# A Summary of Unified English Braille

Compared with Standard English Braille

Here is a summary of the main differences between Standard English Braille and Unified English Braille for ordinary text. Some knowledge of grade 2 (contracted) braille is assumed.

The main Reasons for the Change to UEB were:

* UEB brings more accurate translation, particularly from braille to print
* It is one single code for all subjects (except music)
* It is one code across the English-speaking world, so more braille available.

## Changes to Contractions

Nine contractions are removed in UEB:

ALLY, ATION, BLE, BY, COM, DD, INTO, O'CLOCK, TO.

All the others are the same.

Because of this, some words will appear differently in UEB to SEB. For example:

* Really now uses the EA sign
* Nation now uses the TION sign
* Doubled uses the ED sign

There is now always a space between each word, so words "and", "for", "of", "the", "with" and "a" are now written with spaces between them.

There are minor differences in contraction use, for example:

* Words like "caveat" and "genealogy" now can use EA
* Words like "silenced" and "Spencer" now use ENCE
* Shortforms are not used next to slash, e.g. "above/below" because they are not "standing alone"

Capitals are shown:

* Dot 6 indicates a single capital letter
* Dot 6, 6 indicates a capital word
* Dot 6, 6, 6 is the start of block capitals (3 or more words)
* Dot 6, 3 is the end of capitals.

Dots 5-6 is now called a grade 1 indicator: it is still used to prevent misreading something as a contraction, but only used where needed. For example, there is no need to use it in "BBC" or "PM" because these can't be misread as anything else. The grade 1 indicator comes before capital signs, for example:

* CD: dot 5-6, 6, 6, C, D

The grade 1 indicator can also be used before things which aren't letters, for example a question mark standing alone is dot 5-6, 2-3-6.

## Punctuation and Symbols

Most basic punctuation signs, including comma, full stop, question mark, basic quotes and hyphen are the same. Here is a selection of new signs:

* Dot 6, 2-3-6: open single quote
* Dot 6, 3-5-6: close single quote
* Dot 5, 1-2-6: open round bracket
* Dot 5, 3-4-5: close round bracket
* Dot 4-6, 1-2-6: open square bracket
* Dot 4-6, 3-4-5: close square bracket
* Dot 4, 4-6, 1-2-6: open transcriber note
* Dot 4, 4-6, 3-4-5: close transcriber note
* Dot 2-5-6, 2-5-6, 2-5-6: ellipsis (dot dot dot)
* Dot 6, 3-6: dash
* Dot 5, 6, 3-6: long dash
* Dot 4-5-6, 1-4-5-6: hash sign (hash tag, pound)
* Dot 5, 3-5: asterisk (star)
* Dot 4, 1: at sign
* Dot 4-6, 3-6: underscore character (e.g. in email or a blank to fill in)

## Numbers and Arithmetic

Numbers are written as before, with dots 3-4-5-6 followed by letters A-J. Here are some signs you might find with numbers:

* Dot 2: comma (the same in long numbers)
* Dot 2-5-6: decimal point (the same as full stop)
* Dot 5: a space within a number
* Dot 3-4: in a number indicates a fraction, e.g. number, A, 3-4, B
* Dot 4, 1-2-3: pound sign
* Dot 4, 2-3-4: dollar sign
* Dot 4-6, 3-5-6: percent sign
* Dot 4-5, 2-4-5: degree sign

The basic arithmetic signs are:

* Dot 5, 2-3-5: plus
* Dot 5, 3-6: minus
* Dot 5, 2-3-6: times
* Dot 5, 3-4: divided by
* Dot 5, 2-3-5-6: equals

The equals sign normally has spaces on both sides, the other signs are unspaced.

## Accent Signs

Rather than just one sign to show any kind of accent mark, UEB has different signs to show which accent is used. Here are some common ones:

* Dot 4-5, 3-4: acute accent
* Dot 4-5, 1-6: grave accent
* Dot 4-5, 1-4-6: circumflex accent
* Dot 4-5, 2-5: diaeresis or umlaut

## Bold, Italic and Underline

UEB can show different styles of text. These signs are collectively called typeforms.

* Dot 4-5, 2-3: bold one character
* Dot 4-5, 2: bold word
* Dot 4-5, 2-3-5-6: bold passage (3 or more words)
* Dot 4-5, 3: end bold

For example: bold "amazing fact" would have dots 4-5, 2 before each word.

For example: bold "incredible amazing fact" would have dots 4-5, 2-3-5-6 at the beginning and dots 4-5, 3 at the end.

Italic uses dot 4-6 instead of 4-5.

Underline uses dot 4-5-6 instead of 4-5.

## Further Resources

UKAAF has various reference documents you can download in print or braille from [www.ukaaf.org/ueb](http://www.ukaaf.org/ueb) including a single page reference sheet, more detailed explanation of the changes and a series of 10-minute podcasts.

The International Council on English Braille maintains UEB: the Rules of Unified English braille is the definitive reference book: [www.iceb.org/ueb.html](http://www.iceb.org/ueb.html)

These documents can also be ordered in hard copy braille from RNIB, call 0303 123 9999 or go to www..rnib.org.uk/shop