

Lesson 12

Letter Sign

Speech Mannerisms: Stammering, Speech Hesitation or Elongation, Sound Imitations, Lipped Words, Dialect

Divided Words: Syllabicated and Spelled Out Words

Note: In this and future lessons there will necessarily be references to rules in *Braille Formats: Principles of Print to Braille Transcription* on subjects not addressed in *EBAE*. While studying *Braille Formats* you may encounter inconsistencies between rules in the two books. These inconsistencies are under study by BANA technical committees. Unless otherwise stated, when in doubt follow the rules as set forth in *EBAE* and this manual when preparing lessons or a certification manuscript.

12.1 Letter Sign in General [II.12]

The letter sign (dots 5-6), also known as the letter indicator, is a composition sign like the capital sign and the number sign. It is used to indicate that a letter or letter grouping *has a letter meaning*, and is not a whole-word contraction or a short-form word. Thus, the letter *d* standing alone has the whole word meaning *do*, but if a letter sign precedes it, it is read as the letter *d*. The letter sign is also used to differentiate between letters and numbers and with roman numerals (to be studied later).

12.2 Letter Sign (Indicator) Used to Identify Single Letters [II.12]

A letter sign is placed immediately before a single, lower-case letter. If the letter is capitalized, the letter sign is placed before the capital sign. Examples:

Make an x.

⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠

X marks the spot.

⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠

12.2a a, i, and o as letters and words. The letter sign is placed before the letters *a*, *i*, and *o* when they stand for letters, even though these letters have no contracted meaning. The letter sign is not used before the words *a*, *I*, and *O*. Examples:

Say the vowels, a, e, i, o, u.

⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠

I heard a child sing, "O come, all ye faithful—"

⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠

12.2b Plural letters. [II.12.a(4)] Where print shows an *s* added to a single letter to form a plural, in braille a letter sign is placed before the letter and an apostrophe is inserted before the *s*, whether or not it is shown that way in print. Examples:

11. With letter groupings joined to a number by a hyphen that could be mistaken for a short-form word. [Fr-10 6-ab]
12. With lowercase roman numerals and foreign ordinal numbers (to be studied in Lesson 14).

Do Not Use the Letter Sign

1. With the words *a*, *I*, and *O*.
2. With letters that are followed or preceded by an apostrophe, hyphen, or dash indicating omitted letters. [Fish 'n' Chips d--n]
3. With letters designating topics in outlines or listings if they are followed by or enclosed in punctuation.
4. With letter groupings that could not be mistaken for a short-form word. [XYZ]
5. With words, names, or letter groupings that correspond to short-form words, but, because of context, could not be mistaken for one.
6. With a contraction that immediately follows a number, as in ordinal numbers. [1st 4th]
7. With any letter that is immediately followed by a number. [M6]
8. With letter groupings followed immediately by a number, or by a hyphen and a number, that will not be confused with a short-form word. [TY60 ty-60]
9. With words following a number and a hyphen, unless all of the letters of the word could be misread as a number. [6-pack]
10. In stammered words (see 12.7.a). [b-b-boy]
11. With initials and abbreviations followed by periods or a slash (to be studied later).

Drill 23

Practice brailleing the following sentences.

1. Little Timmy has learned to write but he sometimes forgets to cross his t's and dot his i's.
2. In algebra, the unknown quantity is represented by x.
3. If A has two apples and B has three apples, how many apples do they have altogether?
4. In the word "siege," I can never remember which comes first, the "i" or the "e."
5. D Day, June 6, 1944, was the day set for the landing of Allied forces on the Normandy beaches.
6. The patient was given a large T-bone steak to eat before the second set of X-rays was taken.
7. His duties are: a. to process the mail; b. to answer the phone; c. to receive visitors; and d. to take dictation.

8. Section 4(d) of the outline should be greatly condensed.
9. "Peg o' My Heart, I love you."
10. Grandma said that the modern generation had gone berserk over rock 'n' roll.
11. Line AB is parallel to CD and intersects EF at O.
12. I am also sending a copy of this letter to Ab.
 13. Al is a popular guy.
 14. A meeting will be held on the 15th for the purpose of organizing a new 4-H Club.
 15. You will find sections 216b and 216c of the law extremely ambiguous.
 16. Next semester Whitney hopes to be promoted to Grade 6A.
 17. The diameter of a circle is equal to 2r.
 18. During the Cold War U-2 planes were shot down deep inside Soviet territory.
 19. She is taking a series of vitamin b12 shots.
 20. The medical examination showed that he was in A1 condition.
 21. I save money by buying V-8 juice in either a 6-can case or a 4-case lot.
 22. We read about Haroun-al-Raschid in the Arabian Nights Tales.

