



Slate and Stylus 101

“All Praise to the Humble Slate and Stylus!”

-Rebecca Blaevoet



AMERICAN
PRINTING
HOUSE



Access

Academy

Leanne Grillot

National Director of Outreach Services
American Printing House for the Blind



Leslie Weilbacher

Outreach Regional Specialist, NW
American Printing House for the Blind



Learning Objectives

1. Orally name the cells necessary to create randomly selected braille letters using the first side/second side, top, middle, bottom format.
2. Independently and correctly load paper; write words and numbers with correct spacing.
3. Identify specific techniques for teaching the slate and stylus to students.
4. Identify practical suggestions and exercises to assist a student to become an efficient slate user.

Dr. Moon's Alphabet for the Blind.

Note.—THE DOTTED MARKS OF THE LETTERS PRINTED OVER THE ALPHABET FOR THE BLIND, SHOW WHAT PORTIONS OF THE COMMON LETTER ARE OMITTED, IN ORDER TO LAY THE CHARACTERS OPEN AND CLEAR TO THE TOUCH.



G O D I S L O V E



Tactile Alphabet Systems

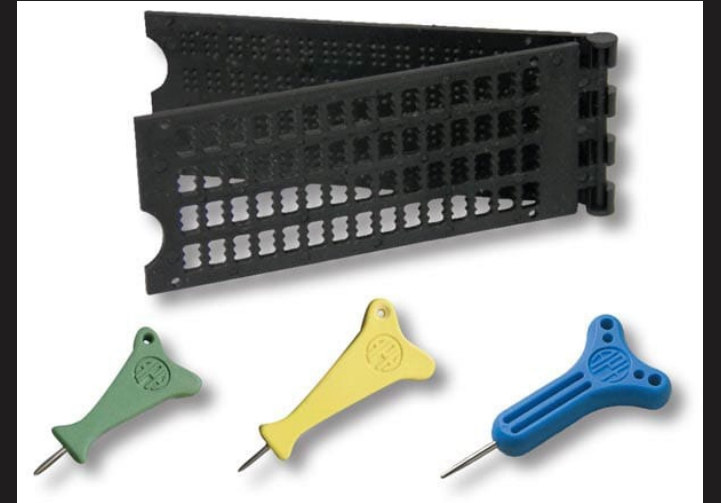
- Raised letters
- Raised shapes
- Raised dots

Compare to Print Writing Materials

- Inexpensive
- Portable
- Simple to use
- Variety of styles
- Variety of sizes



Why should individuals who are blind learn to use a slate and stylus?



AMERICAN
PRINTING
HOUSE



Beginning Steps

- Introduce at toddler age
- Make marks on paper
- Attach meaning to marks
- Model use during home activities
- Use during pretend play



Pieces and Parts

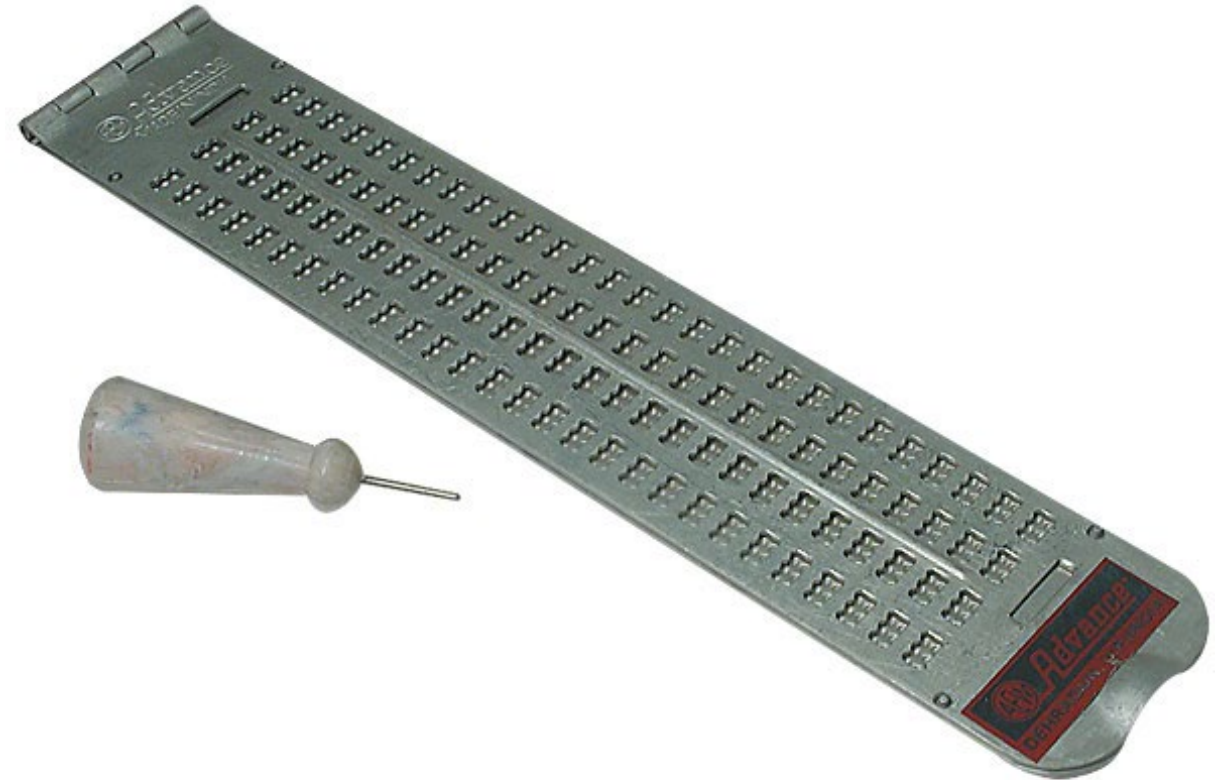
Parts of a Traditional Slate

1. Two sections of metal held together by a hinge.
2. Hinge only works one direction.
3. Bottom section has four rows of pitted cells, 28 in each row.
4. Top section has four rows of openings or windows which fit over the pitted cells when the slate is in the closed position.
5. The hinge should be placed on the left-hand side and the section with the windows is on top when the closed slate is in the writing position.



