

Braille Glossary

The braille alphabet:

Each braille character, called a "cell," is made up of a combination of up to six dots. They are numbered top to bottom in the left column 1, 2, 3, and top to bottom in the right column 4, 5, 6.

1 ● ● 4
2 ● ● 5
3 ● ● 6

The first 10 letters of the alphabet and numbers 1 through 0 (see below for an explanation of numbers):

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

The second 10 letters are the same as the letters directly above them, except they add dot 3:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| k | l | m | n | o | p | q | r | s | t |
| ● ○ | ● ○ | ● ● | ● ● | ● ○ | ● ● | ● ● | ● ○ | ○ ● | ○ ● |
| ○ ○ | ● ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ |
| ● ○ | ● ○ | ● ○ | ● ○ | ● ○ | ● ○ | ● ○ | ● ○ | ● ○ | ● ○ |

The remaining letters are the same as the letters directly above them, except they add dot 6:

| | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| u | v | x | y | z |
| ● ○ | ● ○ | ● ● | ● ● | ● ○ |
| ○ ○ | ● ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ |
| ● ● | ● ● | ● ● | ● ● | ● ● |

The letter **w** does not fit in the pattern above. As braille was developed originally for the French alphabet, which did not contain the letter **w**, it was added later:

w
○ ●
● ●
○ ●

Numeral sign: There are no distinctive signs used to represent numerals in literary braille. The same characters used for the first ten letters of the alphabet (see above) are also used for the digits 1 through 9 and 0. Every number (not every digit) is preceded by the numeral sign.

○ ●
○ ●
● ●

For example: 1776 = ○ ● ○ ● ● ● ● ●

Punctuation in this book:

| | | | | | | |
|------------|-------|---------|-------------------|--------|---------------------|----------------------|
| apostrophe | comma | dash | exclamation point | period | open quotation mark | close quotation mark |
| ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ |
| ○ ○ | ● ○ | ○ ○ ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ |
| ● ○ | ○ ○ | ● ● ● ● | ● ● | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ |
| | | | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ |
| | | | ● ● | ● ● | ○ ○ | ○ ○ |
| | | | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ |

single-letter capital sign

○ ○
○ ○
○ ●

whole-word capital sign

○ ○ ○ ○
○ ○ ○ ○
○ ● ○ ●

A single capital sign preceding a word indicates that the first letter of the word is capitalized. Two capital signs preceding a word indicates that the whole word is capitalized.

italics sign

○ ●
○ ○
○ ●

Braille cells cannot be physically italicized. To indicate that a word is in italics, the italics sign is placed before the word.

This short glossary is not a substitution for complete braille instruction. Please visit our website for more information about braille resources.

www.brailleink.org