ICEB

International Council on English Braille (ICEB)
Unified English Braille (UEB)

Quick links for UEB: Rules of UEB, Guidelines for Technical Material (GTM), UEB resources, UEB History

Quick links to other pages: ICEB home, Committees, Contact Us, Site Map

Unified English Braille was developed by the International Council on English Braille to unify the braille codes used among English-speaking countries and to unify the braille symbols used in literary, mathematics and computing contexts. It was ratified in 2004 and is now used in many countries around the world, including Australia, Botswana, Canada, Fiji, Ghana, India, Ireland, Kiribati, Malaysia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, the Philipines, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Tonga, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Vanuatu, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. ICEB continues to monitor the use of UEB and clarify or review its symbols and rules as necessary.

Rules of Unified English Braille, Second Edition, 2013

The **Rules of Unified English Braille** is the definitive UEB Rulebook produced by ICEB. Hard copies are available for purchase from RNIB in print and braille at an affordable price. The electronic files are available below for free download and can be printed or embossed for personal use.

The PDF version is designed for printing. See: Rules of Unified English Braille 2013.pdf.

A PDF version with hyperlinks is also available. It is designed for easy navigation when accessing the document directly online. See: [Rules of Unified English Braille 2013 (linked).pdf](#).

The braille edition of the UEB Rulebook, in six volumes, is available as formatted braille (BRF) files with page size 25 lines by 30 cells: [Rules of Unified English Braille 2013 vol 1.brf](#) - front matter, Sections 1-2
[Rules of Unified English Braille 2013 vol 2.brf](#) - Sections 3-8
[Rules of Unified English Braille 2013 vol 3.brf](#) - Sections 9-10
[Rules of Unified English Braille 2013 vol 4.brf](#) - Sections 11-16
[Rules of Unified English Braille 2013 vol 5.brf](#) - Appendices 1 [shortforms list] and 2 [word list]
[Rules of Unified English Braille 2013 vol 6.brf](#) - Appendix 3 [symbols list]

The UEB Rulebook has been translated into French. The PDF version is available for free download: [Rules of Unified English Braille 2013-Translated into French.pdf](#).

Translation of the Rulebook into further languages is welcome. Permission must be sought from ICEB by a recognised Braille Authority for the language. Funding and translation is then provided by the requesting Authority.

Updates to the Rules of Unified English Braille (2013)

As at July 12, 2022.

A number of updates to the **Rules of Unified English Braille** have been approved, taking effect immediately, and will be included in the next edition. Transcribers and designers of braille translation software and equipment are asked to implement these changes now.

2.6 Standing Alone

(April 19, 2017): The line indicator (dots 456) added to the "standing alone" rule with a new example.

(July 12, 2022) Section 2.6 rewritten to clarify the effect of a medial indicator on the "standing alone" rule.

The updated rules including the above changes can be downloaded from:
[Rules of UEB section 2.6 Standing Alone with Simbraille (PDF)](#) - for print readers
[Rules of UEB section 2.6 Standing Alone with Unicode (PDF)](#) - for use with a screen reader or refreshable braille display
[Rules of UEB section 2.6 Standing Alone braille (BRF)](#) - for embossing or use with refreshable braille display

3.28 Check mark tick ⠡⠩

New UEB symbol (April 18, 2018) Use for (U+2713) and (U+1f5f8).

3.28 Check mark, tick ⠡⠩
3.28.1 Follow print for use of the check mark.
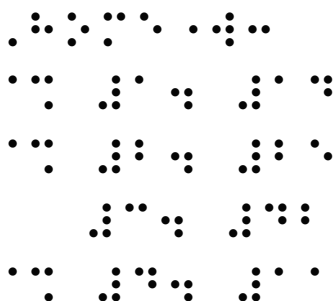*Examples:*

Homework:
✓ 1. 14
✓ 2. 25
  3. 42
✓ 4. 11

Sample ballot:
J. Hadfield
S. Marino
I. Wong ✓

⠨⠑⠄ ⠐⠶⠳⠮⠀⠄ ⠆⠀⠂⠇⠓ ⠰⠿⠨⠒

⠆⠀⠪⠆ ⠠⠃⠮⠍⠐⠳⠮ ⠒

⠆⠀⠹⠆ ⠠⠙⠱⠪⠪

⠨⠱⠆ ⠨⠫⠆⠿ ⠐⠒

[Their✓ There] son is kind.
I will go [yesterday ✓tomorrow].
The [child✓ children] is happy.