Special Items

- Windows
- Slot for labeling tape
- Paper-holding pins
- Holes for paper-holding pins
- Dividing line
- Dividing dots



Loading the Traditional Slate

- Method 1
 - Stand slate on its edge
 - Place paper into slate, touching hinge
 - Close slate
- Method 2
 - Plate slate flat with hinge open
 - Line paper just below top pins
 - Punch bottom two lines into paper
 - Close slate



Parts of the Janus Slate

- Opening slot
- Windows
 - Six lines
 - Five lines
- Dividing lines
- Dividing dots



Holding a Stylus

- Blunt pin end down and knob or saddle end up.
- Right hand forefinger curves over the top of the handle with fingertip reaching down toward the pin.
- Thumb fits on the side of the handle, meeting the side of the forefinger.
- Middle finger may move down the side to grip the pin with the thumb.
- Press straight down on the paper like a needle in a sewing machine.

Strengthen Fingers

- Marbles and clay
- Lacing
- Hook and loop material
- Tongs
- Coins in your palm
- Golf tees and clay or Styrofoam
- Piano keys

Paper

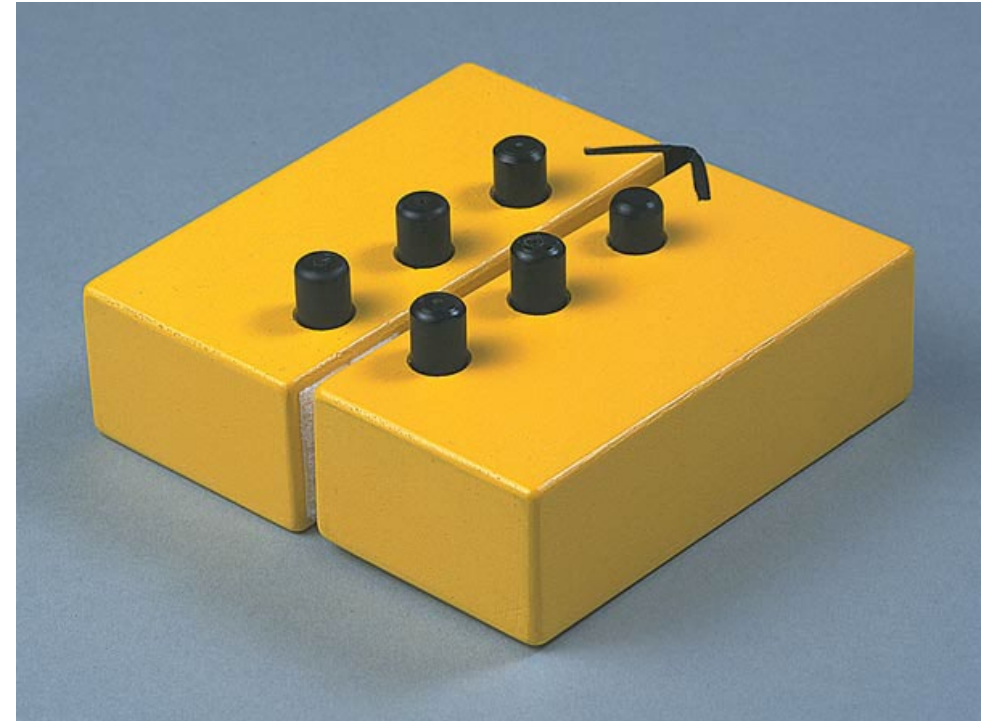
- 8 ½ by 11-inch (can be cut in half)
 - Braille paper
 - PermaBraille
 - Print paper
 - Construction paper
 - Card stock
- 3 by 5 index cards
- Photo paper
- Labeling stickers (PermaBraille or paper)



Beginning to Write

Writing from Right to Left

- Turn slate over like "pages in a book."
- First row from the right, top to bottom: dots 1, 2, 3
- Second row from the right, top to bottom: dots 4, 5, 6



