USING THE BRAILLE SPANISH CODE
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This document is based on the braille code used in the United Kingdom for transcribing text in Spanish, and includes advice about various layout conventions.

THE BRAILLE SIGNS

For ordinary letters of the alphabet, the braille signs are the same as for Standard English Braille (SEB).

For accented letters, the following special accent signs should be used:

```
á   ë
è   ü
í   ň
ó   ú
```

There are only two contractions:

```
æ diphthong
ll
```

Composition signs, e.g. letter sign, numeral sign, etc., are the same as in SEB, with the following exceptions:

```
capital sign
italic sign
double italic sign
```

Punctuation signs are the same as in SEB, with the following exceptions:

```
abbreviation point (as well as apostrophe)
question mark
opening guión
closing guión
```
Print symbols, e.g. dagger, percentage symbol, etc., and mathematical symbols, e.g. plus, minus, etc., are represented by the same signs as in SEB, with the following exception:

: asterisk

(The Spanish asterisk is currently used, but the use of the SEB asterisk would bring this into line with the other print symbols. In practice, in bilingual texts, the SEB asterisk is usually used anyway to avoid confusion with the wordsign “IN”.)

THE RULES

The Spanish Code as used in the UK is a much simplified version of the real Spanish Code used in Spain, thus making an introduction to the Spanish language as straightforward as possible for VI students, without them having to learn a complicated new braille code at the same time. With this in mind, the approach to the production of Spanish language material is: if there’s no rule to the contrary, the SEB rule applies.

The contractions.

Æ: This should only be used where print uses the diphthong. If the “a” and the “e” are written out separately in the print, you should do the same.

LL: This should only be used in words where it is pronounced as “y”. If it is pronounced as “l” (most notably in words and names of foreign origin), the “ll” should remain uncontracted.

Me llamo Luis
Fui a ver el ballet
Maria Callas

The exclamation and question marks.

In Spanish, the exclamation and question marks occur both before and after the exclamation/question. Although print turns the initial mark upside down, braille uses the same mark at both the beginning and the end of the phrase.

¡Qué pena!
¿De dónde eres?
The capital sign.

The capital sign is always used in Spanish, except when the italic sign is used, in which case the italic takes the place of the capital.

*Don Quijote*  
*La Fontana de Oro*

In Spanish print, the accents are often omitted over capital letters, but we use the proper braille sign for the accented letter.

Este es el mío

The double capital sign does not exist in the Spanish code.

If a word or phrase is printed in block capitals for visual effect only, e.g. a heading, an initial capital may well be all that is needed. However, don’t forget that any proper nouns within a phrase like this will also need a capital sign.

*LA VIDA HISPÁNICA*  
*LA PENÍNSULA IBÉRICA*

If a word is printed in block capitals for emphasis, then the italic sign should be used instead, as happens in non-capitalised SEB.

¡¿Ha dicho QUÉ?!

Acronyms are brailled with the capital sign before each letter.

la ONU

The italic sign.

The italic sign is placed before a word to show that it is printed in italic type. If more than three consecutive words are italicised, the first word is preceded by the double italic sign and the last word by the single italic sign.

*un bocadillo*  
*bocadillos de*  
*queso y jamón*
The letter sign.

There is no letter sign in the UK Spanish code. However, in bilingual books, the letter sign can be used on questions prefaced by lower case letters or Roman numbers, and occasionally even on lower case letters in ordinary text if this is necessary to avoid confusion. (Upper case letters and numbers take the Spanish capital sign).

(a) ¿Cuánto es?  ¿Cuánto es?
(ii) Escucha y repite Escucha y repite
Juan Carlos I
Juan Carlos I

The abbreviation point.

Dot 3 is used instead of the full stop where a stop is used to indicate an abbreviation. If this occurs at the end of a sentence, use both the abbreviation point and the full stop (although, of course, if print does not use a stop after its abbreviations, an abbreviation at the end of a sentence requires only the normal full stop).

Sra. Pérez  Sra. Pérez
O.N.C.E.  O.N.C.E.
Véase p. 9, etc.  Véase p. 9, etc.

Dot 3 should also be written after the number before ordinal endings. See “Numbers” below.

The guión.

The guión (shown in print as a dash) may be used in print both to indicate speech within normal text, or conversely, normal text within speech. In either case, the opening guión is brailled unspaced from the following word, and the closing guión is brailled unspaced from the preceding word. The closing guión may be absent: is should only be brailled at the end of the relevant text if shown in print.

