

QUICK REFERENCE BRAILLE GUIDE

Written and Compiled

by

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The following materials were used as reference sources in helping me to prepare this booklet:

Braille Codes and Calculations by Mary Ellen Pesavento, MA
Instruction Manual for Braille Transcribing, Third Edition by Maxine B. Dorf,
In Collaboration with Barbara H. Tate
Learning the Nemeth Braille Code by Ruth H. Craig
Code of Braille Textbook Formats and Techniques
Handbook for Learning to Read Braille By Sight by Leland Schubert

Note to Users

This Quick Reference Braille Guide was written and/or compiled to serve as a quick memory jogger for the user already educated in Braille Code. It is NOT meant to be a comprehensive Braille instruction guide, but rather a succinct recap of Braille Code rules and examples of their usage.

Many examples are described or written in inkprint rather than shown in Braille because of the enormous amounts of computer memory that it requires to produce pictures of Braille cells.

If any obvious errors or misinterpreted Braille rules or examples are discovered, please notify me at the below indicated address so that a correction can be made:

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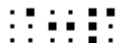
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Find Braille and Nemeth Charts on Other Braille Pages Links

Miscellaneous Signs & Symbols in Literary Braille



\$ Dollar sign



% Percentage Sign



" Inches



' Feet



¢ Cent

Explanatory Rules Used In This Booklet:

No Bridging Rule - Braille contractions that can NOT be used when combining letters that belong to two distinctly different parts of the word such as a prefix and root word or a root word and a suffix.

Law of Preference Rule - Certain Braille contractions that always take priority over other possible braille contractions and which saves the most space.

No-Two-Lower-Signs-Touching-Without-a-Chaperone Law - No two lower signs may stand together without an empty space between them unless they touch a symbol that contains an upper dot (their chaperone)

Punctuation

Spaces - Use one blank space between sentences.

Dash - Uses Dots 3, 6 and Dots 3, 6 to separate thoughts in a sentence.

Example:

He is small--very small.

Double Dash or Omission Indicator Dots 3, 6 and Dots 3, 6 and Dots 3, 6 and Dots 3, 6 - Use the same spacing as the omitted word EXCEPT WHEN ADJOINED BY A HYPHEN.

Hyphen - Uses Dots 3, 6 to separate words

Example:

She is six-feet tall.

Ellipsis - Uses Dot 3 and Dot 3 and Dot 3 to show omission of text. Use same spacing as if it were a word.

Example:

The reasons ... so absurd.

Composition Signs

Capital letter sign - Dot 6 - Precedes letter of any word or letter that needs to be capitalized. It only applies to the letter immediately following it.

Double Capital Sign - Dot 6 and Dot 6:

- Used when all of the letters of a word, abbreviations or acronyms are capitalized.

Example:

ELI (English Letter Indicator) (acronym)

- Used with Roman Numerals with two or more letters:

Example: IV

⠠⠠⠠⠠

- DO NOT USE for adjoined braille cells such as "OF THE" .

- DO NOT USE if punctuation separates the letters of an abbreviation.

Example:

U.S.A.

- DO NOT USE in a series of non-abbreviated capitalized letters where each letter has its own mathematical identify.

Example:

∠ ABC

⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠

Letter Sign - Dots 5, 6

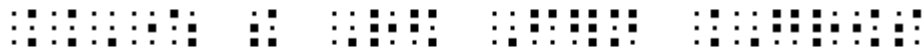
- Used to indicate that a letter is representing itself and not is Alphabet List contraction.
Example:
C is for cat.
- It precedes the capital sign.
- It may stand alone, may be followed by an apostrophe, or a hyphen.
- Omit all italics, parentheses, or quotation marks that surround letters that represent themselves.
- Used before any lower-case letter that followed a number or follows a hyphen after number.
Example:
Room 118a
- Used with any combinations of letters that could possibly be mistaken for short-form words.
Example:
Al Johnson
- Do NOT use letter sign when a letter appears alone in a written dialect, if the letter is preceded or followed by an apostrophe that indicates an omission of a letter or letters.
- Do NOT use the letter sign when a single letter represents an abbreviation followed by a period.
Example:
5 p.m.

The Italic Sign - Dots 4, 6

- Used to distinguish *italics*, underlining, **bold-face type**, and SMALL CAPS.
- Must immediately (with no space) precede word which is *italics*, underlining, **bold-face type**, and SMALL CAPS.
- Uses a space to terminate the effect of the braille italic sign.
- Two italic signs or double italics signs precede the first italicized word if 4 or more words in a series are italicized, and one italic sign precedes the last italicized word.

