

British Braille 2004

List of Changes

The following is a detailed list of the changes and additions to the braille rules contained in the new edition of British Braille issued by the Braille Authority of the United Kingdom (BAUK). This edition replaces the previous edition published in 1992. The revision incorporates ideas and suggestions of braille users and producers collected since the last update in 1992, as well as making corrections. The document "Capitals in British Braille" published by BAUK in 1998 is also superseded by this edition of British Braille.

It is anticipated that braille producers will be able to incorporate these changes into their transcriptions by the end of August 2005, and this may be regarded as the official implementation date. However, braille producers and users who wish to proceed before that date may implement the rule changes as soon as convenient.

References in this document are to sections and paragraphs in the new edition.

General Structure

This edition of British Braille covers rules relating both to transcriptions where capitals are indicated, and those in which they are not. For economy of exposition this is achieved by inserting rules relating to non-capitalized braille only, at the relevant points, and marking these rules with an asterisk. Capitals are normally indicated in the examples in the print edition, but for non-capitalized braille the difference is generally just a matter of dropping the capital indicators, or of applying one of these marked rules to obtain the non-capitalized version.

Both a capitalized and a non-capitalized version of British Braille is being produced in braille. Both these versions contain the full set of rules. In the former version the examples are as in the print edition; in the latter both the text and examples are shown without capitals unless a point specifically relating to capitals is being illustrated.

Section 2. Characters and Signs

2.3. The oblique stroke is now a 2-cell sign, dots 456, 34, rather than the single-cell sign, dots 34. This removes the ambiguity with the contraction for "st". Examples are given in section 4.6.

2.4. Introduction of a part word italic sign (dots 46, 2). This sign is used where it is necessary to show that certain letters only in a word are italicized, e.g. word endings in grammar books. Its use is explained in 5.5.17-18. By using this sign it is no longer necessary to insert hyphens

in braille in such cases, and the print can be represented more accurately.

Introduction of an italic terminator sign (dots 46, 3). This sign is used to terminate an italic passage, and is placed at the end of the passage, rather than before the last word in the passage. The method is explained in 5.5.1 and illustrated in several examples within section 5.5 on italics. Note that the ordinary italic sign and italic passage sign (double italics) have not changed. Nevertheless this is an important change to the way italics are shown in braille for passages. The method is consistent with that used for capitalized passages, and corresponds more closely with what actually occurs in text and what you would do when using a word processor, where you turn italics off after the last word in a passage, rather than before it.

Introduction of a non-Roman passage terminator (dots 56, 3). This is used in a similar way to the italic passage terminator and capital passage terminator, and is explained in 5.8.2.

Inclusion of the capital terminator (dot 6, 3). This is the sign introduced in the leaflet on capitals mentioned above. Its use is explained in section 5.2 on capitals.

Note that the above three terminators form a group of signs with similar construction and use.

Inclusion of the computer code indicator sign (dot 6, 346). In literary braille this is mainly used when transcribing email and web addresses. Its use is explained in section 5.3 (see below).

2.6. Introduction of new signs for the following print symbols: cent when shown in print as a symbol rather than as an ordinary letter c (dot 4, 14), euro (dot 4, 15), yen (dot 4, 13456), commercial at (dot 4, 2346), copyright (dots 45, 14), registered trade mark (dots 45, 1235), trade mark (dots 45, 2345), bullet (dots 456, 256).

2.7. This is a table giving some signs from the UK braille computer code. These signs are standard, but included for the first time in British Braille, mainly for the transcription of email and web addresses, as explained in section 5.3.

Section 4. Use of Punctuation Signs

4.1.2. It is no longer necessary to insert an apostrophe in braille in cases such as 1930s (where the apostrophe is absent in print). Similarly, an apostrophe is not needed in cases such as Ps and Qs when capitals are shown. This change was made to enable braille to follow modern print practice more closely.

4.1.5 and 4.5.4. When print uses hyphens (rather than dots or asterisks) for omitted letters in words, braille should follow suit. This addition allows braille to naturally follow print in such cases.

