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[Louis Braille, Braille]

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## *Braille Year - 2009* 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of Louis Braille.

***“He opened the Doors of Knowledge to Those Who Cannot See.”***

(Translation of the inscription on the monument to Louis Braille in his birthplace,  
Coupvray, France)

**Note: Issues showing Louis Braille and braille**

“Braille was born into a humble family: they had been saddle-makers for generations. He was the youngest of four children.

*At the age of three he wanted to copy his father’s craft and wounded one eye  
with a trim knife; as a consequence of the wound, he completely lost his sight;  
This unfortunate circumstance later became the cause of his success”*

“Over the course of the next three years, from 1821 to 1824, Louis plugged away at defining and refining his own system. He took from Barbier the ideas of raised dots and use of a code; everything else was Louis’s own invention, Pignier who became Louis’s mentor and friend, captured his devotion to the task at hand: ‘Braille, who was detained by classes for part of the day, experimented with his method in the early morning, when there were no distractions, and sometimes during the night when he couldn’t sleep. He took paper, stylus and slate, his work tools, to the dormitory and slept among them.’ Louis spent his summers and school vacations in Coupvray, where ‘the good country people would smile, perhaps with bemusement, when they saw him [sitting on a slope close to his house] ‘pecking at the paper...’

By the age of 15, Louis had cut Barbier’s twelve-dot fit neatly under a reader’s fingertip. Originally, he had included dashes but abandoned that idea because dashes were difficult to write, and could be mistaken by the finger for two dots side by side. All the reader had to do to identify a character was to detect the presence or absence of dots within the six-dot cell.

The braille cell – an arrangement of 6 dots, 2 across and 3 down – is the basic unit of the braille code. Sixty-three patterns are mathematically possible with six dots, sufficient to represent all the letters, numbers, accents, and punctuation marks. Braille would use the same cell for music and math. Further refinements, especially space-saving abbreviations (contractions) would come later, but Braille had laid the foundation of literacy for generations of blind people. The simplicity and versatility of his primary code was wholly original. As Henri put it, ‘Braille did more than perfect Barbier’s system, he modified it to the very foundation... Barbier still had his eyes: Braille had no more than a finger. From that came the six-dot cell that is so perfectly adapted to the requirements of

the sense of touch: one dot higher, one dot lower, one dot wider, and the sign became scarcely readable.’

From: “Louis Braille – A Touch of Genius” by C. Michael, Mellor, 2006

### *Stamps and envelopes*

<b>France</b>	Jan. 4	On January 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2009 (Birthday) France issued a stamp that shows Louis Braille. Top left a slate and stylus, underneath “Louis BRAILLE 1809” and denomination in <i>embossed</i> braille
<b>Algeria</b>	Jan. 4	Louis Braille and the letters a through h in print braille.
<b>Andorra</b>	Jan. 24	Louis Braille and a writing board with desk slate and stylus. Denomination in print braille .
<b>Armenia</b>	Nov 24	
<b>Aruba</b>	Jan. 5	Two stamps, one shows Louis Braille and the other a hand holding a mobility cane. Denomination and “Aruba 2008” in print braille. Note: in print the year is correct 2009, but not in braille.
<b>Austria</b>	May. 20	Bust of Louis Braille – symbol of the blind in Austria.
<b>Barbados</b>	July 6	-
<b>Belarus</b>	Jan. 4	Louis Braille and hands reading braille.
<b>Belgium</b>	Feb. 23	Small bust of Louis Braille and hands reading braille.
<b>Brazil</b>	Jan.4	Louis Braille, taken from the monument in Coupvray. To the left, hand reading a page of braille and to the right a light- weight aluminum braille slate and stylus with a desk slate. In the background a map of the world to show how braille is universal. Embossed in braille are the words “Louis Braille”.
<b>Cap Verde</b>	-	Set of 4. Blind man with cane. Two blind children. Blind man with guide dog. Blind child using index fingers to read braille letters. Print braille alphabet in background.
<b>Cuba</b>	-	-

