Low-level processes involve primitive operations such as:

1. image preprocessing to reduce noise

2. contrast enhancement

3. image sharpening

A low-level process is characterized by the fact that both its inputs and outputs are images.

Mid-level processing of images involves tasks such as:

1. segmentation (partitioning an image into regions or objects)

2. description of those objects to reduce them to a form suitable for computer processing

3. classification (recognition) of individual objects.

A mid-level process is characterized by the fact that its inputs generally are images, but its outputs are attributes extracted from those images (e.g., edges, contours, and the identity of individual objects).

Higher-level processing involves "making sense" of an ensemble of recognized objects, as in image analysis, and, at the far end of the continuum, performing the cognitive functions normally associated with human vision.