4.3.1 and 6.1.4. It is noted that print sometimes uses a longer style of hyphen between numbers than it does between words (e.g. in page ranges in an index). The rule says that these

should be treated as normal hyphens in braille, rather than as dashes. This is normal transcription practice, but documented in British Braille for the first time.

4.3.5. The rule about dividing a braille line at a dash has been generalized, and clarifications have been added about special cases, such as the combination colon dash which should not be divided.

4.3.6. When a dash indicates suppressed letters of a word, a case such as "s----" where the single letter could be read as a wordsign, now requires a letter sign, thus removing the ambiguity. In cases such as "th----", the "th" should be uncontracted, again to avoid ambiguity.

4.4.3. When a series of dots is used in print to indicate an interrupted word, the ellipsis should be used in braille. This, like 4.1.5, allows braille to naturally follow print.

4.6.3. The oblique stroke may now begin or end a braille line, or may be spaced. This is possible because the new sign is unambiguous in each of these cases, so there is no need to apply special restrictions in braille as was previously the case. However, it is still recommended that division at the end of a braille line should be made after an oblique stroke, rather than before. When dividing a braille line after an oblique stroke it is no longer necessary to insert a hyphen in braille: with the new sign there is certainly no ambiguity here.

4.6.4. The new oblique stroke sign may be freely used in conjunction with the "st" contraction.

4.6.5. Simple upper wordsigns may also now generally be used in conjunction with the oblique stroke because the ambiguity has been removed. However, of the lower wordsigns, only "to", "into" and "by" following the oblique stroke may be used in contact with that sign.

4.7.5. A quoted heading divided over more than one line is treated as a single item as regards quotation marks: the opening quote is not repeated before each line. This is simply a clarification.

4.8. This section listing the order in which composition and punctuation signs should be given in braille has been moved from the start of section 4, where it appeared in the previous edition. Of particular note with capitalized braille is the fact that the letter sign precedes each of the capital indicators: single, word or passage. Thus if a letter occurs as the first item in a capitalized passage, its letter sign should precede the capital passage indicator. The rule is straightforward, but some instances such as this occurring with capitalized braille may be unfamiliar.

Section 5. Use of Composition Signs

5.2. This section on capitals contains most of the rules given in the leaflet "Capitals in British Braille" published in 1998, and replaces the corresponding section in the previous edition. However, rules in that leaflet relating to contractions and other specific areas such as

abbreviations have been moved to the relevant sections elsewhere in British Braille, e.g. 8.2.10 deals with sequencing and capital indicators.

5.2.1. This states that the indication of capitals in braille is optional in the UK.

5.2.5. A capitalized heading divided over more than one line is treated as a single item as regards capital indicators: a capital passage indicator is not repeated before each line. This is a clarification similar to 4.7.5.

5.2.16. The list of exemptions to the indication of capitals in braille has been reduced compared to the 1998 leaflet, since it is now stated generally in 5.2.1 that the indication of capitals is optional.

5.3. This is a new section providing for the use of signs from the UK braille computer code in literary braille to represent special strings of characters, e.g. email and web addresses, which might not be represented satisfactorily using the normal literary code rules. This method has in fact been in use for some time by transcription agencies when brailleing electronic addresses, but now that it is included in British Braille, explanatory notes explaining the method should no longer be required.

5.3.6. This rule points out that some cases of email and web addresses can be brailled by simply using grade one literary braille. However, it should be noted that BAUK recommends that the method employing computer code indicators and the computer code signs be the default method used in most transcription circumstances (although this is not explicitly stated in British Braille).

5.5. The examples in this section on italics reflect the change to the rule about terminating italicized passages mentioned above under 2.4. The placement of the terminator is covered in 5.5.1 and 5.5.2.

5.5.7. An italicized heading divided over more than one line is treated as a single item as regards italic indicators: an italic indicator is not repeated before each line. This is a clarification similar to 4.7.5 and 5.2.5.

