

## Narrative Performance Task

**Task:**

Your class has been learning about language and communication. Now the local newspaper is having a creative writing contest. Your teacher has asked each student in your class to write a narrative story for the contest about how they would communicate with a new student from another country.

Before you begin working on your story, you will do some research by reading two articles about different types of communication. After you have reviewed these sources, you will answer some questions about them. Briefly scan the sources and the three questions that follow. Then go back and read the sources carefully to gain the information you will need to answer the questions and finalize your research. You may take notes on the information you find in the sources as you read. Your notes will be available to you as you read.

**Directions for Part 1**

You will now examine two sources. You can re-examine any of the sources as often as you like.

**Research Questions:**

After examining the sources, use the remaining time in Part 1 to answer three questions about them. Your answers to these questions will be scored. Also, your answers will help you think about the information you have read and viewed, which should help you write your story. You may look at your notes when you think it would be helpful. Answer the questions in the spaces provided.

## Source #1: A Language of Dots

Ten-year-old Louis Braille felt a shiver of excitement as he rode in the stagecoach. He was on his way to the Royal Institute for Blind Youth in Paris, France. At that time, in 1819, it was the first and only school for blind children like him. Louis eagerly awaited his chance to learn subjects like history, science, and geography. The institute had special books with raised texts he could read with his fingers.

### Disappointing Discoveries

Sadly, the institute's large, heavy books were awkward to handle and challenging to decode. Louis had to carefully trace the bumpy outline of each big letter with his finger, one at a time, to read a word. Some of the letters had similar shapes and were difficult to distinguish.

Furthermore, the school's library only contained three volumes. Few companies published the expensive books with raised letters. Louis felt frustrated; he began to search for a better way for blind people to communicate through writing. The ability to read and record information would enable them to be better educated and more independent.

### Night Writing

Several years later, a French army captain visited the school. He told students about a code he invented called "night-writing." With his system, soldiers punched a series of raised dots and dashes into cardboard. The different marks stood for the syllables in words. Using the code, he could send brief messages to his soldiers during the night. The soldiers could read them with their fingers, so they did not need to light lanterns that enemies might notice.

In a flash, Louis realized the captain's style of writing would work well for blind people. They could read dots much easier with their fingers than big letters. However, the captain's codes were too long; some of the syllables required twenty dots and took too long to decode. In addition, there were no signs to tell readers when sentences began and ended, which was confusing.

### A Cell of Dots

For the next three years, fourteen-year-old Louis devoted himself to perfecting his own “raised dot alphabet.” After experimenting, he decided to use a rectangular cell of six dots to form his letters. Different combinations of the dots represented certain letters. For instance, two raised dots at the top of the cell represented the letter “c.”

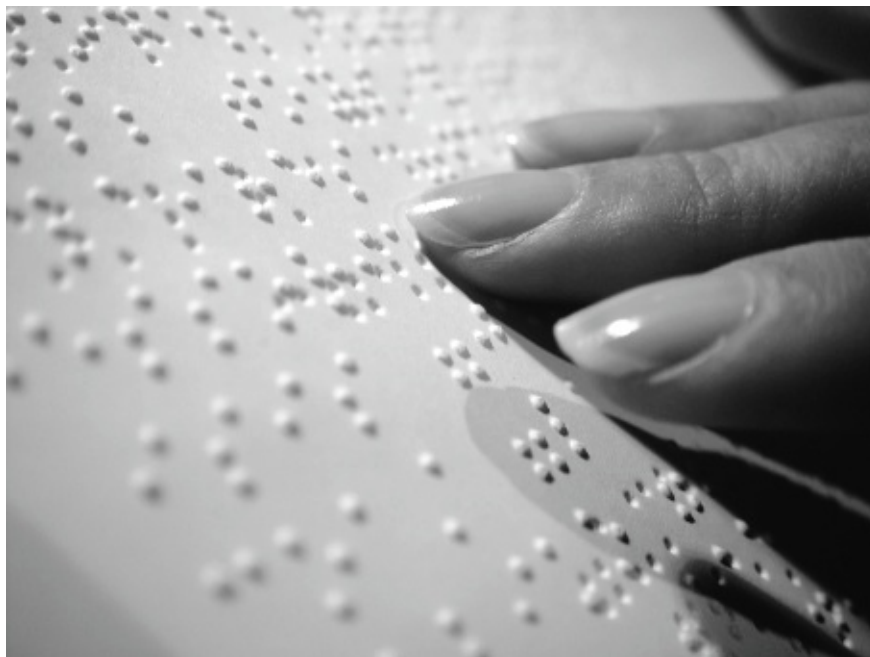
Louis’s new alphabet offered definite advantages to “touch” readers. The small cells quickly glided under their fingertips. As a result, they could conveniently slide their hand straight across the page and read more swiftly than before.