<b>Cyprus</b>	Mar. 12	Louis Braille and embossed braille “200 years”.
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Jan.2	Louis Braille, side view and hands reading braille.
<b>Estonia</b>	Jan. 4	The stamp is part of a project by MTU Jumalalaegas (a non profit organization) which is a member of the Estonia Blind Union. MTU Jumalalaegas with moral support from Estonia Blind Union and Library requested the Estonia Post to issue a stamp honoring Louis Braille, but this was not possible. Then it was decided to produce a personalized stamp using the Estonian "My Stamp" by which you can make your own stamps. This issue is an official .0,35 euro stamp. The design uses the official logo, showing an open book with "Braille 200" in both print and print braille.
<b>Greece</b>	Mar. 30	Hands reading a braille book – denomination in embossed braille – eye
<b>Guatemala</b>	-	-
<b>Hungary</b>	Oct. 15	-
<b>India</b>	Jan. 4	Louis Braille, to the right of him hands reading “Louis Braille” in uncontracted embossed braille.
<b>Iran</b>	-	-
<b>Ireland</b>	Jan. 23	Shows an eye created with a series of dots representing Braille as a system that extends the senses through the organization of a minimal form. Embossed braille is the denomination, 55c and below the eye “Louis Braille (1809-1852)” in print.
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	Mar. 20	Bust of Louis Braille – first five letters of alphabet in print braille.
<b>Kenya</b>	Jul. 10	Blind man at a desk with a braille writer (Mountbatten?) and a red and white striped mobility cane in his left hand.
<b>Korea (South)</b>	Jan. 2	Louis Braille and Korean print braille.
<b>Luxembourg</b>	Sep.	-

<b>Macau (China)</b>	Jan. 4	Louis Braille. Underneath the picture “Bicentenario do Nascimento” in Chinese and Portuguese and “louis braille” in print and print braille.
<b>Macedonia</b>	Jun. 17	Bust of Louis Braille – “Louis Braille” in print braille.
<b>Moldova</b>	Jan. 4	Post Paid Envelope – Louis Braille and print braille.
<b>Monaco</b>	Apr. 29	Louis Braille reading a braille book. Background braille book.
<b>Montenegro</b>	Jan. 30	Louis Braille and a finger reading braille.
<b>Morocco</b>	Jan. 16	Louis Braille, hands reading braille and “Louis Braille” both
<b>Netherlands</b>	Jan. 10	Netherlands – “Lees mee”, Read me. 200 years of braille. 1829 is the year when braille was introduced. A sheet with 12 stamps with print and braille. On the back the letters are printed what is missing on the front of the stamps, in case seeing people cannot solve the braille puzzle.
<b>Peru</b>	-	-
<b>Poland</b>	Jan. 4	Louis Braille – attached tab with embossed braille.
<b>Portugal</b>	Sept. 29	“Os Selos e os Sentidos” which means “The stamps and the senses”. It consists of 5 stamps and a braille sheet with an embossed text in Portuguese and on the actual stamp, with a picture of Louis, you can read “Braille” with a capital B
<b>Romania</b>	Nov. 1, 2008	Painting of Louis Braille.
<b>San Marino</b>	Jun. 16	The word “braille” in both embossed Braille and print. Denomination in braille. Note the number sign is missing.
<b>Sao Tomé</b>	Apr. 15	4 stamps. Bust of Louis Braille (side view) with inscription on his grave. Background the house where he was born.  Bust of Louis Braille. Background the National Institute for Blind Youth where Braille taught and died.

		Bust of Louis Braille, hand reading braille.
		Drawing of young Louis Braille writing braille and portrait of Louis Braille that is on the United States of America silver dollar 2009. Background braille text.
<b>Senegal</b>	May. 20	Stamp 1: Boy reading Braille book at school desk. TEXT: “Bicentenaire de la Naissance de Louis Braille 1809 – 2009”. Stamp 2: Braille cell with dots 2, 4 and 6 which in French braille seems to mean number 9 (without the French number sign dot 6 in front). We don’t know if the dots are embossed. Same text + “9 Braille”.
<b>Serbia</b>	Jan. 4	Bust of Louis Braille, to right hands holding a globe, background embossed braille page.
<b>Slovak republic</b>	Dec. 18	Louis in profile and en face. Also shows a braille cell with the dots 2 and 4 highlighted, the text L B 200 and an arrow pointing to the letter B. I don't know why, because dot 2 and 4 means i. The nomination is 0.40 euro.
<b>Slovenia</b>	Jan. 30	Large eye and the denomination in print braille (colored). Block has braille code with embossed braille.
<b>Spain</b>	Jul. 15	Bust of Louis Braille and “Louis Braille” in print underneath just “Braille”.
<b>Sweden</b>	May 14	“Seeing with other eyes”. A block with 2 stamps and embossed braille.
<b>Syria</b>	Jan. 15, 2008	Louis Braille, hands reading braille book, 200 in print and braille but there is no number sign so it reads <b>b j j</b> , and a head with the logo for blind.
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Feb. 2.	Bust of Louis Braille (side view) – hand reading braille book.
<b>Vatican</b>	Nov. 4	-
<b>Wallis &amp; Futuna</b>	Mar. 7	Louis Braille and to the right a hand holding a stylus writing braille on a desk slate.