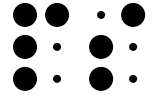
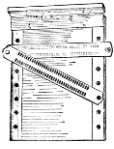


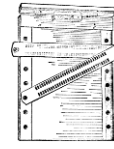
LOUIS BRAILLE



Louis Braille (1809-1852) was a French man who is famous for inventing a system of reading for the blind. Braille became blind when he was young, after an accident in his father's shoemaking workshop. His parents were very loving and supportive, and they made sure that he received the best education available at that time in France. He was a very bright student and, at the age of ten, won a **scholarship** to study at the Royal Institute for Blind Youth in Paris. The students at this school were taught mostly **orally**, but there were a few books available in "raised print," a system developed by the founder of the school, Valentin Haüy. Haüy's system used heavy paper with embossed (raised) letters, which the blind reader could trace with his or her fingers to "read" the letters of the alphabet. These books were large, heavy, and not very **convenient**. Braille was one of the best students at the school and, after graduating, became a professor there. He soon decided to develop a better system of reading for the blind when he came across the invention of Charles Barbier. Barbier was an Army officer who created his own **nocturnal** reading method for soldiers to be able to see at night—using 12 raised dots on cardboard. These dots could be arranged and rearranged to form different words. Braille changed this method by **reducing** the 12 dots to 6 smaller ones in **varying** patterns of **domino**-like "cells" and making them all a **uniform** size. The main difference between his method and Barbier's was that each letter could be read with just one touch, which made the process of reading a lot faster. Braille continued to improve and **perfect** his method all throughout his life. The Braille Method, as it is called today, was not used until after his death, but it has become the **standard** method of reading for people who cannot see. It **enables** blind people of any age to read with the tips of their fingers. Braille's great compassion for others with his **disability** resulted in the creation of a **tactile** alphabet that has helped blind people all over the world. If you go to almost any public building in the U.S. today, you will see signs on the walls in Braille.



QUESTIONS



I. Discuss the following questions aloud or answer them on a separate piece of paper.

- A • What heroic actions did Braille perform?
- B • How does Braille exemplify the virtue of compassion?
- C • Can you identify with anything in Braille's life?
- D • What is something interesting you learned in this biography?

II. Answer these questions in the boxes provided.

1.

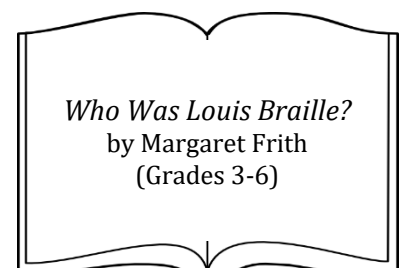
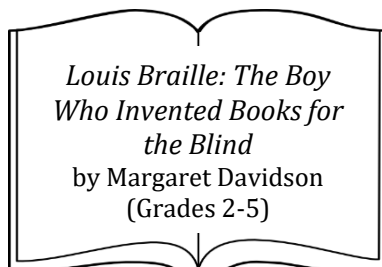
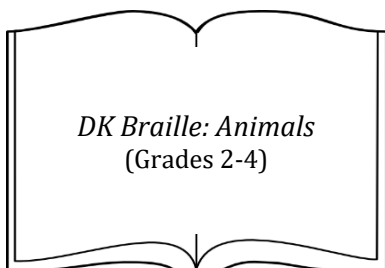
Braille's country:	Century born:
Main accomplishment:	

2. What advantages did Louis Braille have growing up?

3. What was the problem with Valentin Haüy's "raised print" system?

4. Compare the reading methods of Haüy, Barbier, and Braille.

III. Choose from these recommended books to learn more about Louis Braille.



COMPASSIONATE HEROES IN OUR COMMUNITIES



Spotlight on: **Social Workers**



Social Workers play a very important role in our communities. They help the most **needy** and **vulnerable** people in society by providing them with the right **resources** for their particular needs. They give counsel and support to people who are going through difficult experiences. Social workers can be found in hospitals, mental health and **substance abuse** agencies, schools, **criminal justice** systems, and **psychiatric** facilities. A social worker must be a **sensitive**, caring, and supportive person.



ASSIGNMENTS

- I. If you don't know much about social workers, research the profession and write a brief description of what they do.
- II. Interview someone who is a social worker. Write down the questions and answers from your meeting. (There are many types of social workers who work in almost every field, so you will probably have to limit the research to a specific type of social worker.)

Questions to consider for an interview:

- How long have you been a social worker?
- What initially interested you about this profession?
- What is a typical day like for you? What kinds of things do you do?
- What skills does a person need to be a social worker?
- What is the hardest part about the work you do?
- How do you show compassion to the people who are in your care?



HOW TO BE A COMPASSIONATE HERO



Be kind!	Don't be cruel!
Be generous!	Don't tease!
Be encouraging!	Don't hold a grudge!
Forgive easily!	Don't make fun of others!
Be considerate!	Don't be selfish!



THINGS TO THINK OR TALK ABOUT



- ✓ Do you listen to other people's problems patiently? Are you sensitive to other people's feelings?
 - ✓ How do you think you can become a more compassionate person? Name concrete ways.
- ✓ How important is kindness in everyday life?
 - ✓ Are there people in your life with whom it is difficult to be kind? Why?
- ✓ Would your friends describe you as a sympathetic person? Why or why not?



WRITING EXERCISES



<p>1. Write two things you can say to someone who is upset:</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>2. Write two ways you can show compassion to animals:</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>3. Write two ways that you can show compassion in sports:</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>4. Write two kind things that teachers do for their students.</p> <hr/> <hr/>

5. Using the chart by **Louis Braille** (see below), write your complete name in the box:

⠁	⠃	⠉	⠇	⠑	⠋	⠎	⠏	⠗	⠊	⠕	⠖	⠓	⠔
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n
⠏	⠑	⠒	⠕	⠗	⠘	⠙	⠚	⠛	⠜	⠝	⠞		
o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z		



CHALLENGE QUESTION

Irena Sendler once said: "Heroes do extraordinary things. What I did was not an extraordinary thing. It was normal." Write a short essay discussing why Sendler's actions were, in fact, extraordinary and therefore heroic.