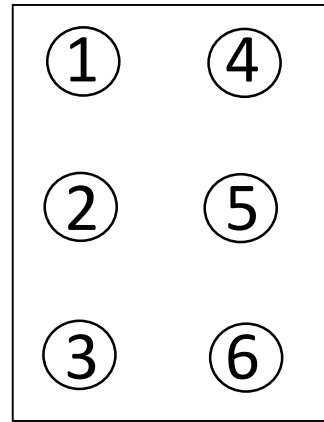
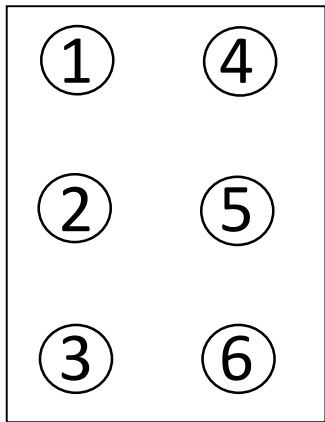
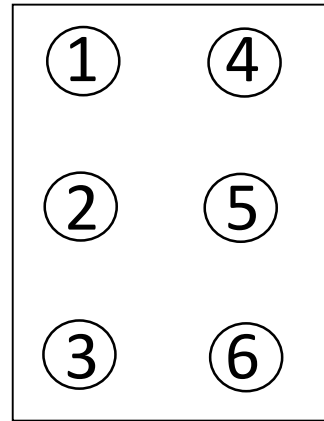
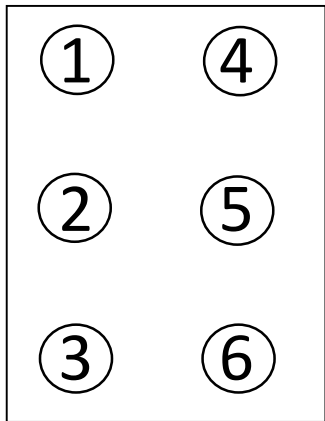
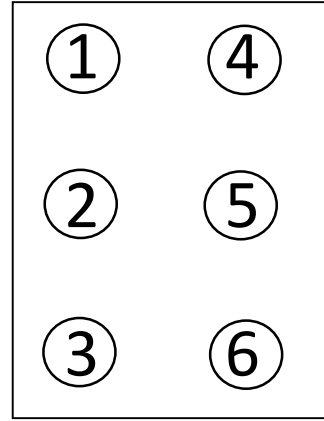
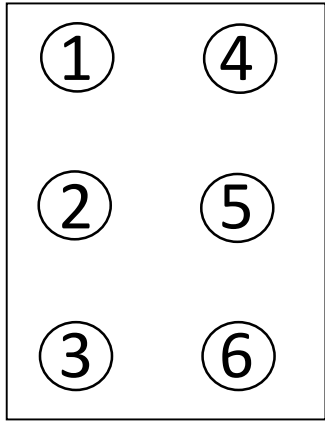


Braille, universally accepted system of writing used by and for blind persons and consisting of a code of 63 characters, each made up of one to six raised dots arranged in a six-position matrix or cell. These Braille characters are embossed in lines on paper and read by passing the fingers lightly over the manuscript. Louis Braille, who was blinded at the age of three, invented the system in 1824 while a student at the Institution Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles (National Institute for Blind Children), Paris.

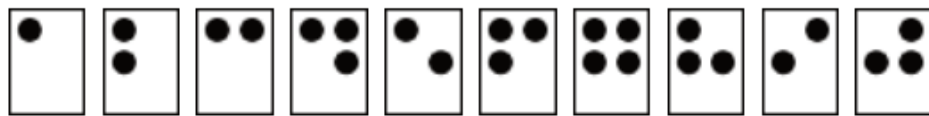
The Frenchman Valentin Haüy was the first person to emboss paper as a means of reading for the blind. His printing of normal letters in relief led others to devise simplified versions; but, with one exception, they are no longer in use. The single exception is Moon type, invented in 1845 by William Moon of Brighton, England, which partly retains the outlines of the Roman letters and is easily learned by those who have become blind in later life. Books in this type are still in limited use by elderly people, particularly in Great Britain.

Louis Braille, the inventor of the Braille code, became blind at a young age due to an accident while holding his father's awl from his leather workshop. When Louis Braille entered the school for the blind in Paris, in 1819, he learned of a system of tangible writing using dots, invented in 1819 by Capt. Charles Barbier, a French army officer. It was called night writing and was intended for night-time battlefield communications. In 1824, when he was only 15 years old, Braille developed a six-dot "cell" system. He used Barbier's system as a starting point and cut its 12-dot configuration in half. The system was first published in 1829; a more complete elaboration appeared in 1837.

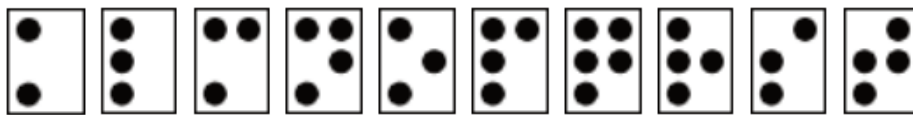
The second row (k-t) mimics the first row (a-j) in that it just adds dot 3 (or the bottom left dot). The third row (u-z) mimics the second row (k-t) in that it adds dot 6 (or the bottom right dot). W was not originally a part of the French alphabet.



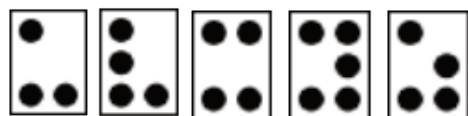




a b c d e f g h i j



k l m n o p q r s t



u v x y z



w