Example:

Where the Red Fern Grows -



- Should BE used for foreign words or phrases.
- Should BE used for names of books, pictures, ships, etc.
- Should BE used for subject headings at the beginning of a paragraph.
- Should NOT be used where quoted passages appear in both italics and quotations.
- Should NOT be used where words appear both in italics and parentheses.
- Should NOT be used for stage directions, settings, etc. in plays.
- Should NOT be used where word endings are separated from the root words and are printed in italics.

Alphabet or Single Letter Contractions:

- Uses a Braille letter STANDING ALONE to represent a whole word.

a	a	n	not
b	but	o	O
c	can	p	people
d	do	q	quite
e	every	r	rather
f	from	s	so
g	go	t	that
h	have	u	us
i	I	v	very
j	just	w	will
k	knowledge	x	it
l	like	y	you
m	more	z	as

- MAY BE used as a possessive
Example:
Will's
- MAY BE used as proper nouns
Example:
Mr. More
- MAY BE used as a true compound word.
- MAY BE used only in certain contractions as indicated below:

c's	can's
c't	can't
p's	people's
s's	so's
t'd	that'd
t'll	that'll
t's	that's
w's	will's
x'd	it'd
x'll	it'll
x's	it's
y'd	you'd
y'll	you'll
y're	you're
y've	you've

- Can NOT be used as a syllable.
- Can NOT be used to represent musical note "do" as in "do, re, mi, etc."

and, for, of, the, with - Whole Word Contractions

- MAY BE be used as Whole or Parts of Words.

Example:

h(and)

- When these words appear together there is no space between them, EXCEPT if punctuation or a capital sign falls between words. DO NOT ADJOIN IF DOUBLE CAPITALS ARE USED.

and, for, of, the, with - Parts of Words Contractions

- Must BE used in preference to other contractions.

Example:

RIGHT: o(the)r

WRONG: o(th)(er)

- May NOT be used to bridge compound words such as twofold.

Example:

RIGHT: twofold

WRONG: tw(of)old.

- May NOT be used to bridge a prefix and root word OR to bridge a root word and suffix.

Example:

RIGHT: professor

WRONG: pr(of)essor

child, out, shall, still, this, which - Whole Word Contractions

- These contractions must STAND ALONE to represent the whole word. It's OK to use the whole-word contraction after hyphen.

Example:

step-child

ch, ou, sh, st, th, wh - Parts of Words Contractions

- Use as an abbreviation.

Examples:

Street (St.) or Saint (St.)

- Use in numbers.

Example:

21(st)

- May NOT bridge prefix and root word OR root word and suffix.

Example:

RIGHT: mistake

WRONG: mi(st)ake

- May NOT bridge compound words.

Example:

RIGHT: rawhide

WRONG: ra(wh)ide

- May NOT be used as Sh! (meaning "hush")

Example:

RIGHT: Sh!

WRONG: (Sh)!

ar, ed, er, gh, ow - Parts of Words Contractions

- OK when representing their own sounds.

Examples:

ar! (pirate's laugh)

er (stuttering sound)

Ed (name)

ow! (sound of pain)

- May NOT bridge prefix and root word OR root word and suffix OR compound words.
- May NOT separate the letters of a diphthong.

Example:

RIGHT: aerial

WRONG: a(er)ial

ble, ing - Middle and Enders - Parts of Words Contractions

- Used in the middle or end of words only.

Examples:

s(ing)le or s(ing)

pro(ble)m or trou(ble)

- Law of Preference Rule applies, such as contractions (ed) and (er) yield to (ble).

- May NOT begin a word.

Example:

RIGHT: blemish

WRONG: (ble)mish

- May NOT bridge prefix and root word OR root word and suffix.

- May NOT bridge a compound word.