–¡Vamos a la playa! –gritaba Mercedes.
–¡Vamos a la playa! –gritaba Mercedes.
—Quiero un vino tinto —dijo Carmen—, y una tapa de pimientos rellenos.

“¡Vamos a la playa!” gritaba Mercedes.

Distinción must be made in Spanish between a guión and a dash. The dash is unspaced either side as in SEB, and is brailled in exactly the same way (dots 3-6, 3-6).

**Numbers.**

*Cardinal numbers.*

Numbers in Spanish are generally printed with a space or a stop separating groups of digits. In braille, the mathematical comma must be inserted.

\[
\begin{align*}
20,000 & \quad \text{ª}2\text{b}5\text{ª}555 \\
1,000,000 & \quad \text{ª}1\text{a}5555555
\end{align*}
\]

In decimal numbers, the decimal point is printed as a comma. We use the usual braille decimal point, dot 2.

\[
3,14 \times 2,36 \quad \text{ª}3\text{a}1\text{d} \quad \text{ª}2\text{b}1\text{c}6
\]

Dates, telephone numbers, fractions, etc., all follow SEB rules.

*Ordinal numbers.*

Dot 3 should be written after the number before ordinal endings.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{el } 1\text{º} \text{ de agosto} & \quad \text{ª}2\text{a} \text{º do agosto} \\
\text{la } \text{III}^\text{a} \text{ escena} & \quad \text{ª}2\text{a} \text{a III}^\text{a} \text{ escena}
\end{align*}
\]
Unit abbreviations.

Unit abbreviations should generally be brailled as in SEB. If you’re not sure what to do, following the print is not a bad idea! **Remember:** use the dot 3 abbreviation point rather than the full stop; upper case letters take the Spanish capital sign; lower case letters should be spaced from the preceding number to avoid confusion; where print uses a special symbol, the equivalent SEB braille sign should be used.

Money.

In Spanish print, the word “pesetas” (or one of its abbreviations, e.g. “pts.”, “ptas”, etc.) is generally written after the number, and transcription into braille is straightforward.

\[
\begin{align*}
5000 \text{ pesetas} & \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{5000 \text{ PESETAS}} \\
\text{£5} = 1000 \text{ pts.} & \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{1000 \text{ PTS}}
\end{align*}
\]

Time.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{son casi las 9} & \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{SON CASI LAS 9} \\
\text{a las 7.30} & \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{A LAS 7.30}
\end{align*}
\]

Measurements.

NB: Measurement abbreviations are usually spaced from their preceding number, even if close up in the print. Exceptions (e.g. the degree sign) are the same as in SEB.

\[
\begin{align*}
2 \text{ m (or 2m)} & \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{2 \text{ M}} \\
55 \text{ g (or 55g)} & \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{55 \text{ G}} \\
89 \text{ kg} & \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{89 \text{ KG}} \\
60 \text{ km/h} & \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{60 \text{ KM/H}} \\
21^\circ \text{C} & \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{21^\circ C} \\
60 \text{ W (or 60W)} & \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{60 \text{ W}} \\
8,25^\% & \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{8,25 \%}
\end{align*}
\]

(Notice in this last example the Spanish use of the comma rather than a stop to represent the decimal point. In braille we use dot 2, the same as in SEB.)
WORD DIVISION

The following information on word division may be useful.

(a) The following combinations of written consonants are not divided: *ch, ll, rr,* and combinations of stops and liquids, i.e. *br, bl, cr, fl, fr, gr, gl, pr, pl, dr, tr.* (But beware of compound nouns, e.g. *interracial* can be split *inter-racial* because *inter-* is clearly a prefix and the *rr* is therefore not one consonant.)

(b) Bearing in mind that the combinations listed under (a) count as one consonant, a single consonant is always grouped with the following vowel: *ha-cha, ca-lle, pe-rro, ca-bra, co-fre, o-tro,* etc.

(c) Any two adjacent strong vowels (*a, e, o*) may be split: *A-te-ne-o, co-ar-ta-da, le-a, a-é-re-o,* etc.

(d) Combinations of weak vowels (*i, u*) with another weak vowel or with a strong vowel (*a, e, o*) may only be split if an accent is written on a weak vowel. Thus: *viu-do, fiel-tro, ha-cia, bue-no, re-cien-te, can-táis,* etc.

