



Write a letter in Braille

Get involved with National Braille Week by creating your own message.

What you need

- A piece of white card
- A notebook
- A pencil or pen
- Eraser
- Ruler
- Glue
- Dried lentils
- Clear nail varnish

From 14 to 19 October it will be National Braille Week. Braille is a writing system for people who are blind or visually impaired. It uses raised dots to replace written letters so that people can feel with their fingers to read words. National Braille Week aims to celebrate and raise awareness of Braille as a vital tool that helps people read books for fun and for learning, and aids communication too.

Braille was invented in 1824. It is named after a French man called Louis Braille. He was blind from the age of three but left his home town aged 10 to attend a school for blind pupils in Paris. They had a basic system of raised dots for reading but, aged 15, Louis began to develop his own.

Today, technologies like voice-to-text software and smartphones mean Braille is used less often than it once was, but it remains an important tool. It is usually written by embossing (punching the raised dots into paper) by hand or machine. Here, we show you how to do it with dried lentils.

VERSATILE
Braille has been adapted for use in more than 130 languages.



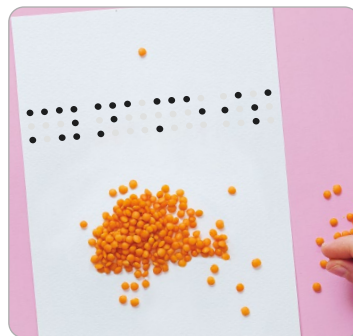
Use this Braille alphabet for your own message.



1 Think of the message you want to send and write it out in clear letters in your notebook so you can refer to it. Start off with a short, simple message.



2 Use the Braille alphabet above to translate your message into the correct dot pattern on your card. Make sure you leave space between each letter and word.



3 Dab a little glue on one side of a lentil – this can be fiddly, so go slowly – and stick it on a dot. Repeat this until all your dots are covered with lentils. Wait for it to dry.



4 Once the glue is dry, paint over the note with clear nail varnish. This will help to keep the lentils in place when someone is running their fingers over them.

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SCAN ME