

LOUIS BRAILLE

Lesson Plan

Reading by Feel

Lesson Plan for *Louis Braille*
Grade 2

Objective

To help students use hands-on experience to explore how braille made reading and writing faster and easier than previous systems for blind students.

Things Needed

- *Louis Braille* book
- Whiteboard
- Paper
- Toothpick (or another small, slightly sharp object)
- Foam alphabet letters

Before the Activity

Have students read the *Louis Braille* book. Stick foam letters to the paper to spell the following vocabulary words from the book:

- braille
- code
- institute
- sonography
- slate
- stylus

On separate slips of paper, use a toothpick to write the same words in braille, using the diagram of the braille alphabet on page 17 of the *Louis Braille* book as a guide.

Activity

To start, ask for a volunteer to read the Did You Know? sidebar on page 9: “Before braille, some blind students learned by feeling letters made from wood. Others felt letters pressed into wax tablets.”



Ask students to close their eyes. Then pass out the foam words. Have students try to guess which word they're holding by feeling the letters. After students have a chance to pass the words around and try guessing, ask the following questions:

- Was reading words this way easy or hard? (Answer: probably hard, since students had to feel letters one at a time and remember their shape)
- Would writing words this way be easy or hard? (Answer: probably hard, since students would have to create a whole letter without seeing it)
- What could we change to make reading and writing faster or easier? (Answers will vary.)

Louis Braille had an idea to make reading and writing faster and easier. Instead of raised letters, his system used raised dots. Pass out the slips of paper with words written in braille. Like last time, students should feel the letters and try to guess the word. Display the diagram of the braille alphabet from page 17 of the book on a screen at the front of the class to help students. After students have a chance to pass the words around and try guessing, ask the following questions:

- Compared with the raised letters, was reading braille easier or harder? (Answer: probably harder, since most students won't be familiar with the dot combinations)
- What made reading braille harder or slower? (Answer: Students had to look up the dot combination for each letter.)
- An earlier writing system, called sonography, used 12 dots instead of 6. How might reading braille be faster or easier? (Answer: Fewer dots would be faster to feel and learn.)
- How would braille be easier to write than raised letters? (Answer: Punching the dots would be much easier than shaping a letter.)

Evaluation

Could students figure out the word on each piece of paper they felt? Could the class answer the discussion questions?

Standards

This lesson plan may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' speaking and listening standards, grade 2 (SL 2.3).