⠦⠮⠀⠐⠖⠮⠐⠒ ⠠⠀⠳⠪⠂⠪ ⠩⠱⠩ ⠪⠽ ⠰⠽⠹⠆

⠨⠂ ⠲ ⠼⠃ ⠆⠮⠙⠽⠝⠹⠪⠐⠒ ⠐⠪⠪⠫⠮⠓⠓⠪⠰ ⠰⠽⠹⠆

⠨⠩ ⠆⠮⠃⠽⠪⠇⠐⠒⠐⠒ ⠐⠙⠪⠙ ⠪⠽ ⠘⠂ ⠶⠶⠩⠹⠆

4.6 German letter sharp s (eszett)

New UEB symbol (July 12, 2022) Use for lower case ß (U+00DF) or capital ß (U+1E9E)

4.6 German letter sharp s (eszett)

⠠⠩ ß German letter sharp s (eszett)
⠠⠀⠠⠩ ß capital German letter sharp s (eszett)

4.6.1 Follow print for the transcription of the German letter sharp s in an English context.

Examples:
I support the SG Sonnenhof Großaspach football team.

⠨⠂ ⠆⠥⠏⠏⠪⠓⠞ ⠮ ⠠⠠⠩ ⠠⠪⠝⠝⠪⠝⠓⠕ ⠠⠛⠗⠪⠩⠪⠎⠏⠪⠡ ⠋⠪⠪⠞�247⠄⠇
⠆ ⠶⠐⠳⠆

4.6.2 Follow the rules of capitalisation. The capitals word or passage indicators are used where a capitalised word or passage includes the capital German letter sharp s.
Refer to: Section 8, Capitalisation.

Examples:

The print capital form ß is used in capitalised words.

⠠⠱ ⠏⠓⠄⠰ ⠐⠈⠏⠄⠞⠈⠇ ⠿⠍ ⠐⠌⠱ ⠈⠌

⠠⠹⠱ ⠄⠆ ⠐⠈⠏⠄⠞⠈⠇⠄⠌⠱ ⠘⠱⠂⠢

FRIEDRICHSTRAßE   ⠐⠐⠨⠗⠊⠑⠙⠗⠊⠡⠎⠞⠗⠁⠘⠑ ⠨⠜⠈

4.6.3 Use the sign from the German language braille code for passages where a significant knowledge of German is presupposed or where the German language is being taught.
Refer to: Section 13, Foreign Language for more guidance.

7.6 Quotation marks, apostrophe

(October 8, 2019)

The rule is simplified, removing the concepts of "nonspecific" and "predominant" quotes; the importance of the apostrophe in braille is emphasized; there is an expanded section on avoiding ambiguity; and a section is added to give guidance for software developers. There are several new examples.

The new rules can be downloaded below:
[Rules of UEB section 7.6 Quotation marks, apostrophe (PDF)](#) - recommended for print readers
[Rules of UEB section 7.6 Quotation marks, apostrophe (BRF)](#) - recommended for use with a refreshable braille display
[Rules of UEB section 7.6 Quotation marks, apostrophe (Word)](#) - available for use with a screen reader

10.9 Shortforms

(July 12, 2022)

The rules have been modified to allow a medial capitals indicator or terminator in longer words containing shortforms which meet specific criteria. The rules relating to avoiding confusion with shortforms have been rewritten to give greater clarity.

The updated rules including the above changes can be downloaded from:
[Rules of UEB section 10.9 Shortforms, with simbraille (PDF)](#) - for print readers
[Rules of UEB section 10.9 Shortforms, with Unicode (PDF)](#) - for use with a screen reader or refreshable braille display
[Rules of UEB section 10.9 Shortforms, braille (BRF)](#) - for embossing or use with refreshable braille display

10.12.2 Error in brailling of example

(March 15, 2017)

The lower groupsign for "ea" is not used in the word "reactor".

Strong contractions; See Section 10.3:

CANDU reactor ⠀⠄⠨⠉⠒⠩⠀⠒⠊⠡⠩⠒⠱⠒
[Canada Deuterium Uranium]

15.1.3 New rule allowing use of the line indicator (dots 456) in tabular material

(April 19, 2017)

15.1.3 When columned or tabular material is changed to a linear format in braille, the line indicator may be used to mark the breaks between the columns. The line indicator is unspaced from the text in the preceding column and is followed by a space before the text of the following column. Use of the line indicator within tables is not mandatory and should be determined according to the format guidelines of the producing agency or braille authority. Other methods for separating columns in braille are also permissible.