5.5.9. For italicized words in which the letters are separated by hyphens, e.g. to indicate that the word is being spelt out, each part should be counted as a separate word as regards italics. This is a logical application of the normal rules for italics, but one which had caused some confusion amongst transcribers.

5.5.14. A foreign word which contains an apostrophe is treated as a single word as regards italics. For example, "Ch'un". Such cases were not covered previously.

5.5.17-18. These rules deal with using the part word italic sign, mentioned above under 2.4.

5.5.22. Where print uses underlining or bold, braille can normally italicize. But if the distinction between these different types of emphasis needs to be retained, this rule suggests that angle brackets may be used as a secondary indicator, and an explanatory note to the

reader be provided. This addresses the well-known problem in braille transcription of how to deal with significant differences in font types, short of defining specific indicators for underline and bold.

5.5.24. Print symbols should not, in general, be preceded by the italic sign, but if occurring within an italicized phrase should be counted as a word. If such a symbol, e.g. a plus or minus, is joined to an italicized word, the italic sign is placed before the word, not the symbol. This was not covered in the previous edition; the treatment is analogous to that of the ellipsis with italics.

5.6.2. This is an explicit rule stating when the letter sign should be used before single letters. (There is no change in practice, but no such rule was present in the previous edition.) Examples "a/c" and "I/O" show that the rule in the previous edition whereby the oblique stroke is dropped in such cases no longer holds: these should now be transcribed in full.

5.6.3. A single letter at the end of a sentence should be preceded by a letter sign, whether or not the following stop could be regarded as an abbreviation point. The ambiguity with the letter being read as a wordsign is thereby removed.

5.6.4. Letters at the beginning of paragraphs, e.g. a., b., etc., should be preceded by a letter sign whether or not followed by a full stop. This has been normal transcription practice, but was not stated in British Braille before.

5.6.6. This rule states that the letter sign is needed before a string of letters without stops unless starting with a capital indicator. Again, this is existing practice, but not explicitly stated in this general form in the previous edition. Note that for capitalized braille, the rule applies to the case where an abbreviation occurs within a capitalized passage, e.g. "BBC" in the middle of a capitalized passage would need a letter sign; however, such an abbreviation would not require a letter sign if it occurred at the beginning of the passage as it would then be preceded by a capital indicator.

5.6.10. This rule states that the letter sign should be used before single accented letters (e.g. when referred to in a grammar book), and may be needed if the letter is a word, to avoid an ambiguity.

5.7.3. The line sign may now be brailled unspaced from an apostrophe or hyphen, as with other punctuation marks. Previously the rule was that it should be spaced from those two signs, so the rule has been simplified.

5.8.2. This rule explains the use of the non-Roman passage terminator, mentioned above under 2.4.

Section 6. Numbers and Related Signs

6. The section previously titled "Mathematics" is now called "Numbers and Related Signs", so as to avoid misunderstandings about its contents.

6.1.3. The force of the numeral sign no longer carries over the hyphen. This change means that the numeral sign now behaves in the same way as the letter sign in this respect, and some awkward issues as to exactly when the numeral sign was needed after a hyphen (e.g. with compound numbers) have been removed: the simple rule is now that the numeral sign is always needed. This simplification to the rule also removes some ambiguities, although the cost is, of course, that the extra cell is used.

6.1.6. An additional example is given of an international telephone number, including the plus sign.

6.1.8. As a general principle, a dot in a string of digits should be represented as dot 2. This applies to decimal numbers, times of the day, section numbers, software program numbers, etc. Previously this applied only to decimals, and the other cases were treated differently, i.e. by the repetition of the numeral sign. The new rule avoids the need to make this distinction which is sometimes unclear. Note that abbreviated dates are still brailled by repeating the numeral sign, whether print uses dots or oblique strokes as separators.

6.5.4. This rule says that it is permissible to use arithmetical signs unspaced from following words, which was not stated in the previous edition. However, in such cases lower contractions should not be used at the beginning of those adjoining words.

