
Rules

1. Alphabet Whole Word Contractions

- Stand alone.
- May not be used as parts of words.
- Can be proper names (i.e., Will)
- Can be next to an apostrophe, but an apostrophe cannot precede them (i.e., can't).
- May not be made plural by adding s.
- May be joined by other words to make genuine hyphenated compound words (i.e., merry-go-round).

**but can do every from go have just knowledge like more not
people quite rather so that us very will it you as**

(Clusters 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)

2. Punctuation

- Punctuation follows the same spacing and order as print.
- Do not double space after punctuation.

, ; : . ! () [] " " ? " * / ' ... - — --

(Clusters 4, 11, 12, 17, 20, 22, 30, 33)

Note: Rules for specific punctuation can be found throughout the list of rules.

3. One Cell Whole Word/Part Word Contractions

- May stand alone or with each other as whole words.
- Must be used as parts of words wherever the letters they represent occur, except when specific rules limit their use.
- The word signs **a**, **and**, **for**, **of**, **the** and **with** should follow one another without a space between them (e.g., *with the* = *withthe*, *and a* = *anda*, unless there is a composition or punctuation sign between them).

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- **and, for of, the** and **with** should be used in preference to other contractions, provided they do not waste space (e.g., *the* not *th* and *ed* in *bathed*).
 - **St** may be used for abbreviations.
 - In proper names when the letters **sh**, and **th** are pronounced as one sound, the contractions should be used (i.e., *Townshend*).

a, and, for, of, the, with, child, shall, this, which, out, still
(Clusters 3, 24, 26, 15, 29, 31, 34, 35, 43, 48)

Note: See Rule 24, General Use of Part Word Contractions and Rule 25, Preferred Contractions.

4. One-Cell Whole Word/Part Word Contractions

- Must be used as parts of words wherever the letters they represent occur, except when specific rules limit their use.
- **ble** and **ing** must never begin a word, but may be used in the middle and end of a word and at the beginning of a line of the divided word.
- Part word signs which have no whole word meanings may be contracted when they stand alone (e.g., *Ed, er, Ow!*)

gh, ed, er, ou, ow, st, ar, ble, ing
(Clusters 15, 24, 28, 32, 34, 36, 38, 41, 52)

Note: See Rule 24, General Use of Part Word Contractions and Rule 25, Preferred Contractions.

5. Dot 5 Initial Letter Contractions

- May be used either as words or parts of words when they retain their original sound (e.g., timed, mothering, timer).

**day, ever, father, here, know, lord, mother, name, one, part,
question, right, some, time, under, work, young, there,
character, through, where, ought**

(Clusters 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 26, 34)

Note: See Rule 24, General Use of Part Word Contractions and Rule 25, Preferred Contractions.

6. The Apostrophe

- Is inserted before the *s* in plural abbreviations, numbers or letters, even though it has been omitted in print.
- Should also be inserted in the expression *OK'd*. In such cases, the apostrophe terminates the effect of the double capital sign (e.g., ABCs = ABC's, 1930s = 1930's, ps and qs - p's and q's, OKd = OK'd).
- Follow the general rule for punctuation, (Rule 2).

(Cluster 20)

7. Numbers

- Literary braille numbers are always the number sign plus the numeral.
- The effect of the number sign is not terminated by commas, colons, hyphens, fraction signs and decimals. However, after a space or dash, the number sign must be repeated.

(Clusters 21, 23)

8. Hyphen

- No space should be left before or after a hyphen in a compound word. However, a space should be left appropriately before or after the hyphen in a disconnected compound word (i.e., five- or six-pointed star).
- Follow the general rule for punctuation, (Rule 2).

(Cluster 22)

Note: Never call it a dash. A dash is a double hyphen and is found in Cluster 55.

9. Letter Sign

- Is placed before a letter or letters to distinguish between the letter meaning and a number, a word, a whole-word contraction, or a short-form word.
- Is required when:
 - any letter, or group of letters, immediately follows a number or is joined to it by a hyphen (i.e., 4-H Club).
 - a letter stands alone and is not followed by a period indicating an abbreviation (i.e., D Day).
 - a combination of letters standing alone could be confused with a short-form word (i.e., line AB).
 - a single letter is followed by an apostrophe or is joined by a hyphen (e.g., C's, b-1, e-mail).
- Is **NOT** required before a single capitalized or uncapitalized letter when:
 - the letter is an initial or an abbreviation followed by a period or an oblique stroke (e.g., M.D., c/o).
 - a number is followed by a contraction (e.g., 1st, 4th).
 - the letter is preceded or followed by the apostrophe, indicating omission of letters (e.g., 'e = he, t' = to).
 - the letter is in or refers to an outline or listing, or is enclosed within punctuation marks (e.g., (f) or a) b) c).

10. Short-Form Words

- Should be used alone or as part of a word.
- An addition may be made only if it retains its original meaning and would not obscure recognition of the word.
- An addition may be made to the short-form word provided the combination cannot be mistaken for, or have the appearance of another word.

