The Braille System reading passage

The Braille System

The Braille system is a contact reading and writing device for the blind where the dots indicate the letters and numbers. It also has dots for punctuation marks and markers for showing letter groupings. They read using both hands, but mostly using their index fingers. They can read at a speed of about 125 words per minute on average. Some people can read up to 200 words per minute. Blind people will learn about the written word while using the braille alphabet. They will also learn things like pronunciation, punctuation, paragraph formatting, and footnotes.

Most importantly, braille gives blind people access to a wide variety of items, including leisure and instructional reading, income reports, restaurant menus and critical things in everyday adult life like contracts, laws, insurance plans, indexes, and cookbooks. Using materials such as musical scores, songbooks, card games, and chess, blind people will also enjoy activities and cultural stimulation through braille. Many other methods have been tried over the years to help blind people to read. Many of those were elevated copies of print letters. The braille scheme became a success because it is made on a logical series of signs intended for the fingertips instead of imitating signs designed for the eyes.

Braille has a long tradition that dates back to the beginning of the 18th century. In Bonaparte's French army, a man named Charles Barbier invented a unique technique known as "night printing" so soldiers could talk peacefully at night. Barbier, a veteran of the military, saw the deaths of several troops who used lights after dark to understand battle signals. Because of the light from the torches, enemy combatants realised where the French soldiers were, causing the death of several men. Barbier's "night printing" technique is made on an elevated 12-dot cell that is 2 dots wide and 6 dots deep. Inside the cell, each dot or mixture of dots denoted a letter or phonetic sound. The issue with the legal regulations was that the normal fingertip did not recognise any of the dots with a single touch.

Louis Braille was born in a French village called Coupvray on Jan 4, 1809. He went blind at a young age after accidently stabbing himself in the eye with his father's blade. Braille's father was a leather maker who used a tool to punch holes in the leather goods he made. At the age of 11, Braille was inspired to change Charles Barbier's "night printing" code to make an effective written correspondence device for all the blind people. He had joined the National Institute of the Blind in Paris a year before. He spent the best part of the next 9 years designing and making a perfect pattern of raised dots that bears his signature, Braille.

With all of Braille's efforts, the coding was now directed on cells of just 6 dots rather than 12. This crucial advancement meant that a fingertip could cover the entire cell unit with a single impression and travel quickly from one cell to the next. Braille eventually gained acceptance around the world as the main mode of written communication for blind people. Even today, there is no difference in the braille system from what he invented. However, some small changes have

been made to the braille system, most notably the addition of contractions describing groups of letters or entire words that occur regularly in a script. Contractions allow for easier braille reading. It also helped to reduce the scale of braille books, making them even lighter.

In 1853 Braille passed away, at the age of 43, a year before his native France adopted braille as the official correspondence method for the blind. In 1860, Braille made its way "across the pond" to America, where it was used by The Missouri School for the Blind in St. Louis. The legacy of Louis Braille has enriched the lives of millions of people who are blind. As a consequence, blind people from around the world learn from Braille's work on a regular basis. Today, braille code has been transposed in a variety of languages all over the world. Braille will be proud to know that his work has helped many people get literacy over the years. The effect is largely inspiring and helps them to achieve success in their academics and their career paths.

The Braille System reading questions

Questions 1 – 5

Complete the sentences below.

Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBERS from the passage for each answer.

1. The Braille system is a contact reading and writing device for the blind where the _____ indicate the letters and numbers.

2. The braille scheme became a success because it is made on a logical series of signs intended for the _____ instead of imitating signs designed for the eyes.

3. Braille eventually gained acceptance around the world as the main mode of _____ for blind people.

4. Braille code has been transposed in a variety of _____ all over the world.

5. The issue with the _____ was that the normal fingertip did not recognise any of the dots with a single touch.

Questions 6 – 10

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the Reading Passage?

Write:

YES if the statement agrees with the claims of the writer

NO if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer

NOT GIVEN if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

6. The average speed of reading using Braille is 125 words per minute.

7. Braille cannot be used for reading contracts, laws, insurance plans, indexes, and cookbooks

8. Braille died in 1835 at the age of 43.

9. Braille's father was a leather maker.

10. Contractions allow for easier braille reading and help to reduce the scale of braille books, making them even lighter.

Questions 11-15

Complete the summary below.

Write NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the passage for each answer.

Louis Braille was born in a French village called 11_____ on Jan 4, 1809. With Braille's efforts, the coding was directed on cells of just 12_____ rather than 12. Blind people from around the world learn from Braille's work on a regular basis. It gave access to a wide variety of everyday items, including leisure and 13_____ reading, income reports, restaurant menus and critical things. Today, 14_____ has been transposed in a variety of languages all over the world. In 1853 Braille 15_____, at the age of 43.