

*Issue no.01***HOW TO READ YOUR GLASSES PRESCRIPTION**

Have you wanted to understand how your eyeglass prescription is read? All those numbers and abbreviations tell the optician what lenses are needed in order for you to see clearly.

Optometrists write these prescriptions in a very specific manner. What you see written is universal, so the lenses are made the same way, no matter where you are in the world.

There are 5 aspects of vision your prescription describes.

1. Which eye?

It's pretty common to have different prescriptions for each eye. To keep them straight, glasses prescriptions will sometimes use the letter R to symbolize the right eye and the letter L to symbolize the left eye.

But more commonly, you'll see the Latin abbreviation O.D. to indicate the right eye and O.S. to indicate the left.

	SPH	CYL	AXIS	ADD
O.D.	-0.50	-2.25	128	+1.50
O.S.	plano	-2.00	061	+1.50

2. Is this for myopia or hyperopia?

In the second column, the abbreviation 'SPH' stands for the word 'spherical'. This tells you whether you're nearsighted (myopic) or farsighted (hyperopic).

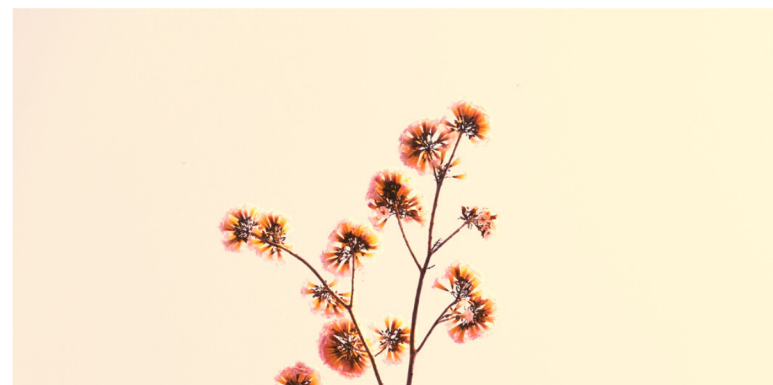
Is there a plus sign or a minus sign?

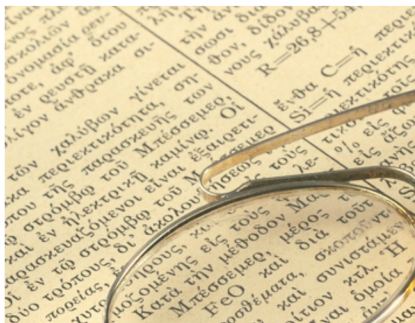
- The plus (+) symbol means you're farsighted (hyperopia)
- The minus (-) symbol means you're nearsighted (myopia)

In this example, the left eye contains the word 'plano' (sometimes you'll see it shortened to just 'PL'). Plano tells you that the eye's neither myopic nor hyperopic.

	SPH	CYL	AXIS	ADD
O.D.	-0.50	-2.25	128	+1.50
O.S.	plano	-2.00	061	+1.50

The number -0.50 on this prescription tells us that this person is nearsighted (myopic) in the right eye and emmetropic in the left eye.





3. What strength are the glasses?

The number in the 'SPH' box is what most of us will call our 'power'.

For a nearsighted person:

- 0.00 to -3.00 is considered *mild* myopia
- -3.00 to -6.00 is considered *moderate* myopia
- -6.00 and up is considered *high* myopia

For a farsighted prescription:

- 0.00 to +2.25 is considered *mild* hyperopia
- +2.25 to +5.00 is considered *moderate* hyperopia
- +5.00 and up is considered *high* hyperopia

4. Do you have astigmatism?

Astigmatism tells the glasses manufacturer that they need to use a very specific curvature for your lens in order for you to see clearly.

If you don't have astigmatism in your glasses, you'll see the abbreviations 'DS' or 'SPH' as placeholders in this column.

	SPH	CYL	AXIS	ADD
O.D.	-0.50	-2.25	128	+1.50
O.S.	plano	-2.00	061	+1.50

This prescription tells us we have astigmatism because there are numbers in the 'cyl' and 'axis' columns.

If you have astigmatism, you'll see the abbreviation 'CYL' (shorthand for cylinder), followed by 'AXIS'.



The higher the number in the column, the higher the amount of astigmatism.

- 0.00 to -1.00 indicates *mild* astigmatism
- -1.00 to -2.00 shows *moderate* astigmatism
- -2.00 to -3.00 shows *high* astigmatism
- -3.00 and above indicates *very high* astigmatism

By convention, optometrists precede the cylinder power with a minus (-) sign.

In some instances, you'll see cylinder preceded by a plus (+) sign. Use this [online cylinder conversion tool](#) to tell you your level of astigmatism if you see a plus sign.

When looking at the AXIS number, remember that this doesn't have anything to do with strength. It's merely telling the lens manufacturer where to angle the cylinder. The angle can be between 1 to 180 degrees and doesn't indicate severity in any fashion.

	SPH	CYL	AXIS	ADD
O.D.	-0.50	-2.25	128	+1.50
O.S.	plano	-2.00	061	+1.50

This prescription tells us bifocals, or reading glasses, would be helpful because there are numbers in the 'ADD' column.

5. Will bifocals or reading glasses help?

If there are numbers in the 'ADD' column, your eye doctor probably talked to you about the benefits of reading or computer glasses.

ADD power tells you how much magnification you need on top of your distance prescription.

It's common to see this in adults aged 40 and older, but certain types of vision issues at younger ages also benefit from an ADD power.

Remember that an eyeglass prescription only gives information about the lenses inside your frames.

These numbers are not the final word on how well you can see or indicate any diagnoses for other eye conditions that affect the eye's health.

Need an updated prescription?

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If you wear contact lenses, we can update your [contact lens prescription](#) for you too.

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