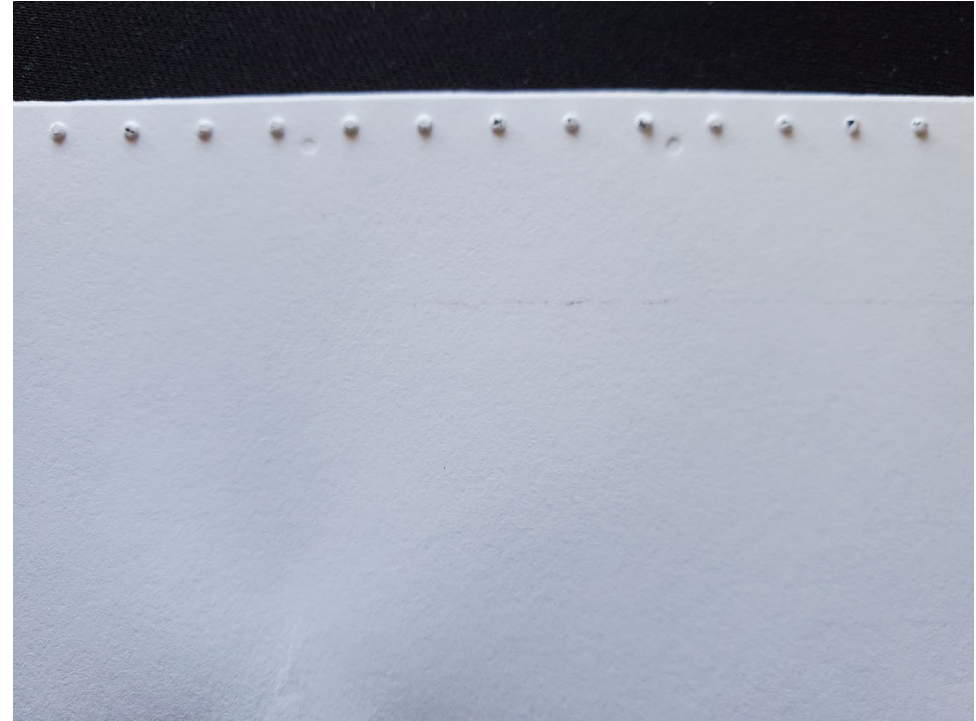
Making Marks

- Find first cell on the right on the top line.
- Find dot one. Push down on the stylus with the right hand.
- Move the left forefinger to the second cell, followed by the stylus in the right hand.
- Make dot one.



Writing is not Enough

- Check Your Work!
 - Correct dots?
 - Dot height?
 - Any missed cells?
 - Did you keep a steady pace?



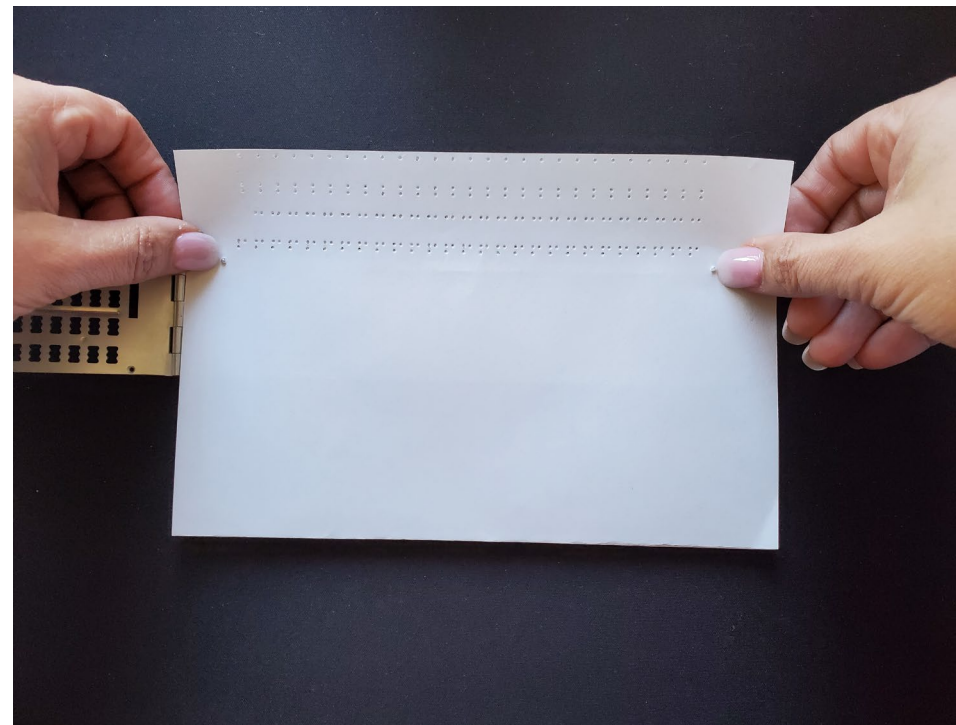
Moving Down Lines

- Return to the first cell of the second line.
- Move down to the third line.
- Make dot three.
- Move to the fourth line.
- Make dots one and three.



