



Observation list 'Good skills in reading Braille'

Name student:

Date:

Before reading:

The student uses a rubber pad, if necessary. (A rubber pad is required when reading a single paper.)	Yes	No	
The chair has the right height (the feet need support).	Yes	No	
The table has the right height (the student's elbows should be a little higher than the top of the desk or table being used).	Yes	No	
A finger warming up has been done before beginning.	Yes	No	
The student orientates himself with a flat hand across the page.	Yes	No	

Sitting position while reading:

The student sits straight up	Yes	No	
The book is well-positioned (body centered)	Yes	No	
The shoulders are relaxed	Yes	No	
The elbows are relaxed and positioned down to the body	Yes	No	
Both feet are next to each other	Yes	No	

Reading technique:

The index fingers are parallel to each other	Yes	No	
The student uses six fingers (or eight) horizontal on one line	Yes	No	
The fingers are slightly bended	Yes	No	
Thumbs are downwards	Yes	No	

The student shows no vertically regressive hand movements	Yes	No	
The student uses very little pressure when touching the Braille dots. The touch is adequate: 'tickle the dots'. (The fingertips should not be white while reading.)	Yes	No	
On demand, the student can read a text with only the right hand	Yes	No	
On demand, the student can read a text with only the left hand	Yes	No	
(From the age of 8 or 9 years:)The left hand reads half of the line, the right hand takes over in a fluent movement.	Yes	No	
(From the age of 8 or 9 years:) The student utilizes a two handed reading technique in which the left hand locates the beginning of the next line, while the right hand finishes reading the previous line.	Yes	No	
The student is aware of the importance of a good reading technique to improve the reading speed	Yes	No	

Put a cross in the empty squares where the answer was a "no" and formulate goals

p.s. The goals for the coming period must have been discussed with the student.

Goals for the coming period:

- 1
- 2
- 3

Guidelines for the teaching of Braille reading technique are included in a separate appendix.

Guidelines for teaching

‘Touch in conjunction with movements of the two hands, can achieve almost the same facility and speed as visual reading’. (Millar, S. 2008)

Before starting with Braille, readers should pay much attention to adopt a proper position when reading and writing. By allowing the pupil to practise this every day, you make the pupil aware of his attitude so that he will make it a habit to check his posture. Apart from the fact that an incorrect attitude can also cause fatigue or pain complaints, it turns out that a good reading posture can also prevent mistakes while reading Braille. These are mistakes with regard to position (for example, exchanging b for e); they can occur if the pupil constantly adopts the same attitude in relation to the material to be read (body, arm, hands). The height of the table and chair should be adjusted to the pupil's length. For more sensitivity in the fingers, the hands should be warm. Encourage the child to use both hands while reading.

Problems of insufficient knowledge of Braille letters	Guidelines for the teaching of Braille reading technique
The student has problems with letters which are reversals of another letter. e/i j/ h w/r f/d	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be aware that the elbows hang aside the body. When the elbow moves sideways than the fingertip rotates and will increase errors.• Offer exercises with flash letters. Encourage the movements of the hands from left to right• For those who became blind later in life: refer to the visual image of the letters (the dots of f, en j in Braille have agreement with the form in black print.
The student does not notice the lower dots: mistakes in o (student reads e) l (student reads b) p (student reads f)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage a reading technique in which the fingers slightly flatter on paper.• Let each line of text be followed by a blank line.
The student is rubbing in a vertical manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Rubbing” should not be accepted. Reading Braille requires movement forward, not up and down. Each vertical movement must be prevented since this will seriously delay the reading speed in a later phase. If a word or letter is not recognized, do not make an up-down movement (this is called “rubbing”). In that case the fingers must go back again and another attempt must be made.• Encourage to use the most sensitive part of the fingertips, the ball of the fingers.• Practice in reading rhyming words• Select texts that are at students' instructional or easier reading level.• Do exercises with flash letters and flash words in a line• Encourage rereading to develop the automatic recognition of simple words• Let each line of text be followed by a blank line.