12.7 Speech Mannerisms [II.13]

In the preceding section it was stated that when a letter is joined to a word by a hyphen, the letter sign should precede the letter. In speech mannerisms such as stammering, speech hesitation, and vocal sounds, letters are separated by hyphens but they are actually part of the word itself. In such cases, the letter sign is not used.

12.7a Stammering. When brailleing stammered words, the letter or contraction preceding and following the hyphen must be identical. Therefore, contractions cannot always be used. Examples:

m-m-m-mine	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠	s-s-say	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠
g-ghost	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠	wh-which	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠
f-f-father	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠	wh-where	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠
b-by th-the way	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠	st-st-stop	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠

EXCEPTION: When a word that can be represented by a one-cell whole-word contraction is stammered, such as *c-c-can* or *d-d-do*, the contraction is not used even though the letters are the same before and after the hyphen (⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠). The use of the contractions would render the words in braille as *can-can-can* and *do-do-do*.

To, *into*, and *by* should be contracted and joined to a stammered word. Examples:

into th-these	to d-do	by th-the way
⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠

(could)a [could have]	me(bb)e [maybe]	(th)' [the]
p(in)ny [penny]	dep(ity) [deputy]	y(ou)r [you're]
(wh)(er) [where]	(some)rs [somewhere]	(their)selves
d(in)t [didn't]	'(st)ract(ed) [distracted]	b(of)e [both]
fay(the)r [father]	(dis)truc(tion) [destruction]	f(er) [for]
(must)a [must have]	(good)un [good one]	com'(er)e [come here]

If, however, the use of a contraction in a word printed in dialect would obscure its meaning or pronunciation, the contraction should not be used. Example:

lyedee [lady] ⠠⠨⠏⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨

In order to reflect dialectal pronunciation, the *th* sign is used instead of the *the* sign when in dialect *thee* replaces *thi*, as in *(th)e(en)g* [thing] and *(th)e(en)k* [think] — or, where *the* replaces *te* or *de*, as in *mat(th)(er)* [matter], *sis(th)(er)* [sister], *bat(th)(er)y* [battery], and *mur(th)(er)* [murder]. [X.34.e(1)] This rule applies whether the word is written as a whole or elongated as in *the-e-enk*.

When in dialect *you're* is written *your*, do not use the short-form word because it does not retain its original meaning.

12.8 Divided Words [II.13]

12.8a Words divided into syllables. In syllabicated words the hyphen always occurs at the end of a syllable; therefore they may be divided between lines after any hyphen.

12.8a(1) Words divided into syllables for dramatic effect. In order to prevent misunderstanding, contraction usage is restricted in syllabicated words. The only contractions that *can be used* when brailleing a word that has been divided into syllables for dramatic effect are:

- *and, for, of, the, with.* Examples: (for)-ti-tude b(and)-age
- one-cell, part-word contractions including *in* and *en*. Examples: (en)-li(st)
m(in)-is-t(er)
- one-syllable initial-letter contractions. Examples: (day)-(time) (right)-i(st)
- one-syllable, short-form words. Examples: (great)-(er) (quick)-ly

The following contractions *cannot be used* if they constitute the *entire* isolated syllable:

- one-cell, whole-word contractions. Examples: can-did so-da (ch)ild-i(sh)
- one-cell, lower sign contractions (except the part words *en* and *in*). Examples: con-tract was-sail be-have mo(th)-(er)-in-law
- one syllable, final-letter contractions. Examples: (for)(th)-(right)-ness
com-m(en)t bal-ance (in)-di-g(ence) b(less)-(ed) less-(en)

6. "If you'll be m-i-n-e mine, I'll be t-h-i-n-e thine, and I'll l-o-v-e love you all the t-i-m-e time."
 7. "Come on now! All together! Make it loud! Spell it and yell it! Let's go! C E N T R A L! Central!" urged the cheerleader.
 8. "I loht my ten thenth, Thuthie," sobbed the little girl.
 9. "Iffen I cain't keep goin' fer long, I kin allus set a spell and sip my Harm Walker Likker," said the old mountaineer.
10. "Theess leetle fellair ees lookeeng for hees seestair," explained the Mountie.
 11. "And have you consithered, O'Reilly, that the pattrer of little feet manes that you'll be nadin' mor-r-re bread and butther and tay on the table?"
 12. The sign in the barracks read: A·T·T·E·N·T·I·O·N! LIGHTS OUT AT 2300.
 13. Oh, what a beau-ti-ful morning!

EXERCISE

Prepare the following exercise for submission to the instructor. As in previous lessons, the running head, **LESSON 12**, should appear on the first line of every page of the exercise. On the first page only, center the title of the story **SCHOOL DAY** on the third line. Leave a blank line between the title and the beginning of the text. Do not leave blank lines between paragraphs.