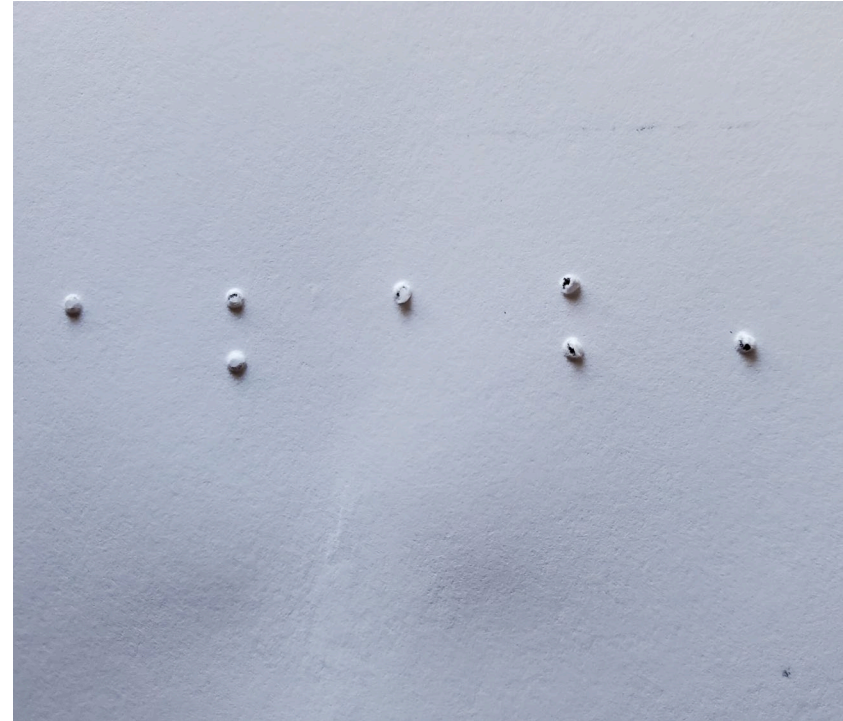
Second Slate Position

- Open slate.
- Find the bottom holes.
- Move bottom holes to top holes.
- Close slate.



We Need Space!

- Review the past exercises.
- Create these with spaces in between.



More Letters and Dots

- Next line, dots 1 and then 4.
- Spaces between each letter.
- Next line, a row of dot 6 separated by spaces.
- Third line, a row of letter U.
- Fourth line, dots 1, 3, 4, 6.



Practice Using Dividing Dots

Line 1

- Mama cell 1.
- Mack cell 11.
- Max cell 21.

Line 2

- Mack cell 1.
- Max cell 11.
- Mama cell 21.

Line 3

- Max cell 1.
- Mama cell 11.
- Mack cell 21.



How Are You Doing?

1. I don't get it.
2. I kind of – sort of get it.
3. I get it and can explain it.
4. I get it and can teach it!



Four Dots Down, Two to Go!

Dot 2 is Next

- In the fourth line, first cell, locate dot 2, the middle top on the right of the cell.
- Found by locating dot 1 and then move down over the rippled side to dot 2.
- Now, make dots 1, 2, 3, five times.
- Now make a dot 2 by itself across the rest of the line.



Three Dot 2 Letters

- Make an L (dots 1, 2, 3)
- Make a B (dots 1, 2)
- Make an F (dots 1, 2, 4)
- Between each letter place a comma (dot 2) and a space before completing the next letter.



Let's Add a Few Words

- Luck
- Flax
- Bulb
- Bluff

- Calm
- Clam
- Fax
- Max

- Full
- Mall
- Black
- Buck



More Dot 2 Letters

- Make I (dots 2 and 4)
- Make S (dots 2, 3, and 4)
- Make P (dots 1, 2, 3, and 4)
- Make V (dots 1, 2, 3, and 6)



Correcting Errors by Adding Dots

- Braille 10 a's with spaces separating them.
- Proofread the 10 a's and make corrections.
- Add dots to each a to make the letters:
- c, k, m, u, x, v, p, b, f, l



Dot 5 is the Last Addition

- Make d (dots 1, 4, and 5)
- Make j (dots 2, 4, and 5)
- Make e (dots 1 and 5)
- Make o (dots 1, 3, and 5)
- Make r (dots 1, 2, 3, and 5)
- Make h (dots 1, 2, and 5)
- Make a period (dots 2, 5 and 6)



Correcting Errors by Erasing Dots

- Make six L's
- Erase dot 1 in the first two
- Erase dot 2 in the middle two
- Erase dot 3 in the last two
- Make V, P, L, M, F, S
- Change them to L, F, K, C, B, I



Last Few Letters

- Make Q (dots 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5)
- Make W (dots 2, 4, 5, and 6)
- Make Z (dots 1, 4, 5, and 6)
- Make N (dots 1, 3, 4, and 5)
- Make T (dots 2, 3, 4, and 5)
- Make Y (dots 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6)



How Are You Doing?

1. I don't get it.
2. I kind of – sort of get it.
3. I get it and can explain it.
4. I get it and can teach it!

Number Sign!

- Make a number sign (dots 3, 4, 5, and 6)
- Write numbers 0 through 10, with spaces!
- How many people in a quartet?
- How many sides in a triangle?
- Number of days in a week.



More Number Practice

- Number of letters in your name.
- Number of letters in the alphabet.
- Number of cents in a dollar.
- Number of inches in a foot.
- Number of hours in a day.



Write Your Name

- Grade 1 Braille (no contractions)
- Think about each letter as their number combinations
- Don't forget to start with a capital!





Beyond the Basics

Next Steps

- Grade 2
- Paragraph indentation
- Page numbers
- Good, readable braille
- Columned writing

Increasing Your Speed

- Alphabet in five minutes.
- Lines of the same character.
- Repeat these sentences:
 - The five boxing wizards jumped quickly.
 - The family barracks with the xylophone is in a friendly over objectifying Mozambique!
 - Freight to me sixty dozen quart jars and twelve black pans.
 - Big Alex quickly drank five whole cups of zesty plum juice?
 - Jacob quickly drove a few extra miles on the glazed pavement!
- Keep a journal.
- Use down time (bus travel, doctor waiting room).



