Louis Braille.

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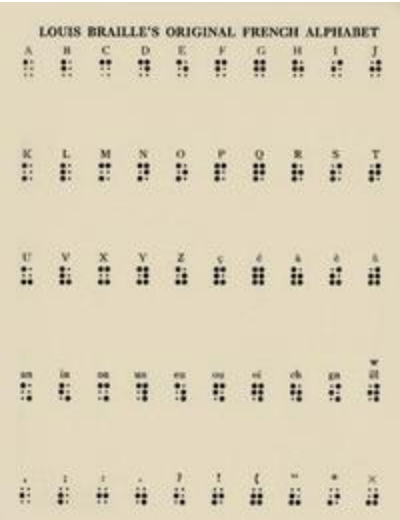
Inventor

- **Born:** January 4, 1809
- **Birthplace:** Coupvray, France
- **Died:** January 6, 1852
- **Place of death:** Paris, France

Louis Braille, like many inventors , realized his life needed improvement. He decided to do something to make it better and in the process helped many others.

Portrait of Louis Braille. Library of Congress



The original braille code for the French language, as devised by Louis Braille c.1824. By SteveStrummer

Louis Braille was born in France in 1809. When he was three years old he was involved in an accident that left him blind. At that time there were only a few schools for the blind in the world. He went to school at the Royal Institute for Blind Youth in Paris. There he received a very good education and began studying about the other scientific advances that were being made in the area of education for the blind.

While in school, Louis Braille realized that there was a strong need for a way to allow the blind to be able to read and write so that they could perform just as many tasks as sighted people.

After he finished his studies at the Institution, he became a teacher at the same school and designed a system of reading and writing for the blind. The Braille alphabet is a system of raised dots that the blind can read with their fingertips. The letters consist of six raised dots that can be formed into 63 combinations of letters, numbers, and common words.

In the past, Braille was produced by punching dots into heavy paper using an instrument resembling a pencil. Today there are Braille writers which allow a person to write as many as six dots at once by pressing six keys. The dots are pushed down

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into the paper so it has to be turned over to be read. Braille codes have also been developed for music and mathematics.

In the Braille alphabet one dot represents the letter A, and another dot added below it represents B. The first ten letters of the alphabet also stand for the numbers 1 through 10.

To save space, combinations of dots may mean common words or parts of words, such as "for" or "-tion."

Louis Braille died in 1852.

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By Phyllis Barkas Goldman

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