Name _____

Reading in the Dark

NOTE: *This reading is a transcript adapted from a podcast called "Science Update." In this episode, host Bob Hirshon interviews an expert on vision to ask, "Can reading a book in a dim room really hurt your eyes?"*

Announcer:

Today's question comes from one of Science Update's own writers, Kandice Carter. She wants to know if reading a book in a dim room can really hurt your eyes. We asked Howard Howland, a vision expert at Cornell University. Here is what he says:

Howard Howland:

Yes, I think there's a chance that you will become more nearsighted if you read in low light.

Announcer:

That's because in low light, your pupil has to open up wider to let in enough light to see. That changes where light normally hits the retina. This makes the image blurry. After reading in the dark enough times, the eye gets a signal to start growing longer! It does this so that the image will hit the right place on the retina. That's great for a dark room. But in normal light, now your eye will be a little too long. So your vision will be a bit blurry.

Howard Howland:

The larger the pupil, the greater the blur, and the greater the blur, the stronger the signal is for the eye to grow longer. And so, your daytime vision will become blurry.

Announcer:

Howland adds that damage is more likely to happen with young people, whose eyes are still developing.