Practice Exercises for Your Slate and Stylus

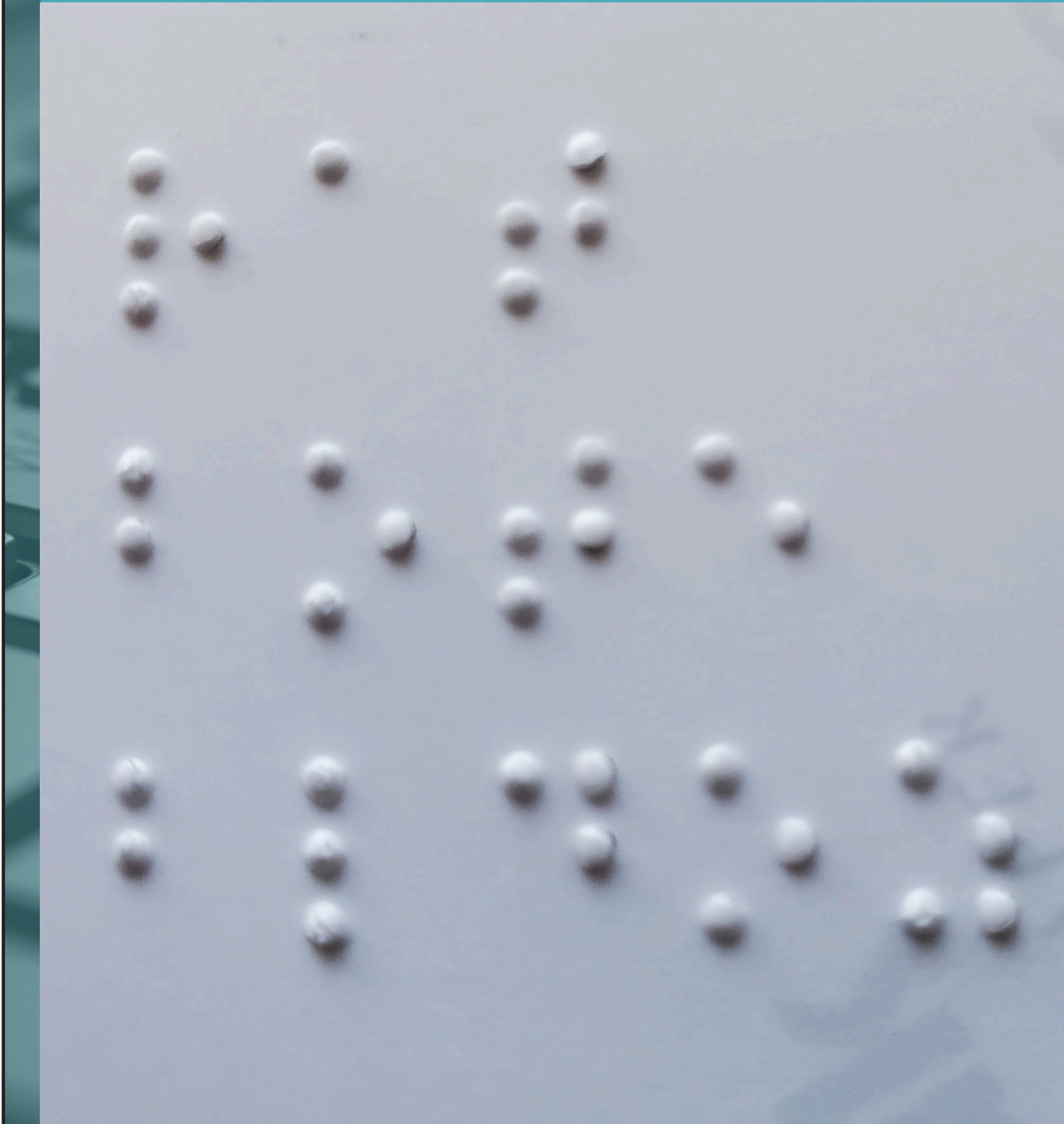
Name the dots!

- Spend time reinforcing dots that create braille letters when using a braillewriter.
- Alternate between asking for specific letters, punctuation, combination letters and then asking for dot combinations.