SCHOOL DAY

It never would have happened to me if Miss Nellie Peabody, the pretty schoolmarm of Possum Hollow, hadn't suddenly eloped with Everett Stamp, the mail carrier for Route 3. This created a crisis in the Possum Hollow School, and in a weak moment I agreed to step into the breach and teach the entire school — all the way from kindergarten to grade a8.

My troubles began early. The children were all seated when Terence O'Shaughnessy came running through the door. I asked why he was late, and he answered in his broadest Irish brogue, "The battery in me fayther's car was dead." I explained to Terence that the word is pronounced bat-ter-y, not bat-ther-y. But he, not the least bit convinced, glared at me as he took his seat, and snarled, "Divil a bit! That's the way me fayther says it, and me fayther is always right."

I then proceeded with the calling of the roll. I had progressed from the A's through the M's when I became conscious of the fact that the back of the room was enveloped in clouds of smoke. I was frantically looking about to locate the safest exit through which to herd my charges when I discovered the source of the smoke. A huge hulk of a boy, about six feet, two inches tall, clad in blue overalls and a multi-colored T-shirt and wearing colossal brogans that looked to be at least size 12d, was slouching in his seat in the back row calmly smoking a corncob pipe.

"What do you mean by smoking in school?" I demanded.

"We-e-e-ell, I reckon a m-m-man kin have his m-m-mornin' pipe," he drawled. "Y' know the m-m-mailman run off with the t-t-teacher, and my pa made me g-g-go clear into

t-town and g-g-git the m-mornin' paper so's he c-c-could read the g-g-gossip. So th-thar w-warn't t-t-time for my m-mornin' p-p-pipe."

"Well, you just put that foul-smelling thing out and do without your smoke for one morning," I snapped.

"Okay," he assented sullenly. "Some p-p-people t-treat you like a ch-child. I bin s-smokin' my p-p-pipe since I was th-thirteen. Some f-folks oughta l-look out for th-theirselves 'steada b-bossin' others 'round."

After the smoke had cleared away I returned to my pedagogic duties, listening to the kindergarten contingent recite their ABCs. Even these little tykes seemed determined to test my patience to the utmost. Whenever little Luigi recited the alphabet he insisted on stopping at *q*. When I asked him why he did this, he replied, "But teachair, Q is for quit — I the-e-enk," and the class roared with laughter. When we came to arithmetic I asked 1st-grade Judy how much 7 and 7 make, and she replied sweetly, "Theventy-theven, Mith Olthen," and again the school rocked with laughter at my expense.

During that whole long day there was one fleeting moment of satisfaction. This happened during the 4th-grade spelling lesson. It became painfully apparent that the children were all having difficulty with words that contained both the letters "e" and "i." Finally, Al asked in desperation, "But how can we tell which comes first, Miss Olsen?"

"Al," I replied, "one thing that will help is to remember this little verse: 'When the letter *c* you spy, place the *e* before the *i*.'" After that, Al and the rest of the class as well had much less trouble.

About this time, noticing that the children were becoming restless, I announced we'd have a real spell-down — choosing up sides and everything. We started with easy words, and for a while things proceeded smoothly and without notable incident. But then it was Jimmy's turn, and I gave him the word "frog." "F-r—" began Jimmy. He hesitated and started over again. "F-r—f-r—" Jimmy appeared to be completely at sea. Just then I detected Tom reaching over and jabbing Jimmy with a pin, and Jimmy finished in a blaze of glory, "—o-g!" I ignored the prompting and went on.

Finally the field was narrowed down to just two survivors; Dorothy Stamp, a bespectacled, pony-tailed intellectual colossus, and little Percy Littlejohn, a precocious brat who always read with expression. (I could envision the day when Percy would be the announcer on the Possum Hollow radio station and would dramatically proclaim the virtues of K-9 dog toys and 2-dog leashes to an enthralled public.)

"Your word is sat-is-fies, Percy," I said.

Percy spelled it with confidence: "S-a-t-i-s-f-y-s."

"How do you spell it, Dorothy?" I asked, and she triumphantly spelled it correctly: "S-a-t-i-s-f-i-e-s."

As I presented Dorothy with a new 3r game as the prize for being the A1 speller of the school, little Percy's small world of conceit came tumbling down amid anguished howls and copious tears, and my little world of peace and tranquillity came tumbling with it.

At last that long day came to a close, and with it my country schoolteacher career was ended. As I stepped out into the bitter cold of that January 1935 afternoon my lips said “Br-r-r-r,” but my heart uttered a fervent “Thank God!” I was an older and wiser woman. I had learned three never-to-be-forgotten facts: (a) kids say and do the darnedest things, (b) patience is a virtue well worth cultivating, (c) a schoolteacher's life is anything but a bed of roses.