Example:

RIGHT: ni(gh)t(in)gale

WRONG: ni(gh)t(ing)ale

LOWER CELL CONTRACTIONS

be, enough, his, in, was, were - Lower-cell Whole Word Contractions:

- MUST stand alone.
Example:
Chocolate milk is (enough) for him.
- May adjoin a capital sign (which is a composition sign) UNLESS the capital sign is preceded by a mark of punctuation.
Example:
RIGHT: (His) face is cute.
WRONG: "(His) face is clean."
- May have any number of lowers signs stand together as long there is a space between them.
Example:
She (was) (in) (enough) classes.
- May NOT adjoin any marks of punctuation.
Example:
RIGHT: Is this his?
WRONG: Is this (his)?
- May NOT be used in a hyphenated compound word.
Example:
RIGHT: bride-to-be
WRONG: bride-to-(be)

to, into, by - Lower-cell Joiner Word Contractions:

- MUST be followed without a space by a word.
- MUST NEVER stand alone. If it DOES stand alone, it must be written out.
- May adjoin the Alphabet List contractions.
- May follow punctuation.
- MUST follow Law of No-Two-Lower-Signs-Together-Without-a-Chaperone.
- May adjoin signs of composition such as capital sign, italic sign, and number sign.
- MUST NOT be followed by punctuation.
Example:
RIGHT: He went to "The Mall".
WRONG: He went to "The Mall".

en, in - Lower-cell Parts of Words Contractions:

- The word "en" such as en route must be spelled out.

Example:

RIGHT: en masse

WRONG: (en) masse

- May NOT bridge prefix and root word OR root word and suffix OR compound words.

- May NOT separate the letters of a diphthong.

Example:

RIGHT: Phoenix

WRONG: Pho(en)ix

be, com, con, dis, - Lower-cell Parts of Words - Leader or Beginning-of-Word Contractions:

- MUST always be used at the beginning of a word in which THEY FORM THE FIRST SYLLABLE **except for com.**

• **com** is always used in the beginning of a word whether or not they form the first syllable, but can never adjoin a hyphen, dash, or apostrophe.

- May BE used in an abbreviation, unless it comprises the entire abbreviation.

• No-Two-Lower-Signs-Touching-Without-a-Chaperone Law - No two lower signs may stand together without an empty space between them unless they touch a symbol that contains an upper dot (their chaperone).

- May BE used in a divided word if it is the first syllable on the new braille line.

• **com, con, dis** - may only be used as parts of words, they have no whole word meaning.

- May NOT be used in the middle or the end of a word.

- May NOT be used before punctuation.

ea, bb, cc, dd, ff, gg - Lower-cell Parts of Words - Sandwich Contractions:

- May ONLY appear in the middle of word, must appear between letters or contractions.

Example:

RIGHT: be(gg)(ed)

WRONG: e(gg)

- Is the LOWEST priority when Law of Preference applies.

- May NOT adjoin punctuation.

- May NOT bridge prefix and root word OR root word and suffix OR compound words.

Final Letter Parts of Words Contractions

	Dot 6		Dots 4-6		Dots 5-6
ally	Dot 6, y	ance	Dots 4-6, e	ence	Dots 5-6, e
ation	Dot 6, n	less	Dots 4-6, s	ful	Dots 5-6, l
		ound	Dots 4-6, d	ity	Dots 5-6, y
		ount	Dots 4-6, t	ment	Dots 5-6, t
		sion	Dots 4-6, n	ness	Dots 5-6, s
				ong	Dots 5-6, g
				tion	Dots 5-6, n

- Use as parts of words.

Example:
d(ance)

- Final letter contractions ALWAYS take first priority.

Example:
RIGHT: (th)(ence)
WRONG: (the)nce

- May NOT begin a word

Example:
RIGHT: fulfill
WRONG: (ful)fill

- May NOT bridge a prefix with a root word.

Example:
RIGHT: (Con)gratulate
WRONG: C(ong)ratulate

- May NOT separate the letters of a diphthong.

Example:
RIGHT: fruity
WRONG: fru(ity)

- The Law of Preference applies:

-ation is preferred over *-tion*.

Example:
n(ation)

-ence is preferred to *the*.

Example:
(th)(ence)

-ness is preferred to *in*.

Example:
busi(ness)

-ally and -ation are preferred over *ea*.

Examples:
re(ally)
cre(ation)

-tion is preferred to *st*.

Example:
diges(tion)

Initial Letter Contractions - Whole Words and Parts of Words Contractions

- Are two cells that are read together as a single unit.