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- Must not be divided by a hyphen at the end of a line, but a hyphen may be added after the short form word if other syllables are added.
 - Should be used as the whole proper name only, not as a part of a proper name.
 - Short forms for *after*, *blind* or *friend* should not be used when followed by a vowel, but may be used when followed by a consonant, or a hyphen in a divided word.

about, above, according, across, after, afternoon, afterward, again, against, almost, already, also, although, altogether, always, because, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, blind, braille, children, conceive, conceiving, could, deceive, deceiving, declare, declaring, either, first, friend, good, great, herself, him, himself, immediate, its, itself, letter, little, much, must, myself, necessary, neither, o'clock, oneself, ourselves, paid, perceive, perceiving, perhaps, quick, receive, receiving, rejoice, rejoicing, said, should, such, themselves, thyself, today, together, tomorrow, tonight, would, your, yourself, yourselves
(Clusters 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 40, 41, 42)

11. Lower Sign Contractions

- Are never at the end of a word without a space, as they would be read as punctuation.
- *Be, enough, were, his, in,* and *was* may be preceded by the capital and/or italic sign. They must not be in contact with any other letter, contractions, word or punctuation sign.
- Any number of lower signs should follow on another without a space if one of them is in contact with a sign containing dot 1 or dot 4.
- Two or more unspaced lower signs must follow one another when they are not in contact with an upper sign containing a dot 1 or a dot 4.

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- When two or more lower-sign contractions follow one another without being in contact with an upper sign, the final lower sign contraction must not be used (i.e., "to his" must spell out "his").
 - **To, into** and **by**:
 - are unspaced from the word, abbreviation, letter, or number which follows them.
 - begin on the next line if there is not enough room on the braille line for it and at least the first syllable of the following word, abbreviation, number or letter.
 - may be preceded and/or followed by braille composition signs.
 - may not be used and joined to any punctuation sign which follows.
 - do not use as parts of words, in compound words, or as proper names.
 - **Ea** and the double letter signs **bb, cc, dd, ff,** and **gg**:
 - must be used only when these letters occur between letters and or contractions within a word.
 - must never begin or end a word.
 - should not be used when in contact with a hyphen or apostrophe.
 - must not be used where the letters are separated by a primary syllable division.
 - may overlap syllable divisions which occur between a prefix and the root of a word, since to use them would not obscure recognition (e.g., address, affect).
 - **Be, con,** and **dis**:
 - may be used only as syllables at the beginning of a word or at the beginning of a line in a divided word.
 - may be used after a hyphen in a hyphenated compound word.
 - may be used in names for the first syllable following Mac or Mc when the syllable is capitalized (i.e., McConnell).

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- must not stand alone as syllables at the beginning of a line in a divided word.
 - may not be used in contact with a hyphen in a divided word.
 - can be used within an abbreviation of a word, but cannot be the whole abbreviation.
 - must never be used before the apostrophe, but may follow an apostrophe.

- **Com:**

- may be used at the beginning of a word or the beginning of a line in a divided word, but need not be a syllable.
- must never be used in contact with a hyphen, dash or apostrophe, even when a composition sign intervenes.
- may be used after a capital and/or italic sign, unless it immediately follows a hyphen, a dash, or an apostrophe on the same line of writing.
- when capitalized, the contraction may be used in a name follow Mac or Mc.

ea, be, bb, con, cc, dis, en, enough, to , ff, were, gg, his, in, into, was, by, com

(Clusters 29, 33, 36, 39, 41, 46, 48, 49, 50, 52)

Note: See Rule 24, General Use of Part Word Contractions and Rule 25, Preferred Contractions.

12. Dots 4, 5 Initial Letter Contractions

- May be used either as words or parts of words when they retain their original sound (i.e., wordy).

upon, word, these, those, whose

(Cluster 30)

Note: See Rule 24, General Use of Part Word Contractions and Rule 25, Preferred Contractions.

13. Dots 4, 5, 6 Initial Letter Contractions

- May be used either as words or parts of words when they retain their original sound (e.g., spirited, worldly).

cannot, had, many, spirit, world, their

(Clusters 30, 39, 42)

Note: See Rule 24, General Use of Part Word Contractions and Rule 25, Preferred Contractions.

14. Dots 5, 6 Final Letter Contractions

- Should be used in the middle or at the end of a word, or at the beginning of a line in a divided word. They may never begin a word nor be used alone as a whole word, nor should they be used when preceded by the hyphen or the apostrophe.

ence, ong, ful, tion, ness, ment, ity

(Cluster 32)

Note: See Rule 24, General Use of Part Word Contractions and Rule 25, Preferred Contractions.

15. Dots 4, 6 Final Letter Contractions

- Should be used in the middle or at the end of a word, or at the beginning of a line in a divided word. They may never begin a word not be used alone as a whole word, nor should they be used when preceded by the hyphen or the apostrophe.

ound, ance, sion, less, ount

(Clusters 36, 38, 41, 42)

Note: See Rule 24, General Use of Part Word Contractions and Rule 25, Preferred Contractions.

16. Dot 6 Final Letter Contraction

- Should be used in the middle or at the end of a word, or at the beginning of a line in a divided word. They may never begin a word nor be used alone as a whole word, nor should they be used when preceded by the hyphen or the apostrophe.

ation, ally

(Clusters 51, 52)

Note: See Rule 24, General Use of Part Word Contractions and Rule 25, Preferred Contractions.

