

# BANA in Brief

## What is Braille?

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Braille is a system of touch reading and writing in which raised dots represent letters, numbers, punctuation marks, and other symbols. It is written in horizontal lines from left to right across each page, much as print is written. Braille users read by moving a finger or fingers from left to right along each line. Both hands are usually involved in the reading process. The average reading speed is about 125 words per minute, but greater speeds of up to 200 words per minute are possible.

The braille cell, an arrangement of six dots, is the basic unit for reading and writing braille. Sixty-three different patterns are possible from these six dots.

By using braille, blind people can review and study the written word. They can become aware of different conventions such as spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, and footnotes. Most of all, blind individuals can have access to a wide range of reading materials – educational and recreational reading as well as other practical materials. Written matter that is part of daily adult life is equally important. These materials include contracts, regulations, insurance policies, directories, appliance instructions, and cookbooks, to name a few. Also through braille, blind people can pursue hobbies and cultural enrichment with such materials as music scores, hymnals, playing cards, and games.

Braille has undergone continuing modification, particularly the addition of contractions, which represent groups of letters or whole words that appear frequently in a language. The use of contractions permits faster braille reading and helps reduce the size of braille books.

## Our Mission

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BANA's mission is to assure literacy for tactile readers through standardization of braille and/or tactile graphics.

## Our Purpose

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BANA's purpose is to promote and to facilitate the use, teaching, and production of braille. It publishes rules, interprets and renders opinions pertaining to braille in all existing and future codes. It deals with codes now in existence or to be developed in the future, in collaboration with other countries using English braille. In exercising its function and authority, BANA considers the effects of its decisions on other existing braille codes and formats; the ease of production by various methods; and acceptability to readers.

## Who We Are

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The Braille Authority of North America is made up of the member organizations shown below. One representative of each member organization serves on the BANA Board.

### Full Members:

**American Council of the Blind** – *Kim Charlson, Representative*

**American Foundation for the Blind** – *Frances Mary D'Andrea, Representative*

**American Printing House for the Blind** – *Mary Nelle McLennan, Representative*

**Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind & Visually Impaired** – *Diane Wormsley, Representative*

**Associated Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired** – *May Davis, Representative*

**Braille Institute of America** – *Bonnie Grimm, Representative*

**California Transcribers and Educators for the Blind and Visually Impaired** – *Sue Reilly, Representative*

**Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired** – *Doug Jacques, Representative*

**CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind)** – *Darleen Bogart, Representative*

**National Braille Association** – *Cindy Laurent, Representative*

**National Braille Press, Inc.** – *Jefferson Lyons, Representative*

**National Federation of the Blind** – *Jennifer Dunnam, Representative*

**National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped** – *Judy Dixon, Representative and BANA Board Chair*

## **Associate Members:**

**Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind** – *Maria Stevens, Representative*

**T-Base Communications** – *Sharlyn Ayotte, Representative*

## **How We Serve**

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BANA works largely through committees composed of transcribers, braille readers, education and rehabilitation professionals, and Board Members. These committees are charged with updating the braille codes, formats, and techniques as well as the on-going business of BANA. Changes to the braille codes may be suggested by readers, transcribers, and/or producers. Before any changes are made, the committees carefully study possible impact on readability and usability of braille as well as the benefit the change would provide. Proposed new codes or revisions are submitted to all other technical committees to avoid conflict with existing braille codes. The BANA Board issues final approval for adoption and dissemination.

BANA committees are:

- Braille Formats Technical Committee
- Computer Braille Technical Committee
- Crafts and Hobbies Technical Committee
- Literary Braille Technical Committee
- Mathematics Braille Technical Committee
- Music Braille Technical Committee
- Publications Committee
- Refreshable Braille Technical Committee
- Tactile Graphics Technical Committee
- Ad Hoc Committee on Braille Research
- Ad Hoc Committee on Early Literacy Materials Production
- Ad Hoc Committee on Signage and Labeling
- Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Language Materials
- Ad Hoc Committee on Standardized Tests
- Ad Hoc Committee on Uncontracted Braille

# BANA Publications

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## BANA Braille Codes Update 2007

This latest update for several BANA codes is available for download from [www.brailleauthority.org/update07.html](http://www.brailleauthority.org/update07.html). The Update is being distributed in several electronic formats through the BANA web site ([www.brailleauthority.org](http://www.brailleauthority.org)). Users can easily create print and/or braille versions from the files provided there. Hard copy print or braille versions will be included with the relevant codebooks being sold by the American Printing House for the Blind.

