3 scenarios, here are some interesting facts for them to be aware of:

### "THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!"

### Did you know that there are several apps that blind people use to solve problems?

- **Choosing clothes:** Did you know you can often tell what piece of clothing you have in your hand by the texture of the fabric? If you know you've only got one pair of denim jeans, you'll be fine. However, if you've got jeans in 5 colors, how will you know which pair is the color you'd like to wear? There's a color identifier app you can use to identify the color of a piece of clothing.
- **Buying items in a supermarket:** If you wanted to make a shopping list of the items you'd like to buy you can type the information into your phone and an app can read it aloud to you. Once you're at the store, and you aren't sure what item you're holding, don't worry, because, "There's an APP for that!" There's an app which can identify objects from a photo. You take a picture of the item, and the app identifies what it is, and speaks out loud. You won't have to worry that you needed to buy two cans of tuna fish, but you bought two cans of cat food instead.
- **Identifying money so you can pay for items:** Again, thankfully we live in modern times! There is a money reader app that identifies currency and speaks aloud, telling you what bill is in your hand (example: "Five U.S. Dollars.")
- Even students who aren't yet drivers are aware of GPS Navigation apps (ex: Waze) that "speaks" and tells us exactly how to get somewhere.
- Other examples that visually impaired people use to navigate a route with a guide dog include using landmarks. These include counting street crossings, children on a playground, the smell of a bakery, a sidewalk that slants or has a slope. Obviously, there are many examples. Can you think of others?