Dot 5 Words:

day	Dot 5, d	question	Dot 5, q
ever	Dot 5, e	right	Dot 5, r
father	Dot 5, f	some	Dot 5, s
here	Dot 5, h	time	Dot 5, t
know	Dot 5, k	under	Dot 5, u
lord	Dot 5, l	work	Dot 5, w
mother	Dot 5, m	young	Dot 5, y
part	Dot 5, p		

(ch)aracter	Dot 5, ch
(ou)ght	Dot 5, ou
(th)rough	Dot 5, th
(the)re	Dot 5, the
(wh)ere	Dot 5, wh

Dot 4-5 Words:

Dots 4-5-6 Words:

(the)se	Dots 4-5, the	cannot	Dots 4-5-6, c
(th)ose	Dots 4-5, th	had	Dots 4-5-6, h
(wh)ose	Dots 4-5, wh	many	Dots 4-5-6, m
word	Dots 4-5, w	spirit	Dots 4-5-6, s
upon	Dots 4-5, u	world	Dots 4-5-6, w
		(the)ir	Dots 4-5-6, the

Initial Letter Contractions:

- Are USED as whole words and as parts of words.
Examples:
(here)
(part)n(er)
- Are USED as parts of words when it retains its original meaning.
Examples:
birth(day)
grand(father)
- Are USED as parts of words when it retains its original sound or pronunciation.
Examples:
ad(her)e
s(mother)

Initial Letter Contractions (Continued):

- DO NOT USE if Laws of Preference apply: It is preferable to use one-cell contractions over two-cell contractions, when the same amount of space is used.

Example:

ad(here)

RIGHT: adh(er)(ed)

WRONG: ad(here)d

- DO NOT USE if an initial letter(s) contraction bridges a prefix and a root word. (No Bridging Rule applies).

Examples:

RIGHT: partake

RIGHT: c(en)timet(er)

WRONG: (part)ake

WRONG: cen(time)ter

- DO NOT USE if an initial letter(s) contraction is a digraph.

Examples:

RIGHT: Boone

RIGHT: P(ar)(the)non

WRONG: Bo(one)

WRONG: (Part)henon

- DO NOT USE when -(ed) or -(er) have been added to **some**.

Examples:

ransom

ransom(ed)

- DO NOT USE if the contraction doesn't retain its meaning or original pronunciation (See The "One" exceptions).

Examples:

RIGHT: fever

RIGHT: sword

WRONG: f(ever)

WRONG: s(word)

The "One" exceptions:

- Initial Letter Contractions can only be used as "parts of words" if the short form retains its original meaning, sound, and spelling, except for the part-word **one**.

Examples of Part-word **one** exceptions:

st(one)

ph(one)

- HOWEVER, the above rule applies except in the case where the letters of "one" such as o and n are NOT in the same syllable.

Examples of "one" in the same syllable:

m(one)y

ph(one)

Examples of letters of "one" NOT in the same syllable:

RIGHT: colo-nel

RIGHT: pi-o-neer

WRONG: col(one)l

WRONG: pi(one)er

HOWEVER, **one** yields to (ed), (en), and (er).

Examples:

g(one) gon(er)

Short Form Words

ab	about	(be)n	beneath	h(er)f	herself	p(er)h	perhaps
abv	above	(be)s	beside	hm	him	qk	quick
ac	according	(be)t	between	hmf	himself	rcv	receive
acr	across	(be)y	beyond	imm	immediate	rcvg	receiving
af	after	bl	blind	xs	its	rjc	rejoice
afn	afternoon	brl	braille	xf	itself	rjcg	rejoicing
afw	afterward	(ch)n	children	lr	letter	sd	said
ag	again	(con)cv	conceive	ll	little	(sh)d	should
ag(st)	against	(con)cvg	conceiving	m(ch)	much	s(ch)	such
alm	almost	cd	could	m(st)	must	(the)mvs	themselves
alr	already	dcv	deceive	myf	myself	(th)yf	thyself
al	also	dcvg	deceiving	nec	necessary	td	today
al(th)	although	dcl	declare	nei	neither	tgr	together
alt	altogether	dclg	declaring	o'c	o'clock	tm	tomorrow
alw	always	ei	either	(one)f	oneself	tn	tonight
(be)c	because	f(st)	first	(ou)rvs	ourselves	wd	would
(be)f	before	fr	friend	pd	paid	yr	your
(be)h	behind	gd	good	p(er)cv	perceive	yrf	yourself
(be)l	below	grt	great	p(er)cvg	perceiving	yrvs	yourselves

Short Form Words:

- Should BE used as proper nouns when the short form stands alone.

Example:

Dr. Good - Dr. (Gd)

- Should BE used as proper nouns as long as they stand alone.

Example:

Mr. (Little)

- **after, blind, & friend** are special cases and may NOT be followed by a vowel without a space.

