Why a larger magnifier would not be as good.

“I can only read a few letters at a time with my magnifier. I need a bigger one.”

“I would like a magnifier that covers a whole page.”

Magnifiers magnify because of the way their curved surfaces bend the light. The more curved the surfaces, the more magnification will be achieved. Some simple low powered hand and stand magnifiers, (magnifying up to about three times,) can be fairly large in size, perhaps several inches across. This is because the surfaces need only shallow curves, so the lens can be fairly thin. However, as the magnification is increased, the surfaces have to become more steeply curved and the magnifier has to be reduced in size in order to keep the lens as thin as possible. This is necessary as a thick lens will distort the print; the thicker the lens the more distortion it will produce. A magnifier that was both large and powerful would be useless due to severe distortion, (as well as being far too heavy to use!)

Many people with a visual impairment ask about the possibility of a “full page” magnifier. Such a thing does exist in the form of an A4 or A5 sized

sheet made up of many tiny magnifying elements. Although it sounds ideal, it can provide only very low magnification and is of no use to anyone with a significant visual impairment.

So, as magnifiers increase in power they have to reduce in size, and if magnification is high, only a few letters may be visible at a time. For this reason it is generally advisable to use the lowest magnification necessary for any particular task.