

# Braille

## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Have you heard of Braille, the system of communication that allows blind people to read?
2. Do you know when Braille was invented?
3. How long do you think it took to develop the system of Braille?
4. Have you ever looked at a book written in Braille? If so, what did you notice about it?
5. What other inventions have helped blind people in their day-to-day lives?



### B. Vocabulary Preview

Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right.

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| ___ 1. allow       | a) army   |
| ___ 2. compose     | b) can be carried   |
| ___ 3. code        | c) to let, to permit, to enable   |
| ___ 4. military    | d) being able to see  |
| ___ 5. pattern     | e) a design or arrangement  |
| ___ 6. punctuation | f) a shortened form of a word   |
| ___ 7. recognize   | g) to create, to make (music, literature, etc.)                         |
| ___ 8. contraction | h) to know  |
| ___ 9. sighted     | i) a system of signs or symbols   |
| ___ 10. portable   | j) a system of putting marks into writing (e.g., periods, commas, etc.) |

## Reading

1. Braille is a form of communication that **allows** blind people to read, write, do math, and even **compose** music. It is not a language, but a system that can be used by blind people to read or write most of the world's languages.
2. Braille was developed in the 1820s by Louis Braille of France, who became blind after a childhood accident. While attending the National Institute for the Blind in Paris, he learned that French soldiers used a special **code** to send messages at night that could be read without a light. Raised dots and dashes formed a message on a piece of paper, which a soldier read by running a finger over them.
3. Louis Braille was just 11 years old, but he used this **military** code to create an alphabet system that people could read with their fingertips. It took him almost nine years, but his system is still used today.
4. In the Braille system, each letter of the alphabet is formed from a different **pattern** of up to six small raised dots. The system also includes symbols for numbers, **punctuation** marks, and musical notes.
5. To read Braille, people move their index finger from left to right along a series of symbols on each line of a page. This lets them put together letters to make words or to **recognize** shortened forms of whole words and things such as periods or commas.
6. Grade 1 Braille is the longer form of written Braille. Grade 2 Braille uses more short forms and **contractions** of words. Experienced readers can read Braille books as quickly as **sighted** readers can read regular books.
7. Braille can be written on paper, using either a sharp, pointed instrument called a stylus or a machine that looks like a typewriter but has only six keys. Today, computer software programs and **portable** electronic Braille notetakers are also available.

*"We must be treated as equals, and communication is the way we can bring this about."*

—Louis Braille

# Comprehension

## A. True or False?

Read the statements below.

If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence.

If it is false, write F and correct the information.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Louis Braille was born blind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Braille used a special French military code to help develop his form of communication for the blind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The Braille system allows blind people to do math.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. It is not possible to read punctuation marks in Braille.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Readers of Braille cannot read books as fast as sighted readers.

## B. Ask and Answer

Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner.

Then write your answers in complete sentences in your notebook.

- 1. Is Braille a language? Explain what Braille is.
- 2. How did Louis Braille become blind?
- 3. How is each letter formed in the Braille system?
- 4. Besides letters, what else does the Braille system include?
- 5. Where did Louis Braille get the idea for his system of communication?
- 6. Explain how blind people read Braille.
- 7. How can Braille be written?

## Vocabulary Review

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from page 1.  
You may need to change the word forms.

1. You have to rewrite your essay and correct all the \_\_\_\_\_ mistakes.
2. That's a beautiful dress. I love the color and \_\_\_\_\_ of the material.
3. The army had many secret \_\_\_\_\_ to transmit messages during the war.
4. Even though we hadn't seen each other in almost ten years,  
I \_\_\_\_\_ you immediately. You haven't changed at all!
5. Although we use a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ in spoken  
English, it is better to use full forms in written work.
6. He is a wonderful musician. He plays three instruments  
and also \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of his own music.
7. Let's take a \_\_\_\_\_ radio to the beach with us today.

## Discussion

1. Louis Braille started to develop his system of communication  
when he was still a child. It took nine years to complete the system.  
What kind of person do you think he was? (Give several adjectives  
that might describe him.)
2. Explain the meaning of the following expression:  
*Necessity is the mother of invention.*
3. What kind of special facilities, equipment, and conditions are  
available for disabled people in your community? What more  
can society do to help make life easier for disabled kids and adults?