Literary Numbers:

- USE a Number Sign - Dots, 3, 4, 5, 6 before the first ten letters of the Braille alphabet to indicate Literary Numbers.

a	1
b	2
c	3
d	4
e	5
f	6
g	7
h	8
i	9
j	0

- May BE followed immediately by letters.
Example:
43rd
- May USE a comma within a number without repeating the number sign.
Example:
1,000
- USE a hyphen to separate the numbers in date.
Example:
4/30/97 should be 4-30-97
- Always USE an apostrophe between numbers and "s".
Example:
1940s should be 1940's
- USE Dots 3, 4 to show slash in simple fractions.
Example:
3/4
- USE spelled out equations in literary work.
Example:
2+2=4 should be 2 plus 2 equals 4
- USE Dots 4, 6 to show a decimal sign.
Example:
3.9

Nemeth Code - See Charts 1 & 2 for Nemeth Code Signs & Symbols

Nemeth Code Numerals:

- Use a Numeric Indicator before a DROPPED CELL of the first ten letters of the Braille alphabet to indicate numerals.
- Are USED for mathematical and scientific notation, EXCEPT for page numbers.

Numeric Indicators - Dots 3, 4, 5, 6:

- Uses the same Dots as the Number Sign for Literary Numbers.
- Do NOT need to be repeated until after equal (=) sign.
- Are NOT required before the numeral that follows the opening grouping symbol without a space. All others follow the standard rules.
- For **Negative Numbers** Dots 3, 6 precede the Numeric Indicator (#) to create negative numbers.
Example:
-#5
- Are NOT used with simple or complex fraction indicators, but are REQUIRED before the whole number in a mixed fraction.
- Are NOT used in Vertical Spacing.

Nemeth General Omission Indicator - Dots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6: Used for vertical or spatial equations. In word problems use the long dash so that it is not confused with the braille contraction *for*.

Example:

⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨

Fraction Indicators:

Simple Fraction Indicators:

Example:

$\frac{3}{4}$

Example of Indicator:

⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨

Mixed Fraction Indicators:

Example:

$1\frac{1}{4}$

Example of Indicator:

⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨

Complex Fraction Indicators:

Example:

$\frac{\frac{1}{4}}{\frac{3}{4}}$

$\frac{3}{4}$

Example of Indicator:

⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨

- Fractions must be enclosed by both opening and closing fraction indicators.

Horizontal Spacing:

- Do NOT space between numbers and signs of operation:

Example:

RIGHT: $2+6 = 8$

WRONG: $2 + 6 = 8$

- Use a space before and after any signs of comparison ($=$, $>$, $<$, etc.)

Example:

RIGHT: $8 = 8$

WRONG: $8=8$

- Format Rules: Try to keep mathematical expression together on a single line of braille.

- Order of preferable line division:

1. after a comma that occurs between items in an enclosed list.

2. before a symbol of comparison ($>$, $<$, $=$, etc.)

3. before a symbol of operation ($+$, $-$, \times , etc.)

4. before a fraction line ($/$)

Vertical Spatial Format

- No Numeric Indicator used.

- Symbols of Operation $+$, $-$, MUST be one cell left of the widest number

Example:

RIGHT:

```
  45
 125
+  6
```

WRONG:

```
  45
 125
+6
```

- Symbol of Operation \times is placed to immediate left of the bottom number

- Fraction indicators must line up in columns.

Example:

RIGHT:

```
120/4
 1/12
```

WRONG:

```
120/4
 1/12
```

Vertical Spatial Format (Continued)

- Separation lines (Dots 2, 5) extend one cell to the left and one cell right of all symbols

Example:

RIGHT:

$$\begin{array}{r} 45 \\ +150 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

WRONG:

$$\begin{array}{r} 45 \\ +150 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

- One blank cell between problems.
- One blank line between rows of problems.
- Division: Entire problem is together with no space

Example:

$$5 \overline{)45}$$

- Separation line for division is one cell longer than problem.
- Remainders are written after the letter "r" on the same line as the quotient (the answer) Then dot 5 immediately follows the "r"
- Line up minus signs (-) for division directly under the) (Dots 1,3, 5) in the symbol below.

Example:

$$\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ 5 \overline{)45} \\ -45 \\ \hline 0 \end{array}$$

- Line up decimals.

Punctuation Indicator (PI) - Dots 4, 5, 6:

- Are USED to distinguish between literary punctuation from mathematical terms and indicators. It identifies the symbol that follows it as a mark of punctuation.

Examples:

1.

⋮ ⋮ ⋮ ⋮

8's

⋮ ⋮ ⋮ ⋮ ⋮ ⋮