Practice Words

- Spell dictated words
- Accept grade 1 braille



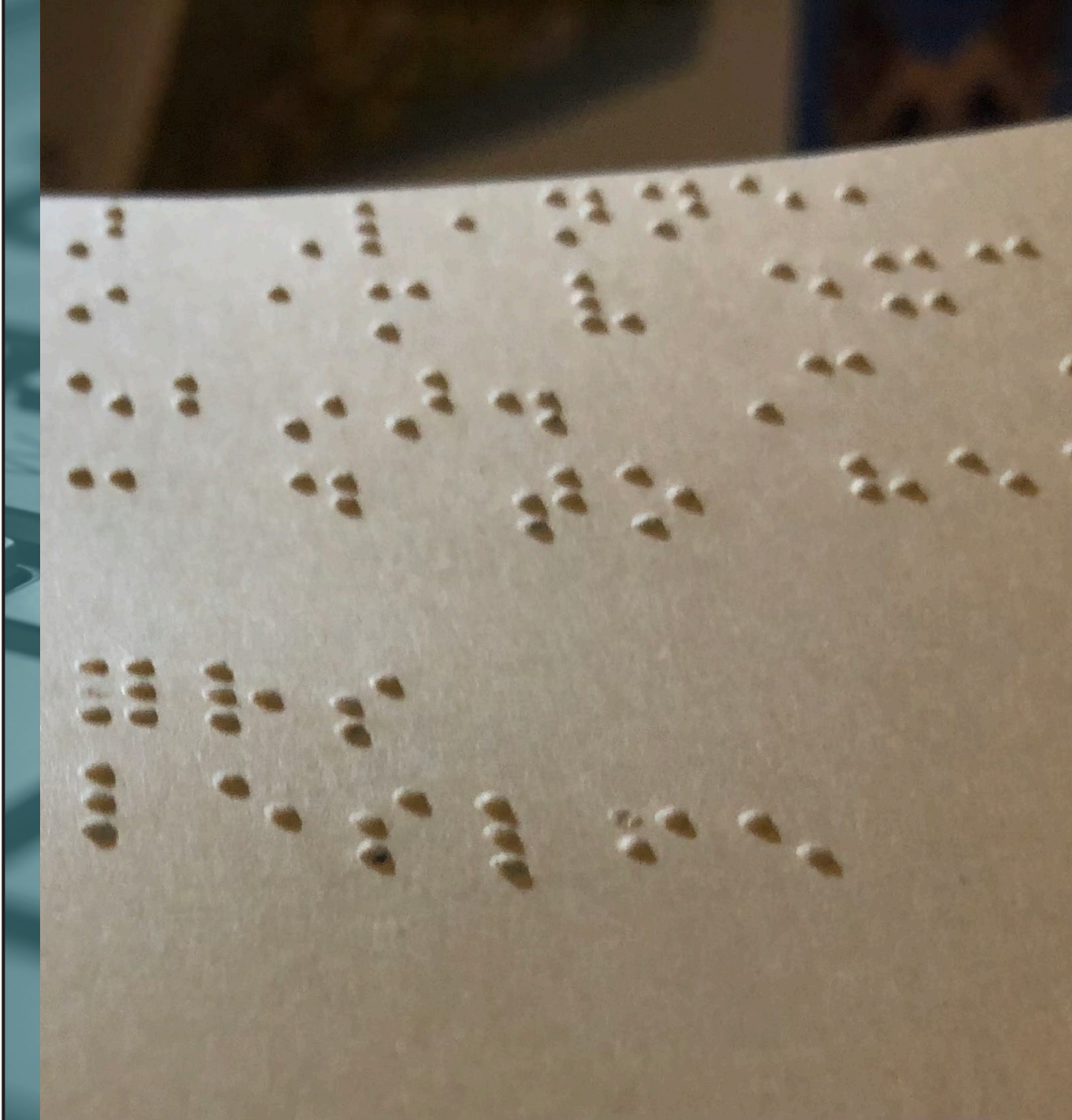
Practice Numbers

- Roll the Dice for two-digit number practice
 - 5 and 2 would be both 25 and 52
- Draw from a deck of cards
 - Abbreviations for suit changed to full word
 - Number with number sign
- Pull dominoes from a bag



Practice Sentences

- Index Card Address File
- Valentine's Day Cards
- Braille a deck of cards



Grade Three Braille

- Personal System
 - 'ex' for examples
 - Drop number sign, punctuation, capitals
 - Text abbreviations
- Briefhand
 - Do not write silent vowels ("e" in "take")
 - Always write vowels that begin words ("a" in "approve")
 - Write long vowels, but not short vowels ("o" in "rope," not "o" in "hot")
 - Omit silent and repeated consonants ("k" in "knee," second "p" in "apple")
 - Do not shorten proper nouns not already obviously established



Getting the Most Out of Your Slate and Stylus

Use in the Home

- Braille tags for pantry or freezer items
- Stickers to label canned goods
- Adapt a pack of playing cards
- Labeling CDs



AMERICAN
PRINTING
HOUSE

Use in School

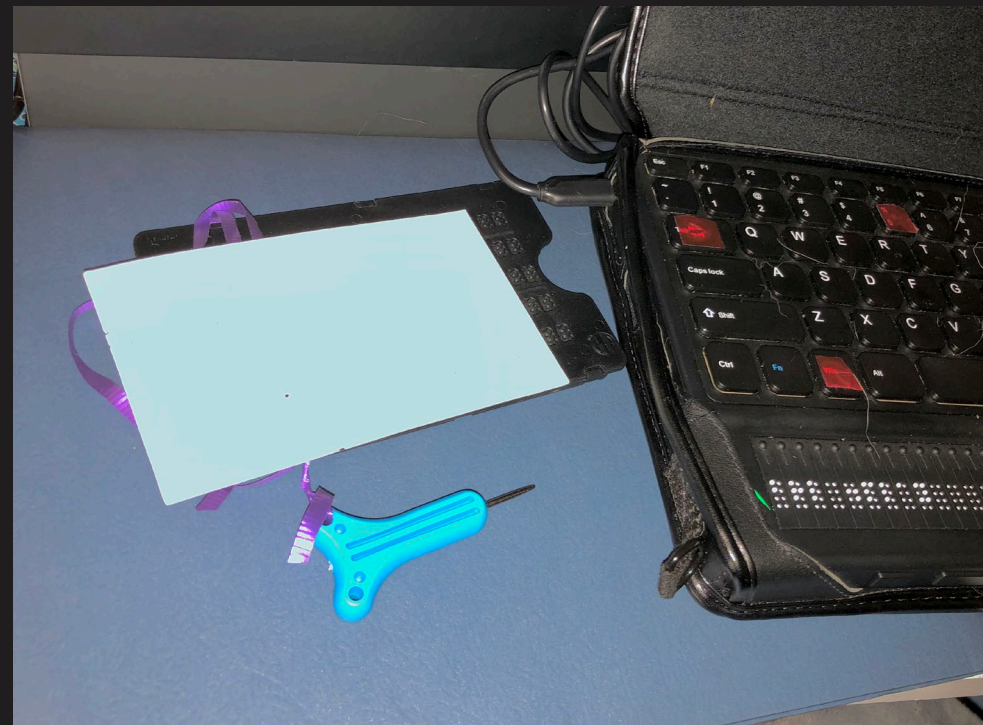
- Add note to print document
- Add braille information to tactile graph or chart
- Take short notes during discussion
- Make flash cards