6.5.5. Arithmetical signs can also be used close up to punctuation signs, e.g. quotes or brackets.

6.5.6. The rule concerning the use of the mathematical separation sign after a fraction has been stated more specifically, now saying that it is needed before following punctuation consisting of a lower a-j; previously the last clause was not included, so the rule might have been interpreted as including the hyphen or dash.

6.5.7. Chemical formulae in general material should be brailled using the normal literary rules for capitals, and the subscript sign should be retained as is normal in literary braille. This does not affect how such formulae might be brailled using science code, but the rule provides a method for general books which avoids the need to resort to a specialist code. This rule also gives additional examples of chemical formulae. Previously there was less guidance in British Braille and a variety of methods were used.

6.6.2. In the foreign ordinal termination "er", as in "1er", the letters "er" may now be contracted.

Section 7. Abbreviations and Symbols

7.1. The rules on print abbreviations have been presented as a logical extension of the general rules for the letter sign (section 5.6), and those for the capital indicators (section 5.2). The transcription of abbreviations in non-capitalized braille has been treated as a special case, as elsewhere in the codebook, but this is especially prominent in this section. A consequence of this reworking is that a wider range of cases as met with in modern text is covered in a logical way.

7.1.3. Cases such as "email", normally read as a word, do not require a letter sign.

7.1.4. As a general principle, abbreviations beginning with a lower case letter followed by a capital letter which is indicated as such, should be preceded by a letter sign. This applies, in particular, to unit abbreviations such as "mA". Previously a letter sign would not have been used in the case of units, which was an anomaly that would be hard to sustain in capitalized braille.

* **7.1.8.** In non-capitalized braille, a capitalized abbreviation including word fragments (such as CAMRA), need not be preceded by a letter sign if wholly pronounced as a word. Previously such cases were not covered in British Braille.

* **7.1.9.** For non-capitalized braille this rule provides for the possibility of separating initials and part words in an abbreviation by a hyphen instead of a space, e.g. in cases such as dBase. This method has been in use in practice, but was not documented.

* **7.1.10.** In non-capitalized braille, abbreviations for American states, such as CA or NY, should be preceded by a single letter sign whether they indicate one or more words.

7.1.12. Where a print abbreviation does not save space as against grade 2, e.g. pt. for "part", the rule now says that it is permissible for the abbreviation to be dispensed with (apart from unit abbreviations). Previously the rule said that the abbreviation should generally be dispensed with, so the change is now to fall on the side of leaving the abbreviation as in the original.

7.2.8. This rule gives an example of a string of unspaced asterisks and punctuation marks representing a swear word.

7.2.10. The new bullet sign, dots 456, 256, may be used, following print, to mark listed items, etc. However, rule 9.1.7 says that normal practice is to omit the bullet sign and use cell 5-1 layout for such items, as is the traditional braille practice. The availability of the bullet sign will nevertheless allow braille to follow the print more closely and retain the bullet where this is important, or where it is a personal preference.

7.3.2. Plural reference abbreviations, as in "78 ff" and "25 pp", now require a letter sign before the abbreviation; previously these were treated as special cases and no letter sign was used.

7.3.5. Where print uses multiple section and paragraph symbols, as in "§§5-6", only a single such sign should be used in braille. This rule removes the clumsiness of multiple paragraph symbols which are each brailled as "par".

7.5.5. Added to the list of units which should be unspaced from a preceding a number in braille, are monetary symbols. In particular, this applies to the euro and cent.

7.5.6. This rule contains additional examples of unit abbreviations placed between numbers, for example, 3m50 meaning 3 minutes 50 seconds. An example is also given for cases such as 3:32.68 (meaning 3 minutes, 32.68 seconds), as used in sports timings.

7.5.9. When the pound or dollar signs are used without a number, they should be brailled as dot 4, 123 and dot 4, 256, respectively, i.e. as the normal sign preceded by dot 4, but without a number sign. This is a natural extension of the new rule 7.5.10 (below).