These code changes took effect on January 1, 2008.

## Literary Braille

*English Braille, American Edition, 1994; Revised 2002.*

Source: APH;

Braille: Catalog #5-35932-00, Cost: \$21.50;

Print: Catalog #7-35932-00, Cost: \$21.50

## Braille Formats

*Braille Formats: Principles of Print to Braille Transcription, 1997.*

Source: APH;

Braille: Catalog #5-09652-00, Cost \$30.00;

Print: Catalog #7-09652-00; Cost: \$30.00

## Computer Braille

*Computer Braille Code: 2000 Revision.*

Source: APH;

Braille: Catalog #5-24410-00, Cost: \$20.20;

Print: Catalog #7-24410-00, Cost: \$20.20

*Computer Braille Code: Flowchart Design for Applicable Braille Codes Supplement, 1992.*

Source: APH;

Braille: Catalog #5-24440-00, Cost \$17.00;

Print: Catalog #7-24440-00, Cost: \$17.00

## Mathematics Braille

*Nemeth Code for Mathematics & Science Notation, 1972 Revision.*

Source: APH;

Braille: Catalog #5-87430-00, Cost: \$40.00;

Print: Catalog #7-87430-00, Cost: \$40.00

*Addendum 1 to the Nemeth Code for Mathematics & Science Notation, 1972 Revision: Ancient Numeration Systems.*

Source: APH;

Braille: Catalog #5-68654-00, Cost: \$5.00;

Print: Catalog #7-68654-00, Cost: \$5.00

*Guidelines for Mathematical Drawings, 1983.*

*Addendum: Number Lines, 1990.*

(These two documents are sold as a set.)

Source: NBA;

Print price, \$44.00;

Braille price to individuals, \$56.40;

All others, \$136.50

*Learning the Nemeth Braille Code: A Manual for Teachers and Students, 1987.*

Source: APH;

Braille: Catalog #5-68653-00, Cost: \$32.00;

Print: Catalog #7-68653-00, Cost: \$32.00

*Braille Code for Chemical Notation, 1997.*

Source: APH;

Braille: Catalog #5-16900-00, Cost: \$20.00;

Print: Catalog #7-16900-00, Cost: \$20.00

## Music Braille

*Music Braille Code 1997.*

Source: APH;

Braille: Catalog #5-09651-00, Cost: \$41.00;

Print: Catalog #7-09651-00, Cost: \$41.00

## **Refreshable Braille**

*Provisional Guidelines for Linear Braille Format, 1987.*

Source: APH;

Braille: Catalog #5-09650-00, Cost: \$3.00;

Print: Catalog #7-09650-00, Cost: \$2.50

### *Sources for purchase:*

American Printing House for the Blind

1839 Frankfort Avenue

PO Box 6085

Louisville, KY 40206-0085

Phone: 502-895-2405

Toll Free: 800-223-1839

FAX: 502-899-2274

Website: <http://www.aph.org/products/bana.html>

E-mail: [info@aph.org](mailto:info@aph.org)

National Braille Association

95 Allens Creek Road. Bldg. 1, Suite 202

Rochester, NY 14618

Phone: 585-427-8260

FAX: 585-427-0263

Website: [www.nationalbraille.org](http://www.nationalbraille.org)

E-mail: [nbaoffice@nationalbraille.org](mailto:nbaoffice@nationalbraille.org)

## **BANA-Announce Listserv**

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BANA-Announce is a one-way email list that disseminates official BANA information. To join this listserv, send a blank email message to [bana-announce-subscribe@brailleauthority.org](mailto:bana-announce-subscribe@brailleauthority.org) and follow the directions in the confirmation email that will be sent automatically in response to your subscription request. If you have any problems, contact [Kim Charlson](mailto:Kim.Charlson@Perkins.org) at [Kim.Charlson@Perkins.org](mailto:Kim.Charlson@Perkins.org) or call 1-617-972-7249 for assistance.

## Contact BANA

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The Braille Authority of North America is a member of the International Council on English Braille. For more information about ICEB, visit [www.iceb.org](http://www.iceb.org).