AMERICAN
PRINTING
HOUSE

Use for Work

- Add note to print document
- Mark file folders
- Identify print books
- Sort paper money
- Add phone number to business cards



AMERICAN
PRINTING
HOUSE



AMERICAN
PRINTING
HOUSE

Slate and Stylus Products

Stylus Choices



AMERICAN
PRINTING
HOUSE

Braille Erasers

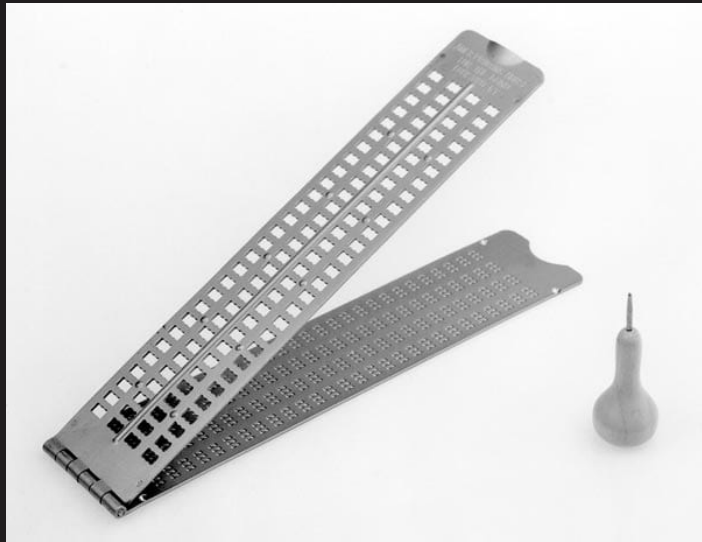
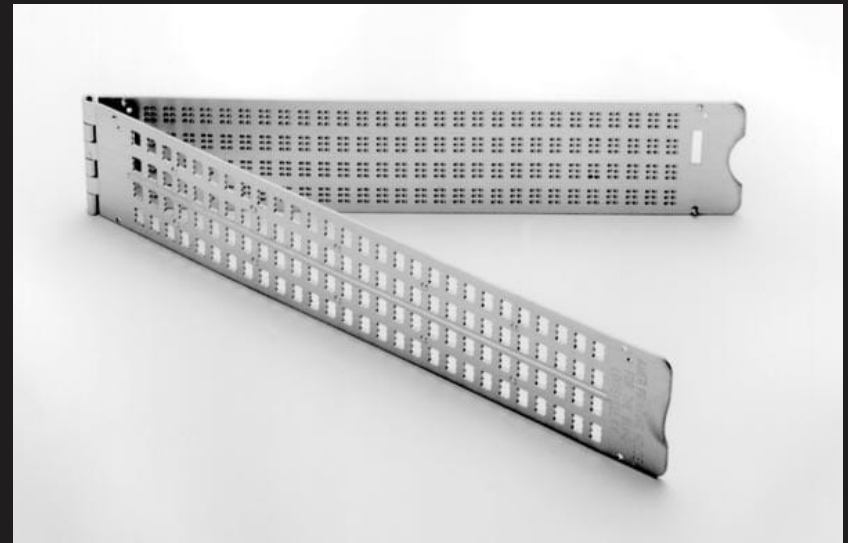
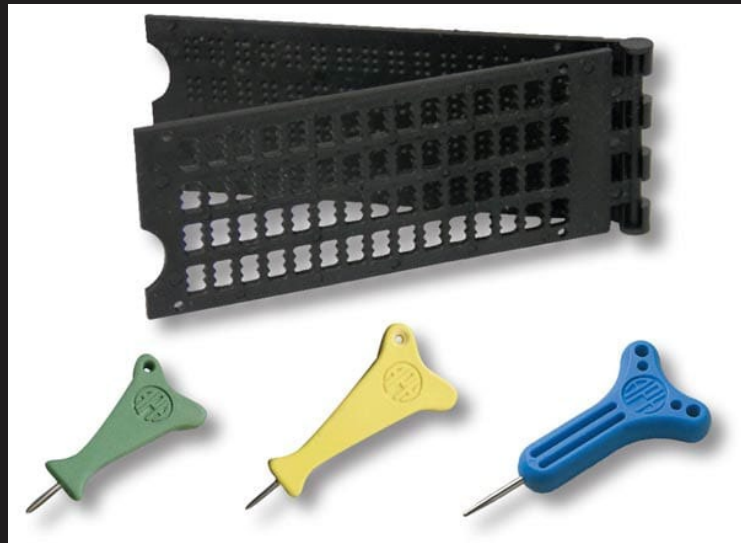


