

Man gets world's first bionic eye

24th July, 2015



A man in Britain can see again because of a new bionic eye. Ray Flynn, 80, became the first patient in the world to get the new device, which is an artificial retina. Mr Flynn suffers from a

condition called age-related macular degeneration (AMD). This is one of the most common problems with eyesight around the world. Flynn started losing his sight ten years ago. Doctors told him eight years ago that he had AMD. From that time, his sight became worse and worse. It became so bad that he could only see things out of the corners of his eyes. Everything in the centre of his eyes was blurred and he could not see shapes properly. He said that even looking at simple things made him very tired.

Mr Flynn's bionic eye cost \$125,000. Britain's national health service hopes the cost of the operation will come down. This means many more people will be able to have the operation for free. Flynn had the surgery last month. Doctors spent four hours putting a microchip in the back of his eye. Doctors are very happy with the operation, which they said was a success. Flynn can now read a newspaper and admire the flowers in his garden for the first time in many years. His doctor, professor Paulo Stanga, said: "Mr Flynn's progress is truly remarkable. He is seeing the outline of people and objects very effectively." Professor Stanga hopes scientists can also help people who have been blind from birth.

Sources: *DailyMail / Telegraph / ITV.com*

Writing

How important are each of the five senses (sight, touch, hearing, smell and taste)? Put them in order and explain your reasons.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

see / bionic eye / patient / artificial / problems / eyesight / worse and worse / simple / national health service / operation / microchip / success / many years / remarkable

True / False

- The man who received the bionic eye was more than 70 years old. T / F
- The bionic eye was an artificial retina. T / F
- The man found out he had a problem called AMD last year. T / F
- The problem meant he could only see out of the corners of his eyes. T / F
- The eye cost \$125,000. T / F
- Britain's health service said the operation will never come down in price. T / F
- The operation took 14 hours. T / F
- A doctor said the operation could not help people who were born blind. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. device | a. middle |
| 2. artificial | b. at no cost |
| 3. condition | c. price |
| 4. centre | d. gadget |
| 5. blurred | e. really |
| 6. cost | f. out of focus |
| 7. for free | g. man-made |
| 8. surgery | h. things |
| 9. truly | i. illness |
| 10. objects | j. operation |

Discussion – Student A

- How would you feel if you needed eye surgery?
- What are the ugliest things in the world to look at?
- How long would it take a sighted person to adjust to being blind?
- What can you tell from looking at someone's eyes?
- Are eyes the most beautiful part of the body?
- What would you like to change about your eyes?
- What does the expression 'seeing is believing' mean?
- What questions would you like to ask the professor?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. the first patient in the world to | a. problems with eyesight |
| 2. one of the most common | b. remarkable |
| 3. see things out of the | c. made him very tired |
| 4. Everything in the centre of his | d. come down |
| 5. even looking at simple things | e. get the new device |
| 6. the cost of the operation will | f. from birth |
| 7. Flynn had the | g. eyes was blurred |
| 8. for the first | h. surgery last month |
| 9. Mr Flynn's progress is truly | i. time in many years |
| 10. people who have been blind | j. corners of his eyes |

Discussion – Student B

- How has your eyesight changed over the years?
- How important is eyesight?
- What do you think of having a bionic eye?
- What are the most beautiful things in the world to look at?
- What bodily functions are you worried will disappear when you get older?
- How often do you get tired eyes?
- What is the maximum number of bionic parts on someone's body?
- What do we need to do to look after our eyes?

Spelling

- the first nttpeia in the world
- get the new ievdce
- an iiaratifcl retina
- problems with tisehgye
- Everything in the centre...was dbrurle
- he could not see shapes poerlrpy
- the cost of the oeitnopar
- Flynn had the uegrys last month
- aedrmi the flowers
- Mr Flynn's sgrpseor
- truly arlmbareke
- the outline of people and tjbosce

Answers – Synonym Match

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

Role Play

Role A – Babies

You think babies are the most beautiful things to look at. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so beautiful. Also, tell the others which is the least beautiful of these (and why): flowers, art or a rainbow.

Role B – Flowers

You think flowers are the most beautiful things to look at. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so beautiful. Also, tell the others which is the least beautiful of these (and why): babies, art or a rainbow.

Role C – Art

You think art is the most beautiful thing to look at. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so beautiful. Also, tell the others which is the least beautiful of these (and why): flowers, babies or a rainbow.

Role D – A rainbow

You think a rainbow is the most beautiful thing to look at. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so beautiful. Also, tell the others which is the least beautiful of these (and why): flowers, art or babies.

Speaking – Seeing

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

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| • babies | • yourself in the mirror |
| • flowers | • a rainbow |
| • art | • TV |
| • countryside | • cars |

Answers – True False

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