

ADVANTAGE

World Braille Day

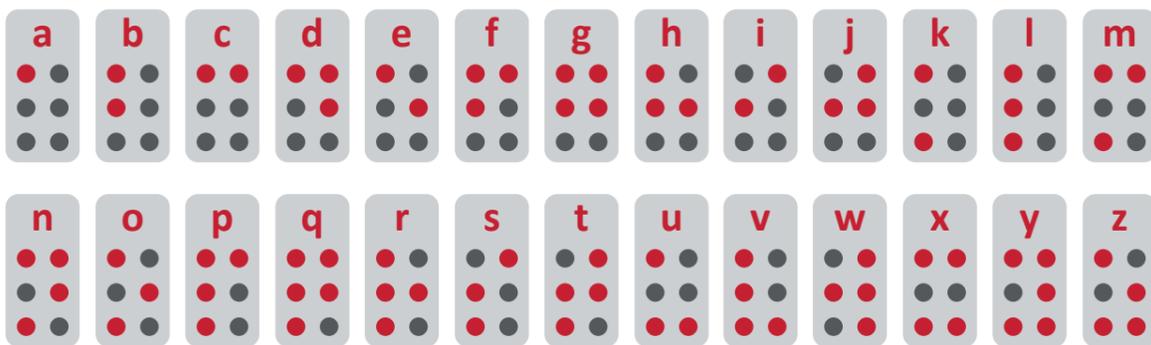


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World Braille Day celebrates the birthday of the Braille inventor, Louis Braille. The day recognizes his contributions in helping blind and visually impaired people to read and write.

The basis of the braille system is known as a braille cell. The cell is comprised of six dots numbered in a specific order. Each dot or combination of dots represents a letter of the alphabet. For example, by checking the braille alphabet you will see that dot 1 is the letter “a” and dots 1 and 2 the letter “b”.

THE BRAILLE ALPHABET



“Braille = Equality, and is a building block to literacy and independence”.

BRAILLE CAN BE USED



FACTS ABOUT BRAILLE

1

Louis Braille also invented raphigraphy.

Raphigraphy is a way for blind people to write letters to sighted people. In 1841 a blind friend, Pierre Foucault, created a piston board that produced all of the dots for a single letter at once.

2

Braille is not a language

Braille is a system of touch reading and writing using raised dots. Nearly every language that is widely spoken has its own braille system. There are even unique systems for math, computer science and music.

3

The six-dot braille cell has 63 possible combinations

Each cell includes three rows of two dots. The first 10 letters (A-J) use the dots in the first two rows of the braille cell. The next 10 letters K-T are formed by adding dot 3 to each of the first 10 letters. The remaining letters, excluding W, are formed by adding dots 3 and 6 to each of the first 5 letters. The letter W is an exception, because the French alphabet did not include a W when the code was created. The symbol for W was added later.

4

“Braille for feet” exists

In order for businesses to meet standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act, Tilco Vanguard developed a veritable “Braille for feet” that assists the visually impaired in knowing the boundaries of dangerous areas. Technically referred to as “truncated domes,” these bright yellow strips spell out a universal message in order to keep store and restaurant patrons safe.



Questions and Answers

for Dr Thapelo Motshudi

1

What causes blindness

The leading causes of chronic blindness include cataract, glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration and diabetes. In South Africa only about 5-10% of blind people can read braille.

2

How do blind people learn how to read braille?

There are a number of resources and institutions that can teach one how to read braille. In our country the South African National Council For The Blind is a very valuable resource for this purpose. As with anything in life, practice makes perfect!

3

How do blind people know where to find braille signs?

The placement of signs is standardized, making it easy for blind people to find them. One can also be directed to where the signs are by a person with normal vision. They can also be found on the buttons of commonly used items like ATMs.

4

Is braille used all over the world?

Yes it is, however braille is not universal, therefore each language has its own system of encoding. It is written from left to right, regardless of the original direction of the alphabet being transcribed.

5

Can blind people vote?

Yes, they can. A blind person can take anyone who is 18 years old to assist with voting, or ask to be issued with a universal ballot template (UBT). The UBT allows one to have an independent secret vote.