Example:

Child	Brenda Rose Laura	Sept. 16, 1952	Medicine Hat	AB	Canada

…

⠠⠔⠣ ⠠⠎⠃⠡⠞⠹ ⠠⠁⠏⠏⠑⠝⠙⠊⠭ ⠼⠁

⠠⠡⠁⠝⠛⠑⠎ ⠞⠕ ⠞⠓⠑

⠠⠎⠓⠕⠗⠞⠋⠕⠗⠍⠎ ⠠⠇⠊⠎⠞ ⠷⠂⠄⠔⠄ ⠼

⠠⠥⠑⠃ ⠺⠑⠃

Appendix 1: Shortforms List

Added words:

(March 26, 2015) under "said" the word **unsaid**, under "paid" the word **unrepaid**

(April 24, 2020) under "blind" the word **DeafBlind**. Note the specific capitalisation.

(May 15, 2021) under "after" the words **aftermentioned** and **aftertheater**, under "before" the word **beforementioned** and under "must" the word **mustardy**.

(July 12, 2022) the Shortforms List has been consolidated and the entries under each shortform are now strictly alphabetical. The rules for list construction have been clarified and updated to give the rule for the addition of specific words with an interior indicator.

The updated Appendix including the above changes can be downloaded from:
[Rules of UEB Appendix 1, with simbraille (PDF)](#) - for print readers
[Rules of UEB Appendix 1, with Unicode (PDF)](#) - for use with a screen reader or refreshable braille display
[Rules of UEB Appendix 1, braille (BRF)](#) - for embossing or use with refreshable braille display

Complete list of changes

A complete list of changes listed above can be downloaded from:
[Rules of Unified English Braille Updates as of July 2022, with simbraille (PDF)](#)

Guidelines for Technical Material

This guidelines document was first produced in October 2008 by the Maths Focus Group, a subgroup of the former UEB Rules Committee during the UEB development phase. The purpose of this document was to give transcribers enough information and examples to produce Mathematics, Science and Computer notation in Unified English Braille.

In August 2014, a new version was produced to correct errors in the first edition. Hard copies of the 2014 version are available for purchase from RNIB in [print](#) and [braille](#). Electronic versions are available for free download in print or braille:
[Guidelines for Technical Material 2014 (PDF format)](#)
[Guidelines for Technical Material 2014 (BRF [formatted braille] format)](#)

For those who already have copies of the October 2008 edition, errata are available in print (5 pages) and braille (7 pages):
[Errata GTM 2014 (pdf format)](#)
[Errata GTM 2014 (brf [formatted braille] format)](#)

Revisions to Guidelines for Technical Material

The Guidelines for Technical Material are currently under revision and will be released in sections for immediate use. Changes in the use of technical symbols that have been approved by the ICEB Executive are also listed below.

In all files, each math example is followed by a verbalization enclosed in quotation marks. Print readers are advised to use the PDF file because many versions of Word will not properly show the math symbols. The Word file is accessible for those who wish to use a screen reader. A braille display will provide optimum reading.

3. Signs of Operation and Comparison

Approved October 2018. This is the first completed section of the revised Guidelines for Technical Material (GTM).

[GTM 3. Signs of Operation and Comparison (PDF)](#) - recommended for print readers
[GTM 3. Signs of Operation and Comparison (BRF)](#) - recommended for use with a braille display. It is formatted with with 30 cells per line and 25 lines per page.
[GTM 3. Signs of Operation and Comparison (Word)](#) - available for use with a screen reader

Symbol assigned for triple vertical bar

(August 15, 2017)

The triple vertical bar ⦀ (U+2AF4, U+2980 or U+2AFC in print) is a sign of comparison meaning is similar to, as in same shape but different size. Its UEB symbol is ⠘⠿⠇ (dots 3456-456-123). It will be used in the same way as other signs of comparison and is included in the revision of **3. Signs of Operation and Comparison**.

Example:
ABCD ⦀ EFGH

⠀⠁⠃⠉⠙⠀⠘⠿⠇⠀⠀⠑⠋⠛⠓

UEB training and resource materials

ICEB has compiled a list of [UEB training and resource materials](#) available for free from its member countries.

UEB History

In April 2004, the ICEB General Assembly declared Unified English Braille to be substantially complete and that it could be recognized as an international standard and considered for adoption by individual countries. The original UEBC Research Project and its subcommittees were disbanded and replaced by a new project charged with oversight over UEB, including its further development.

After official adoption in five countries, the ICEB Executive, at its July 2010 meeting, determined that the development phase was complete and replaced the development project with a UEB Maintenance Committee. UEB has now been adopted in all seven member countries of the ICEB.

Some of the documents pertinent to the research phase of the project, as listed in UEBC Research Project Information -- especially the final committee reports presented at the 2004 General Assembly -- are useful as background information as to how UEB was developed and why certain decisions were made. However, the documents listed on this page provide the most up-to-date information about UEB and in particular, the Rulebook should be considered definitive.

Page content last updated: November 10, 2022.