(e) Some words, whilst complying with the above rules, may be split more than one way, in which case it’s a matter of preference: *de-sa-gra-da-ble or des-a-gra-da-ble***

SPANISH/ENGLISH BILINGUAL TEXT

**English Context.**

(This would apply to such works as: books teaching Spanish as a foreign language; grammar books; critiques including excerpts from Spanish texts, etc.)
1. **Spanish code** (including Spanish italics where necessary) should be used for the following:

   (a) Spanish words in quotes or italics.
   (b) Spanish words which form a centred heading.
   (c) Spanish passages which are inset.
   (d) Spanish words which form a source at the end of a sentence or passage in Spanish.
   (e) Spanish words which are separated from an English interpretation by a colon or other suitable punctuation, as in Notes or Vocabulary.

   **Examples:**

   *Señorita* is the diminutive form of *Señora*.

   By far the biggest chain of department stores in Spain is “El Corte Inglés”.

   buenos días: good morning

2. **Spanish words** which are in the same type as the surrounding text and which do not fall into any of the above categories should be regarded as Anglicized and English contractions may be used, with care, when these would not distort the pronunciation. However, if any of these words contain accents, they should be uncontracted, preceded by a letter sign, and the special accent sign should be used.

   **Example:**

   Unamuno mentions three villages built round the shore of the lake: Riba de Lago, San Martín de la Castañeda, and Galande.
3. Any **foreign words other than Spanish** which are **in quotes or italics** should be uncontracted and dot 4 should be used for any accent signs. Use SEB italics and capital signs.

*Example:*

Colonel Casado’s unreliable tale of his *coup d’état* is related in *La defensa de Madrid*.

4. **Foreign words other than Spanish** which are **NOT in quotes or italics** should be regarded as Anglicized and English contractions should be used, with care, when these would not distort the pronunciation. The dot 4 method should be used for any accent signs.

*Example:*

It was the Frenchman, Pierre Broué, who finally published *Historia de la guerra civil española*.

**Spanish Context.**

(This is rare. It is unlikely we would produce bilingual text where Spanish is the base language and English is the foreign language! In case the unlikely happens though, the above rules are reversed. In brief …)

5. **English words in quotes or italics**, etc. (see point 1 on p.8 for the other categories) should be brailled as SEB with English italics, contractions, etc.

6. **Other foreign words in quotes or italics** should be uncontracted and dot 4 should be used for any accent signs. Use Spanish italics and capital signs.

7. **ALL foreign words** (including English) which are in the **same type** as the surrounding text should be regarded as Hispanicized and Spanish code should be used. The dot 4 method should be used for any accent signs.
N.B. In strictly Spanish text, i.e. not bilingual text, **English words in quotes or italics** would be treated as Hispanicized and Spanish code would be used, in exactly the same way as we treat foreign words in Standard English Braille. This situation could occur in bilingual books which include extracts from Spanish sources, in which case the extracts are Spanish text, even though the overall document is classed as bilingual text.

*Example:*

Solía leer *The Times* todos los días.

* SOLÍA LEER *THE TIMES* TODO LOS DÍAS *

*************
This section is intended only as a *guide* to brailling items where the layout in
print is unusual, e.g. vocabulary, grammar structures, verb tables, etc. It is *not*
meant to be definitive, as it is based largely on the style employed by the
RNIB in the production of language texts, and other producers’ methods may
vary. The important thing to remember is accessibility for the VI reader.

**Vocabulary and (bilingual) examples.**

These tend to be relatively straightforward. Print generally distinguishes this
type of text from surrounding “normal” text by means of indentation and/or a
different typeface. In braille, we ignore the use of bold type and italics (except,
of course, where emphasis is required), but we do indent the text for the
same reason that print does, so that it is easily found in the middle of normal
text. Usual practice is to start the example in cell 5 with runovers in cell 7, and
with a colon between the languages if there is no other suitable separator
used in the print.

**Examples:**

*bueno,* good, fine

*bueno,*  *gd* ,  *f* *i* *e*

*pueblo* = little, small

*pueblo*  *i* *ll* *e*  *small*

**Estaba leyendo** el periódico  *I was reading* the newspaper
cuando sonó el teléfono.  *when the telephone rang.*

*estaba leyendo el periódico*
cuando sonó el teléfono.  *was reading newspaper when the telephone rang.*

**Grammar structures.**

This is a massive topic area, and it would be impossible to cover the huge
variety of layout that there is in the print. On the whole, print tabulates much
of this type of material. In braille, it’s often simpler and clearer to do ordinary
paragraphs and lists.
Examples:

All nouns in Spanish are either **masculine** or **feminine**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine singular</th>
<th>Feminine singular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>un hospital</td>
<td>una clínica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>el hombre</td>
<td>la mujer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