17. Decimal Coinage

- The dollar sign is placed before the number sign to indicate dollars. When writing dollars and cents, the decimal sign is used to separate the cents from the dollars. Neither the dollar sign nor the number sign should be repeated after the decimal sign.

\$ dollar sign, . decimal

(Cluster 44)

18. Fractions

- Fractions are written: number sign, numerator, fraction bar, denominator.
- In a mixed number, the fraction is joined to the whole number by a hyphen, and the number sign is omitted before the fraction (e.g., 85-5/16). the fraction may not be carried over to the beginning of a new line.

/ fraction bar

(Cluster 45)

19. Dash and Double Dash

- When used as a mark of punctuation, no space should be left before or after a dash, even though the spacing or the length of the symbol may vary in print.
- A space is necessary after a dash if it ends an incomplete sentence.
- A dash may begin or end a line, but the sign must not be divided.
- When a dash represents an omitted word or name, a double dash should be used and should be spaced and punctuated as a word.

- dash, -- double dash

(Clusters 55, 56)

20. Ellipsis

- Is usually 3 dots or asterisks in print indicating the omission of words.
- Should be spaced and punctuated as a word.

... ellipsis

(Cluster 55)

21. Italics

- Is placed before an abbreviation, word, apostrophized word, hyphenated compound word, or number to indicate that it is italicized.
- Is not to be repeated after the hyphen or apostrophe.
- Should not be repeated at the beginning of the next line of a divided word or number.
- Must be used in braille if they are used in print only in the following instances:
 - to indicate emphasis (i.e., If you are going to go, *go*).
 - to show distinction only in such cases as foreign words and phrases; names of ships, pictures, book titles, publications, etc.; subject headings at the beginning of paragraphs; the difference between silent thought and conversation; when in print a passage is printed in italics or different typeface from that of regular text.
- Should be omitted when:
 - quoted passages appear in both quotations and italics, unless the italics are required to show emphasis or distinction.
 - pronunciations are written in both parentheses and italics.
 - writings of all stage directions, settings, etc.
 - a letter which means a letter is written in braille preceded by a letter sign.
 - lists of words are printed in boldface type or italics.
 - word endings are separated from the root words and are printed in italics or boldface type.
- If more than three consecutive words are italicized, the first word is preceded by the double italic sign. Where the last word of an italicized passage is a hyphenated compound word, the closing single italic sign should precede the first part of the compound word.

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- In italicized passages comprising more than one paragraph, the double italic sign should be repeated at the beginning of each new paragraph and the final single italic sign should precede only the last word or the last paragraph.
 - The dash or ellipsis at the beginning or end of an italicized passage is not to be included in the italics.

(Cluster 55)

22. Brackets

- When a portion of a word is enclosed in brackets, print practice should be followed.
- Should be spaced and punctuated as a word.

[] brackets

(Cluster 55)

23. Termination Sign

- In general literature, the hyphen should be used to set apart the italicized or capitalized part of a word (e.g., *they're* = *they'-re*, unSELFish = un-SELF-ish).
- When in print a hyphen follows an italicized or capitalized part of a word, the termination sign must be inserted before the hyphen (i.e., *white-collar* needs a termination sign before the collar).

- termination sign

(Cluster 56)

24. General Use of Part-Word Contractions

- Used where the letters of the contraction are in the same syllable, or would overlap a minor or incidental syllable (e.g., inform, Eden).
- Must NOT be used where the usual braille form of the base word would be altered by the addition of a prefix or suffix (i.e., fruity).
- * Must NOT be used where it would violate the primary syllable division between a prefix or suffix and the base word (e.g., twofold, pigheaded).

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- Must NOT be used where base words are joined to form an unhyphenated compound word (i.e., sweetheart).
 - Must NOT be used where the use of contractions would disturb the pronunciation of a diagraph or trigraph, two or more letters pronounced as one sound (e.g., Boon, sphere).
 - Must NOT be used where two adjoining consonants are pronounced separately (i.e., Wingate).
 - Must NOT be used where the use of a contraction would cause difficulty in pronunciation (i.e., Airedale).

25. Preferred Contractions

- Unless their use violates any of the principles of the rules of English Braille, where there is more than one possible choice in the use of contractions, the selections should be:
 - Preference should be given to the contractions that save the greatest amount of space (e.g., partner not partner).
 - One-cell contractions should be used in preference to two-cell contractions as parts of words (e.g., droned not droned).
 - Where a choice must be made between two consecutive contractions, in order to avoid misspelling, preference should be given to the contraction, which more nearly approximates correct pronunciation (e.g., wherever = wh er ever).

26. Order of Punctuation and Composition Signs

- When two or more braille punctuation marks or composition signs occur together before a word, number or letter, they are placed in the following order:
 - With Punctuation: open parenthesis, or bracket, open quotation sign, italic sign, letter sign, apostrophe, capital sign, accent sign.
 - With Numbers: open parenthesis or bracket, open quotation sign, italic sign, number sign, apostrophe, decimal sign.