AMERICAN
PRINTING
HOUSE

Slate Choices, part 1



AMERICAN
PRINTING
HOUSE



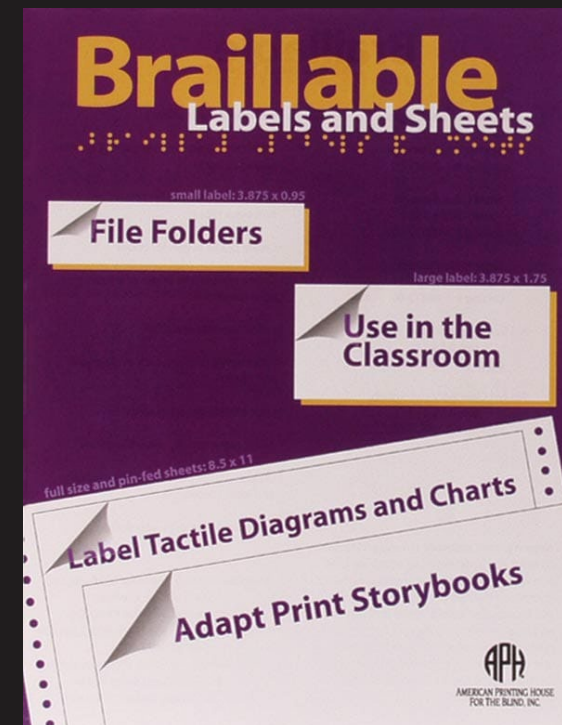
Slate Notebooks



AMERICAN
PRINTING
HOUSE

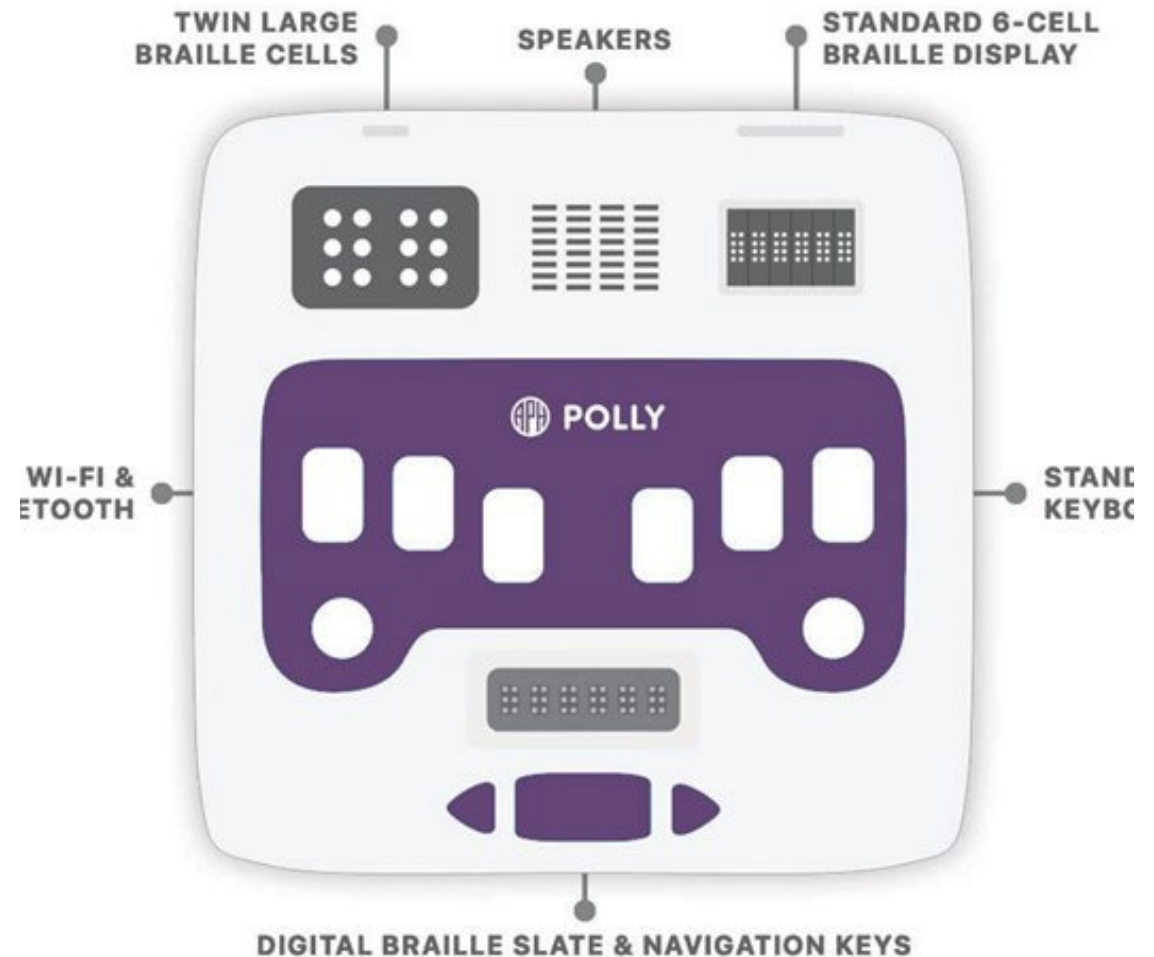
Additional Tools

- Braille Date Book
- Brailleable Labels
- PermaBraille Sheets



Coming Soon ... Polly!

- Jumbo and standard braille displays
- Electronic Slate
- Wi-Fi and Ethernet compatible
- Speaker
- Headphone Jack and volume control
- Vibration repeat sensor
- Curriculum



Polly



Writing with Polly



What's Your Favorite Slate and Stylus?

- Plastic
- Metal
- Interpoint
- Enclosed
- Saddle
- Large wooden
- Small wooden



AMERICAN
PRINTING
HOUSE

Shout out Tips and Tricks

- Do you have any other strategies?
- Useful uses?

References

- Prester, E., et al. (1995). *Braillewriting Dot by Dot*. American Printing House for the Blind
- Dunnam, J. (2000). *The Slate Book: A Guide to the Slate and Stylus*. National Federation of the Blind

Slate and Stylus 101

Leanne Grillot, lgrillot@aph.org

Leslie Weilbacher, lweilbacher@aph.org