(Notice that the options are separated by semi-colons, not strokes. This helps to avoid long wordstrings, which are not easy to read.)
With your partner, practise expressing your opinion, using the table below to help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>¿Qué piensas de …?</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>😞</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>En mi opinión</td>
<td>es</td>
<td>espectacular</td>
<td>Aburrido/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creo que</td>
<td>magnifico/a</td>
<td>horrible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mi ver</td>
<td>maravilloso/a</td>
<td>inaceptable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me parece que</td>
<td>imprescindible</td>
<td>nulo/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lo/le/la considero</td>
<td>interesante</td>
<td>imposible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los/les/las encuentro</td>
<td>divertido/a</td>
<td>ridicule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Simpático/a
- gracioso/a
- original
- elocuente
- (in)justo
- severo/a

(Notice the change of wording in the braille instruction to account for the difference in format from table to lists.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>En</th>
<th>invierno</th>
<th>verano</th>
<th>hace</th>
<th>frío</th>
<th>calor</th>
<th>buen tiempo</th>
<th>mal tiempo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>otoño</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>primavera</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes, of course, following print’s table format is the best course of action to take.

**Example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masc. sing.</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ricos</td>
<td>rico</td>
<td>más ricos</td>
<td>el más rico</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fem. sing.</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ricas</td>
<td>rica</td>
<td>más ricas</td>
<td>la más rica</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masc. plural</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ricos</td>
<td>ricos</td>
<td>más ricos</td>
<td>los más ricos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fem. plural</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ricas</td>
<td>ricas</td>
<td>más ricas</td>
<td>las más ricas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Notice the abbreviation of the row headings in the braille and the inclusion of a note to explain this. In addition, it is not necessary to include the capital sign in table column headings, which also saves space.)
Verb conjugations and verb tables.

Where individual verb conjugations are included within “normal” text, it's often possible to reproduce them in the same way that print does, and indent them to cell 5 to make them stand out. Dot 2’s are not necessary after a verb presented in this way. (But if following text is a list or example also starting in cell 5, it can be helpful to insert a separator such as a blank line or centred asterisks.)

Example:

Regular -ar verbs are conjugated as follows:
comprar – to buy
compro compramos
compras compráis
compra compran

(Notice that the verb endings have not been italicised in the braille. It is often not necessary to do this, as most grammar texts usually explain what is happening in the verb, and bold endings are just an extra visual aid. But don’t rule it out if you think it’s more useful to include it!)

Verb conjugations laid out in this way should not be split over the braille page. If the conjugation won’t fit as two columns, the whole conjugation can be brailled starting in cell 5, like any normal list. If this is the case, the verb conjugation can be split over the braille page, but it should only be split between the singular and plural forms.

If print uses paragraph format, so can we.

Example:

ser – soy, eres, es, somos, sois, son
Some verb tables are best presented in table format, the same way that print does them, although we have to make some adjustments to allow for the limited space on the braille page.

*Example:*

**Regular verbs – present tense:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verbo</th>
<th>verbo</th>
<th>verbo</th>
<th>verbo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>trabajar</td>
<td>comer</td>
<td>vivir</td>
<td>levantarse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trabajo</td>
<td>como</td>
<td>vivo</td>
<td>me levanto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trabajas</td>
<td>comes</td>
<td>vives</td>
<td>te levantas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trabaja</td>
<td>come</td>
<td>vive</td>
<td>se levanta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trabajamos</td>
<td>comemos</td>
<td>vivimos</td>
<td>nos levantamos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trabajás</td>
<td>coméis</td>
<td>vivís</td>
<td>os levantáis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trabajan</td>
<td>comen</td>
<td>viven</td>
<td>se levantan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Notice there are no dot 3 lead lines between conjugations. This is because conjugations are meant to be read down the column, not across the row.)
Some verb tables can be brailled using a combination of the previous two methods.

**Example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Imperfect</th>
<th>Present participle</th>
<th>Past participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pensar</td>
<td>pienso</td>
<td>piensa</td>
<td>pensando</td>
<td>pensado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to think</td>
<td>piensas</td>
<td>piensa</td>
<td>pensado</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pensamos</td>
<td>pensa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pensáis</td>
<td>piense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>piensan</td>
<td>piensen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dormir</td>
<td>duermo</td>
<td>duermo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to sleep</td>
<td>duermes</td>
<td>etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alternatively, the infinitive could be centred (without the word “Infinitive”, although if you do this you should explain it in a note at the beginning of the table) and this would obviate the need for asterisks to separate the conjugations and save some space.