7.5.10. When the pound or dollar signs are used in conjunction with letters, as in A\$50 (meaning 50 Australian dollars), dot 4 should be inserted before the sign to avoid ambiguities (e.g. the dollar sign would otherwise be read as an abbreviation point). This is a new introduction. Note that this use of dot 4 fits in with the family of other monetary symbols (e.g. euro, yen, etc.), which all have a dot 4 prefix. Note also that the signs for pound and dollar have not changed when used in normal contexts, e.g. £6.

7.5.12. When the degree sign is absent, temperature units should be spaced from the number, as in "21 C" (21 degrees Celsius). This is not a change from current practice, but was not documented before.

7.5.14. As in 6.5.6, this rule concerning the insertion of a dot 6 separator after indices, the degree sign, or prime signs, before following punctuation, has been clarified to say that it only applies if the punctuation consists of a lower a-j.

Section 8. Use of Contractions

8.2.5. Wordsigns should not be used for foreign words in Standard English Braille, e.g. in the German words "was" and "so", or in the Arabic word "As". This was not documented before.

8.2.7. The example "the with profits scheme" has been added, where "the" and "with" may be sequenced. When "a" is a foreign word it should not be sequenced, as in "the a priori".

8.4.9. This rule states that "to", "into" and "by" may be contracted and sequenced to a following capitalized word. This is a change to the rule previously published in "Capitals in British Braille" which stated that sequencing was not permissible in such cases; however, this now seems to be an unnecessary precaution.

8.4.11. "to", "into" and "by" may not be contracted before computer code indicators, nor before electronic addresses brailled in grade one.

8.4.12. This rule has been extended to say that "to", "into" and "by" may be contracted after mathematical signs; previously it only said that they could not be used before mathematical signs.

8.4.16. The contraction "be" may now in general only be used at the beginning of a word if it constitutes a syllable, and is unstressed. Previously there was no requirement that it be unstressed. For example, "be" can no longer be contracted in the word "beta" (the Greek letter), where it could have been previously. It is believed that this additional requirement will give more natural results, and there are several examples of this in the contraction list in Appendix III. The words "being" and "bein" are left as exceptions in which "be" should still be contracted.

8.4.21. The contractions "be", "con", "dis" and "com" may only be used at the beginning of a braille line in a divided word when the fragment on the new line is a dictionary word of cognate meaning, and the contractions would have been permissible in that word. Previously the clause that the fragment be a dictionary word of cognate meaning was not present; the intention is that the extra clause will exclude some unnatural cases. For example, "con" can no longer be contracted in the divided word "re- concile".

8.4.24. The rule about the use of the contractions for "in" and "enough" in conjunction with punctuation has been generalized to say that the string must contain an upper sign; previously it said that the string must contain a letter of the alphabet or an upper contraction. An example involving angle brackets is included to show the more inclusive effect of the amendment to this rule.

8.5.2. A rule is now given that the contraction "had" should only be used when the "a" is short, thus excluding the case "Hadrian". In practice this is generally not a change, but previously such cases were treated as exceptions in the word list in Appendix III, and the principle was not explicitly stated in a rule.

8.5.5. In the rule concerning the contraction "here", the condition that the "h" should be aspirated has been removed. Thus the contraction "here" is now permissible in "sphere".

8.5.7. The rule concerning the contraction "one" now explicitly says that it may be used in the ending "oney". Previously cases such as "money" and "honey" were regarded as exceptions, but are now included in the rule.

8.6.5. The contraction "ness" may now be used in feminine endings, unless preceded by "e" or "i", in which case the "en" or "in" contractions should be used instead. For example, "ness" can now be contracted in "lioness". This is regarded as a simplification of the contraction rules, by removing these special cases.

8.7.5. This rule concerning the need for a letter sign to avoid certain letter groups being read as shortforms (e.g. "al"), now notes that the letter sign is not needed in grade one braille, since no confusion can arise.