Problems in advanced reading	Guidelines for the teaching of Braille reading technique
The index fingers are not parallel to each other in the middle of the line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware that the elbows are placed beside the body. The elbows are relaxed and positioned down to the body, the index fingers will go stand by itself in the correct position. • Explanations for children: the index fingers are in love and want to hug each other, in the middle of the line.
The student reads only with index finger(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach in the most deliberate way: Create awareness, otherwise slow reading will remain. Explain: the forefingers are the primary reading fingers and the middle and third fingers help to keep place on the line and increase speed, • Make sure the other fingers in learning Braille always be at or above the line. Do not let the other fingers make a fist. The other fingers are required to be able to follow the line and to orient in the beginning and the end of the line. • Use a long line length to give the opportunity to develop the skill of two handed reading. • Set goals with the student: at what lessons/ length of exercising / at what lessons do you apply reading with more fingers. • The ultimate goal is: read with 3 fingers of each hand.
The student uses too much pressure while reading (fingertips are white)	Explain: Keep your touch light. The touch must be adequate: 'tickle the dots'. Let the student brush his fingers across the skin of the hand. He will feel the texture of the skin and hairs, compare it with Braille. Braille requires a light touch. Improve the touch sensitivity.
The student reads with one hand and is not able to read a text with the other hand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach in the most deliberate way: For the optimal reading technique it is necessary that both hands can read independently. Provide awareness, otherwise slow reading will remain. • The first step is to make the weaker hand follow the other hand • Make arrangements for transition to the new line (see below the item about newline) • Use a rubber pad so the page will not shift. • Train the weak reading-hand. Start with simple reading exercises (flashwords between a line, rhyming words in a row from left to right) • Determine achievable goals for improvement and regularly evaluate.

<p>Problems with transition between lines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no take over in the middle of the line from the left to the right hand in a fluent movement. • The left hand doesn't locate the beginning of the next line, while the right hand finishes reading the previous line. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observe whether the motor skills are sufficiently developed to perform these independent movements. This skill is related to the development of lateralization and dominance. Realize that different movements of the hands, can only be learned at a minimum age of 8 or 9 years. Since the motor skills are not sufficient yet, let the child read with both hands together. Meanwhile it is important to determine which hand is the dominant hand. 2. Is the motor sufficiently developed (age above 8 years), realize that a transition of reading hand in the middle of the line is not always (immediately) achievable. It is always important to use both hands, even if one is less sensitive. It is important to determine which hand is the dominant hand. Make the hand you are trying to strengthen read at least one word at the beginning or end of the line. Train de weaker hand each day a few minutes by reading more simple exercises (in the level of the weaker hand). The final goal is try to bring the index fingers together somewhere in the middle of the line, letting the right hand finish while the left hand returns to the left margin to locate and begin the new line. 3. For those who became blind at a later age: teach the take-over technique from beginning: The student utilizes a two handed reading technique in which the left hand locates the beginning of the next line, while the right hand finishes reading the previous line. The two hands read independently from the start of learning Braille. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make exercises to switch hands halfway line. Use a sign as recognition (dot 2,4,6 and 1,3,5) in the middle of the line as a mark (a hole) to switch hands. • Reading of rhyming words and poetry facilitates fluent movements. Make agreements with the student how many words will be read by the weaker hand. • Determine intermediate goals along with the pupil. Evaluate the goals.
<p>The reading has a slow speed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For more sensitivity in the fingers, the hands should be warm. • The student needs access to a wide variety of motivating reading materials.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage reading with both hands. • As many fingers as possible on the line. • Use the take over technique and both hands read independently. • Use a light pressure • Make use of echo reading, reading together, or taking turns reading. • Make progress clear to student (use a stopwatch. ('you can improve your record')). • Expect students to reread exercises until they achieve fluency. • Encourage daily reading at home.
The student is tired quickly or has pain in the elbow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beware of RSI ! • Observe the reading and sitting position (elbows relaxed hanging down and may not move along while reading). • Check the height of the table top and seat or put the book on your lap. • Take time to relax fingers and shoulders. • Choose alternate exercises (flashwords, rhyme words, short text). • Read regularly for short periods

Effective teacher skills:

- Awareness of the optimal reading technique by teacher and student. Teacher and Braille students realize that it is never too late to improve the reading technique.
- Create high and positive shared expectations for learning Braille.
- Observing and analyzing data
Establish goals per pupil depending on the age and possibilities (choose motivating reading materials)
- Effective and efficient teaching.
- Interaction between teacher and child/student
Express agreement on the operating point during the reading lesson. (Do not give unsolicited physical help, as correcting elbows or shoulders.)
Feedback at each Braille lesson. Teachers need to seek feedback on their practice from both students and colleagues.
Let the pupil express his/ her goals for the coming Braille lessons.
The student can make a note of his / her duty point. The more the student becomes his own teacher the more successful the achievement outcomes.

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