

Helping the Blind to Read and Write

blind = sightless, unsighted, visually impaired ≠ sighted

the blind = the blind people
the British = the British people
the French = the French people
the rich = the rich people
the poor = the poor people

Proverb:

In the city of the blind, the one-eyed man is the king.



Louis Braille

Louis Braille was born in 1809 in a town near Paris. Louis was a bright boy, but he had a very serious disability; he was blind. Even so, he could get around the town by using a cane without getting mixed up. He counted the exact number of the taps that he made to reach the road, the store, and the other places where he had to go. He got along very well, but he was disgusted that he couldn't read and write like other children. "Why should this have happened to me?" he asked accusingly. "How wonderful it would be if I could see the world around me," he said.

1809 = eighteen oh nine
bright = very smart, very clever, very intelligent
disability (n.) = handicap
disabled (adj.) = handicapped
even so = despite this fact
cane = walking stick
mixed-up = confused
tap = a short light blow
blow = the act of hitting somebody or something
reach = arrive at
store (American) = **shop** (British)
get along = manage, do sth well

He was disgusted that ... = He hated that ...

accuse sb of sth/doing sth = charge sb with sth/doing sth

- *George accused Robert of theft.*
- *George accused Robert of stealing his bicycle.*
- *Louis Braille accused God of injustice.*
injustice = unfairness
- *Louis Braille spoke to God accusingly.*
accusingly (adv.) = by accusing; through accusations

Some people are disabled. Is this God's injustice?

No, because God's expectations are based on our abilities. Moreover, the disabled people are usually better than other people at their other senses. For example, the blind have a better sense of hearing and sense of touch.

When Louis was ten years old, his parents sent him to a school for the blind. He was good at all subjects and even learned to play the organ. But none of these made him happy. One reason was that the blind were taught in a way that was much too slow for a quick mind like his.

- ✗ I'm good **in** mathematics.
- ✓ I'm good **at** mathematics.



organ = a musical instrument

The blind were taught = The teachers taught the blind

teach ⇒ taught, taught

The alphabet was taught by placing twigs in the shapes of letters on a table. Then the teacher guided the blind child's hands over these letters and explained what each one meant. Soon the child could read words and sentences with his fingers. He could then read raised cloth letters pasted on paper. But with this method, even a short story filled many big books.

The alphabet was taught = The teachers taught the alphabet

twig = a small piece of wood

guide (v.) = lead, show the right way of doing sth

explain (v.) = to make something clear or easy to understand by describing or giving information about it

explanation (n.) = the details or reasons that someone gives to make something clear or easy to understand

mean ⇔ meant, meant

cloth /klo:θ/ = woven material

paste = glue, stick

raised cloth letters = letters made of cloth which were raised

When Braille finished school, he knew what he wanted to do. "There should be a faster way to learn to read and write," he said to himself, "I will find a way." Braille thought that a code would be easier. But what kind of code? A special symbol for every word in the dictionary? Shapes like squares or triangles for each of the letters of the alphabet? That might be as hard as reading letters. Braille tried many different kinds of codes, but for years he could do nothing in particular.

code = a system of signs

square = a geometric shape with four equal sides ■

triangle = a geometric shape with three sides ▲

in particular = special

Then he found the answer in a story in the newspaper about a new signal code used by soldiers to read or write in the dark. "If this were true," Braille thought, "obviously the same code could be used by a blind man. I should've thought about this earlier," he told his friend.

signal = a movement to give a message

used by soldiers = which was used by soldiers

think ⇔ thought, thought

obviously = clearly

should've = should have

Pronunciation Point:

⊕ 've is pronounced like "of".

Next morning Braille went to visit the man who had made the code, Captain Charles Barbier. "We should have met previously," Louis told him. Barbier said he was glad to help. He showed Braille how he made bumps on a sheet of paper with an awl. This made dots come through the other side of the paper. A certain combination of dots would then mean a certain word.

captain = a military rank

previously = before

glad = happy

bumps = raised parts on a surface



awl = a tool for making dots

dot = point

combination = the way you put things together; arrangement

Braille was filled with joy. Apparently punching holes in paper would be fast and easy. But there were still more things he had to do. First, he had to find a way to make dots. Second, he had to figure out what combination of dots should stand for each letter.

joy = happiness

Braille was filled with joy. = Braille became very happy.

apparently = seemingly

punch = make a hole

figure out = understand, know

stand for = symbolize, represent

After a period of experimenting, he made different combinations of bumps that would stand for different letters. Every letter in the alphabet, as well as every punctuation mark, had its own combination.

experimenting = testing

as well as = in addition to, besides, on top of

punctuation mark = a mark like a comma, period (full-stop), semicolon, etc. used in a text for reading it more easily

This is the secret of the Braille system of writing and reading. It was a great invention and affected the lives of millions of blind people in society. It is possible now for the blind to read and write almost as fast as people who can see.

secret = the particular way of achieving something

affect (v.) = have an impact on

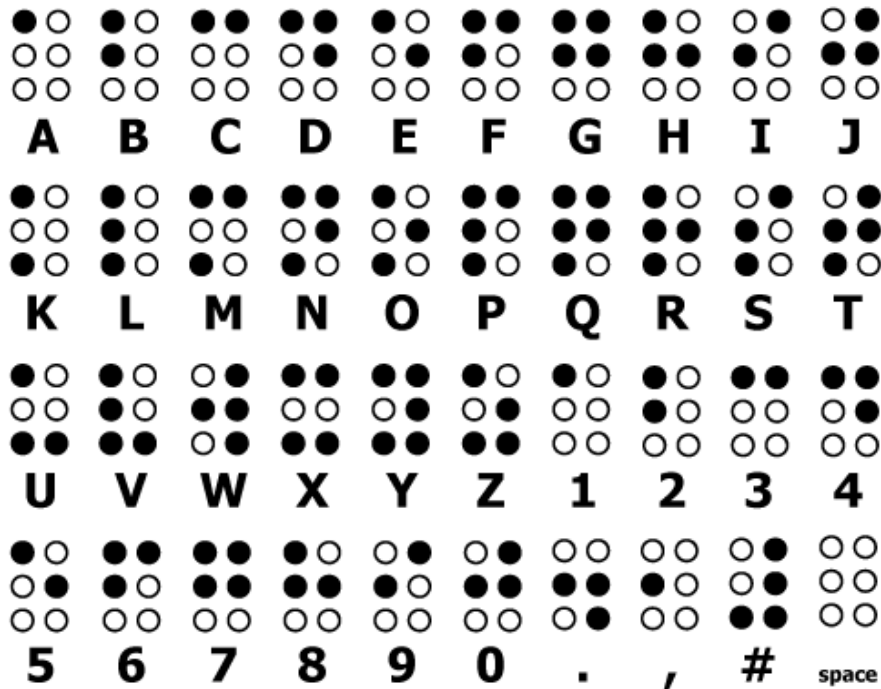
effect (n.) = impact

Pronunciation Point:

life + s = lives /ai/ آي

live + s = lives /I/ اي کوتاه

society = a large number of people living in a particular area



Full Text:

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