8.9.1. The rule on bridging contractions across a prefix and the rest of the word has been

liberalized to some degree. Previously there was a clause that excluded cases in which the rest of the word was another word of the same part of speech and with a similar meaning. This clause has been removed as it was thought to be rather too complicated a concept to apply in practice, making too fine a distinction. However, caution is still advised to avoid using bridging contractions which would make the word hard to assimilate by the reader. Examples of the effect of this change are: "denationalize" ("en" contraction now possible), similar to "denote" in which "en" always was possible; "misterm" ("st" contraction now possible), similar to "mistake" in which "st" always was possible; "predominate" ("ed" contraction now possible), similar to "prediction" in which "ed" always was possible.

8.9.3. The rule on bridging contractions across a suffix and the rest of the word now has the clause added that bridging contractions should be avoided when aspirated h is preceded by c, g, s, t or w. This idea is not new, but was not stated. An example is "kighthood" in which "th" is not contracted.

8.9.6. The contractions "ed", "en", and "er" are now permissible when the "e" forms part of a diphthong. E.g. these contractions are now permissible in "diaeresis", "phoenix", "Goering" and "Baedeker". As in 8.9.1, this is regarded as a simplification of the rules.

8.11.3. For Welsh words brailled in Standard English Braille, in the sequence "edd", the "ed" contraction should not be used, but "dd" may be (because "dd" is a distinct letter in Welsh). Similarly, in "off", "ff" should be used, but not "of".

8.11.4. In the sequence "aar" in Scandinavian words (where "aa" represents the letter "a" with a superscript circle), the "ar" contraction may still be used.

8.13.4. In stammered or slurred words, simple group signs may now be used across the boundary of slurred or stammered letters, but not composite group signs or shortforms. For example, "ou" but not "ount" can now be contracted in "coooooountry", but "ong" cannot be contracted in "loooong".

8.13.6. When stammered words, including hyphens, are italicized, each element separated by a hyphen is treated as a separate word as regards italics. E.g. in "s-sister", both the "s" and "sister" should be preceded by the italic sign. This is consistent with 5.5.9 dealing with spelt out words.

Section 9. Layout and Bookwork

9.1.6. This rule, dealing with headings, now mentions the use of end markers, 12 colons or 12 commas, at the end of sections. This is a standard transcription device but not previously covered in British Braille.

9.6.1. This rule, dealing with play layout, includes the case of transcriptions where capitals are indicated. In this case speakers' names are sufficiently distinguished if in capitals, and there is no need to italicize them as is usual for non-capitalized braille.

9.8.3. Where an indented passage occurs within a quoted or italicized passage, the quotes or italics only need to be reasserted at the beginning of the indented passage if it begins with a new paragraph. Similarly, the quotes or italics only need to be reasserted when the normal text resumes, if it begins with a new paragraph. This clarifies an issue not covered previously.

9.9.3. This rule on word division and contractions is now more specific. Division should not be made in the middle of a letter group constituting a phoneme or single sound (such as "ch" or "th") which would otherwise be contracted. However, a division can be made where the letters of the contraction belong to distinct sounds, such as "his- tory".

Appendices

Appendix I (B). Some of the names of the Hebrew consonants have been amended in line with more recent sources, but the table remains the same as regards the correspondence between braille signs and Hebrew characters.

Appendix I (E). The list of Welsh letters has been amended in accordance with current practice. The acute accent has changed to dots 25, and a grave accent, dots 23, has been added. It should be noted that a new contracted Welsh code has appeared since the last edition of British Braille, and the above changes are consistent with this new code. (Reference should be made to "Welsh Braille Code – Braille Cymraeg".)

Appendix III. Guide to Contracting. This list has been amended in accordance with the changes to the rules, e.g. as mentioned under 8.4.16 ("be"), 8.5.2 ("had"), 8.5.5 ("here"), 8.6.5 ("ness"), 8.9.1 (bridging contractions), 8.9.6 (diphthongs), 8.11.3 ("edd" and "off" in Welsh). In addition, a few additional examples have been added, e.g. Belvoir, bulblet, Ch'ing, filofax, fro-ing, Leneuve, pagandom, psion, Theakstone.

Index. This is far more detailed compared to the index in the previous edition. As a consequence the reader should now find it easier to go directly to a specific subject in the codebook, rather than having to check a number of possible places where it might appear.

August 2004