# Using Braille for Language Learning

Braillists Foundation

https://braillists.org

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## How does braille help with learning languages?

* Using braille may improve your spelling in the target language.
* It will assist with your understanding of sentence structure and grammar.
* You are able to read more accurately, this is an essential skill for translating.
* Being able to accurately read the language will improve your writing overall.
* You have a greater range of materials available to you as, if you have a braille display, you can read any electronic materials in that language, rather than having to rely on audio only.

## Creating a braille rich environment

* Use a platform like Netflix, which offers subtitles, to watch a film in the target language. Set the subtitles to English, and to braille output on your phone. When paired with a braille display you can listen to the film and also read the subtitles in English if there are words that are unfamiliar to you.
* Set the language on your phone to whatever language you are learning. Listening to voiceover helps enforce it, but so does using your phone with a braille display so you are also reading in the target language.
* Download Kindle books in the target language and read them using a braille display.
* Label household items to remind yourself of their name in the language you are learning.

## Using BRFs to learn.

There are languages that are more difficult to learn without the use of electronic braille because they do not use the Latin alphabet. When learning these languages, having access to a braille display, and BRFs will enable you to progress much quicker.

If you can get books transcribed as BRFs this is helpful, particularly for languages like Hebrew. Finding a transcriber may be the hardest part, but once you find one you can access the materials. BRF files are also a good way of producing work for your instructor, if your instructor is a braille reader.

## General learning tips

The hardest thing, at least initially, is remembering different braille symbols, such as accented letters and punctuation. These tips will help you with reading and writing.

* Read as much as you can, read out loud because it's easier to pick up mistakes.
* Reade along with a book, you can use Voice Dream Reader to read the braille and have text to speech as well. Set the tts to a slow rate and read along with it.
* Find blind people in other countries who you can write to. You don't have to send hard copy letters, you can also email them, but make sure you read and write those emails using braille!
* Create flash cards. Write down key words as you learn them, either on sheets of paper, or note cards. Write the word, and the English definition. You can easily look over these. Writing down the words helps you learn them, and you build your own dictionary. A nice way to do this is to buy a small ring binder and cards, because you can move the cards around easily so they are in alphabetical order, or group by word type, such as nouns, verbs etc.

## Resources

### RNIB braille indexed address book

This is a small two ring binder with alphabet cards, and 100 blank sheets of braille paper. Designed for writing down addresses, it is a great way of building your own dictionary when you are studying a language. You can use the note cards with a Perkins, or with a slate and stylus.

<https://shop.rnib.org.uk/braille-indexed-address-book-2224?BB14>

### Refill paper for the address book

100 sheets of white cartridge, 140 GSM, paper.

<https://shop.rnib.org.uk/white-cartridge-paper-refill-for-bb14-bb11-2226?BB14R>

### World Braille Usage

World Braille Usage provides a summary of the braille alphabets and other basic punctuation and signs used in 133 languages across the globe. Often referred to as the "Braille Bible," it is really useful when you are either transcribing text into braille or learning a language.

BRF: <https://www.perkins.org/international/about/world-braille-usage>

Hard copy (from the RNIB): <https://shop.rnib.org.uk/world-braille-usage?25460302>

### RNIB education collection

The RNIB Bookshare services is available to schools supporting blind learners. You may find some foreign language texts in the collection.

<https://www.rnibbookshare.org/cms/bookshare-books-braille>

### Bookshare

Bookshare is a service for people with print reading disabilities. When you sign up, you can access many books in accessible formats, including texts in other languages.

<https://www.bookshare.org/cms/>

### DZB (German Library for the Blind)

This library provides books in braille to people who are blind in Germany. They have allowed those from outside the country to access their electronic resources in the past.

<https://www.dzblesen.de/>

### JBI International

The Jewish Braille Institute provides services worldwide, enabling blind people to access books and other materials that are of interest to the Jewish community. They also offer downloads of BRF files, including the Hebrew Bible.

<https://www.jbilibrary.org/library>

### Biblical Original Language Studies, Duxbury

The Biblical Original Language Studies braille translator allows you to produce braille files which include text from various biblical languages. The translator can handle all of the scripts, making language production easier.

<https://www.duxburysystems.com/biblical_scholar.htm>

### Biblical Language Study

Sarah Blake LaRose teaches biblical Hebrew and Greek at Anderson University in the United States. She is a blind braille transcriber and is able to teach both students who are blind and those who are sighted. She also provides transcription services, specialising in biblical and modern languages.

<https://night-light.org/index/seminary-resources/language-study/>