



THE
HADLEY SCHOOL
FOR THE BLIND

Braille Basics Course ComD 3360 Course Syllabus

Course Description

Would you like to be able to exchange messages with a family member, client, or student who is blind? Perhaps you would like to leave a note about preparing a meal, changing an appointment, or completing an assignment. Braille is the standard form of reading and writing that people who are blind use today. Mastery and use of Braille represent competence, independence, and equality. As such, they play a central role in the development of self-identity. As a sighted person, you can learn to read Braille visually. In fact, this course will give you the tools to communicate in writing with your family member, client, or student who is blind. Its goal is to enable you to read and write uncontracted Braille as well as to become familiar with how Braille is used, accessed and produced by children and youth who are blind.

This course is divided into 13 lessons. The first lesson briefly summarizes the history of Braille and describes the existing systems of Braille code. Then it lists the advantages of learning Braille and describes the devices used to produce it. Lesson 2 discusses early Braille literacy experiences for young children. Lesson 3 explains how to read the letters of the alphabet in Braille. Lessons 4 and 5 explain how to use the braillewriter and the slate and stylus to write Braille. Videoclips demonstrate the use of these Braille embossing tools. Lessons 6 through 9 explain how to write Braille letters, numbers, composition signs, and punctuation. Lesson 10 is an introduction to contracted Braille and Lesson 11 is an introduction to the Nemeth Code used in mathematics. Lesson 12 overviews some of the other Braille codes used in music and foreign languages and also discusses the use of tactile graphics. Lesson 13 then overviews the variety of Braille translation software and technology used in accessing and producing Braille. Some of these lessons will take two weeks and the course itself will take a full 15 week semester.

In lessons 3-9 there will be practice exercises to do, but not submit. Some of the lessons have short quizzes and all have an assignment. Some of the assignments can be submitted online. Others are prepared on paper with a slate and stylus and then braillewriter and sent through the mail. Each lesson is worth 20 points. There will be a final at the end worth 60 points. This makes a total of 300 points for the course.

This course also includes a Quick Reference Guide and a Resource List. The Quick Reference Guide illustrates all the Braille symbols introduced in this course and their print equivalents. The Resource List features providers of Braille writing supplies, various published Braille materials, transcriptions services, and suggested reading.

This course provides the basics needed for those interested in going on to learn contracted Braille. An option for further study is Hadley's course "Contracted Braille."

Required Materials

As a part of the course, you receive a small packet with a slate and stylus enclosed along with some Braille paper to use in your assignments. It may be helpful to purchase more heavyweight paper. A good choice is 60-70 lb. card stock, available from most office supply stores.

It is also strongly advised that you get access to a braillewriter for this course. Your local teacher of the visually impaired can help with this. If that is not possible, then you will need to follow the directions provided in this introduction on how to install the Braille font and Perky Duck Braille simulator on your computer.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Briefly describe the history of braille and the braille system of raised dots.
2. List the advantages of braille literacy for a person who is blind and the various ways it can be used in their daily lives and routines.

3. Visually identify the letters of the alphabet in braille, individually and in words.
4. Correctly insert paper into the slate and emboss with the slate and stylus.
5. Identify the mechanics of the braillewriter and describe how to emboss on the manual braillewriter.
6. Write and read letters, words, and the capital letter sign in uncontracted braille.
7. Write and read the number sign, numbers and the decimal and dollar signs in braille.
8. Write and read the following punctuation in braille: period, comma, apostrophe, question mark, hyphen, dash, exclamation point, parentheses, colon and semicolon and quotation marks.
9. Briefly describe what uncontracted braille is and when it is used.
10. Briefly describe other Braille codes used such as music, foreign language and Nemeth.
11. Briefly describe tactile graphics and its use with students who are blind.
12. Briefly discuss the most common software and technology used to access and produce braille with students of all ages who are blind.
13. Discuss ways to provide tactile literacy experiences including Braille with students who are of preschool age or older with multiple disabilities that cause them to be developmentally young.

How to Get Started

Begin by clicking on "Lesson 1: An Introduction to Braille." You'll notice that as you click on a lesson link, the list expands to reveal its components, including subsections and the assignment.