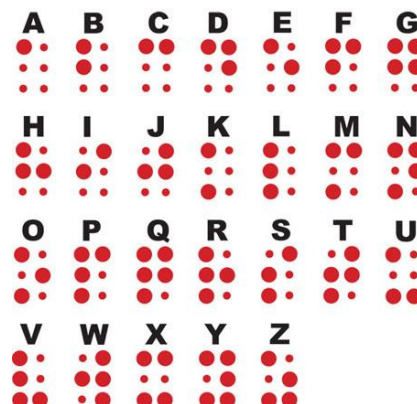


HOW A NASTY POKE IN THE EYE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE BLIND TO SEE

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.1; 7.2; 7.3 and 7.5



HERE'S LOUIS'S STORY!

Louis Braille was born in a small town in France in 1809, where his father was a leather smith. One day when Louis was three, he was playing with one of his father's sharp leather-working tools. The **awl** slipped, poking him in the eye. Doctors did not know how to treat his injury. An infection set in which spread to his other eye, leaving him completely blind.(1)

Louis's father recognized his blind son to be a bright child. His father managed to get him into the only school for the blind in all of France. At that time, nearly everyone believed that people who were blind couldn't do anything and couldn't learn anything. The general opinion was that there was no reason to try to educate them.

One day, when Louis was 12, an officer of Napoleon's army came by the school.(2) The officer demonstrated "night writing" being developed so that artillerymen could communicate at night. The plan was far too complicated for anyone to learn, so it never worked. Louis recognized that by using a system of raised dots on paper he could use his fingertips to see the letters. He worked for three years to perfect an **efficient** system that allowed his fingers to move across the page just as a sighted person's eyes do. Louis went on to develop a writing box. The box allowed anyone,

VOCABULARY

awl: a small pointed tool used for piercing holes, esp. in leather

efficient: achieving maximum productivity with minimum wasted effort or expense

References

(1)http://braillebug.afb.org/louis_braille_bio.asp

(2)<http://www.his.com/~pshapiro/braille.html>

LOUIS'S STORY (CONT.)

including a blind person, to make the dots in the orderly way necessary for them to be read by others. Ironically, the instrument he used for this writing was a blunt awl. The awl was the very same kind of tool that blinded him when he was a child.

The system, which bears his name, Braille, has been **adapted** to be used in all languages and is accepted around the world. The system was also adapted to musical notes, which is another universal language. Instead of being handicapped by the nasty poke in his eye, Louis managed to overcome his inability to see. He also **disproved** society's belief that the blind couldn't learn. His invention has changed the world for millions of sightless people.

VOCABULARY

adapted: make something suitable for a new purpose; modify

disproved: proved that something was false

Quiz

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.5 *Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.*

QUESTION 1. How do the first two paragraphs of the article contribute to the article's overall characterization of Louis Braille?

- The first two paragraphs introduce Louis Braille to the reader as a careless, privileged child.
- The first two paragraphs tell the story of how Louis Braille went blind and how he was perceived because of it.
- The first two paragraphs help the reader understand the role Braille's father played in his ability to invent a reading and writing system for the blind.
- The first two paragraphs provide extra details about Louis Braille that aren't vital for the article.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.3 *Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events)*

QUESTION 2. Louis Braille used the same tool to create the Braille system as the tool that blinded him when he was a child. How does this idea demonstrate irony?

- The reader knows that Braille's efforts were successful, but he did not know that they would be successful at first.
- An awl is the last tool a reader would expect someone to use to help people read and write.
- During Braille's lifetime, the awl both caused his blindness and helped him deal with his blindness.
- Braille's father also used the awl as part of his leather-working job.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.2 Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

QUESTION 3. Why is the visit from the officer of Napoleon's army an important idea in the article?

- a. The visit from the officer is not an important idea in the article, but the author included it as an interesting detail about Braille's life.
- b. The visit from the officer convinced Louis Braille not to try to join the army.
- c. The visit from the officer taught Louis Braille how the successful system of "night writing" allowed artillerymen to communicate in the dark.
- d. The visit from the officer inspired Louis Braille to develop a system of communication for blind people based on the ideas behind "night writing."

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.1

Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

QUESTION 4. Choose the best piece of textual evidence to support the statement that Louis Braille's invention helped to change society's perception of blind people.

- a. Instead of being handicapped by the nasty poke in his eye, Louis managed to overcome his inability to see. He also disproved society's belief that the blind couldn't learn.
- b. His father managed to get him into the only school for the blind in all of France. At that time, nearly everyone believed that people who were blind couldn't do anything and couldn't learn anything.
- c. Louis went on to develop a writing box. The box allowed anyone, including a blind person, to make the dots in the orderly way necessary for them to be read by others.
- d. He worked for three years to perfect an efficient system that allowed his fingers to move across the page just a sighted person's eyes do