Louis’s new system also included rules to make sentences easier to interpret. For instance, a dot in the bottom right corner signaled that the next letter was a capital. Plus, Louis designed individual symbols for punctuation marks, so readers could correctly group words.

### Helpful Shortcuts

As Louis developed his language, he expanded it to include certain symbols that stood for groups of letters or short words. For instance, there was a specific symbol for “ing” and another specific symbol for the word “and.” Other shortcuts, like using the letters “sd” to mean “said,” soon became popular, too.

Today, people throughout the world use the Braille alphabet. It includes notations for letters, words, numbers and musical notes. You may spy the dots in public places, like elevators. Thanks to Louis, people can gain valuable knowledge with the brush of their fingertips.



©Christopher Stubbs/Alamy

Copyright © McGraw-Hill Education

**GO ON →**

## Source #2: Talking Leaves for the Cherokee

Sequoyah stared in amazement as his fellow soldiers read their letters from home. The idea of using marks on a paper to communicate with others captivated him. Sequoyah belonged to the Cherokee people, and Native Americans had no written language. When Sequoyah completed his military service, he remembered the white man's "talking leaves."

### A Bold Decision

Sequoyah married and had a family, carrying on his mother's business as a trader. Later, he trained himself to be a blacksmith and a silversmith. Because Sequoyah had a lame leg that limited his physical abilities, working as a craftsman suited him.

Whenever possible, Sequoyah devoted his time to his cherished dream; he intended to create a written Cherokee language. Many of his friends and acquaintances thought Sequoyah was foolish. They criticized him for wasting his days, but Sequoyah ignored their comments. He hoped to give the Cherokee a way to communicate their thoughts on paper and to record their nation's history.

### The First Attempt

Sequoyah had no experience with any written language, but he understood that the mysterious marks on the soldiers' letters had represented spoken words. At first, Sequoyah started making a different symbol to represent every known Cherokee word, carving the characters into bark with his knife. His collection grew at a furious rate until there were over a thousand characters.

Frustrated, Sequoyah realized his system would not work. People could never memorize that many symbols. However, Sequoyah's efforts were not a complete failure; he became an expert at understanding his musical, flowing language. In the process, he recognized that words contained consonant sounds followed by vowel sounds, or distinct syllables.

### A Syllabary

Next, Sequoyah focused his attention on inventing symbols for every syllable sound in his language. Some historical accounts say Sequoyah used the letters and numbers from an old English spelling book as models for his symbols. However, to Sequoyah, the letter “S” was just a snake shape. He did not know that in the English language it represented a hissing sound. In addition, he turned some of the letter symbols upside down or sideways.

Determined, Sequoyah worked tirelessly to perfect and limit the symbols in his syllabary. In the end, he divided the sounds of his language into 85 syllables. Sequoyah felt that people would be able to read, write, and memorize that amount.

### A New World Opens

When Sequoyah announced that he had successfully invented a written Cherokee language, people scoffed at him. To prove the truth, Sequoyah convinced an important chief to write a letter to a friend using the syllabary and to seal the message in an envelope. Next, Sequoyah brought the letter to the friend and broke open the wax seal. In front of a doubtful crowd of Cherokee leaders, he handed the letter to his daughter and asked her to read it aloud.

Ahyokah, who had often been her father’s assistant, did so without a pause. The Cherokee leaders were stunned and impressed; they wisely understood how valuable the “picture talk” could be to their nation. Before long, the leaders worked to acquire a printing press. In time, their nation printed the first Native American newspaper.

Today, Sequoyah’s syllabary remains in active use. In fact, some computer search engines and cell phones have created keyboards with its symbols for their users. The symbols once carved in bark now connect people through wireless technology.

**1** Read the paragraph from Source #2.

Whenever possible, Sequoyah devoted his time to his cherished dream; he intended to create a written Cherokee language. Many of his friends and acquaintances thought Sequoyah was foolish. They criticized him for wasting his days, but Sequoyah ignored their comments. He hoped to give the Cherokee a way to communicate their thoughts on paper and to record their nation's history.

How does this information about Sequoyah help the reader understand the work of Louis Braille in Source #1? Select **two** options.

- Ⓐ Braille wanted to share the story about schools for the blind.
- Ⓑ Braille wanted an easier way for the blind to be able to read.
- Ⓒ Braille wished to help the French soldiers share information.
- Ⓓ Braille invested a lot of time to achieve his goal to help the blind.
- Ⓔ Braille's raised-dot alphabet was not so effective as raised letters.
- Ⓕ Braille felt that most people did not understand how to read by touch.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**2** Describe how the information in the sources helps the reader better understand the different ways people can communicate. Use **two** details from the sources to support your explanation. For each detail, include the source title or number.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**3** Explain how the sources show the importance of persistence. Give at least **two** reasons, **one** from Source #1 and **one** from Source #2, to support your explanation. For each reason, include the source title or number.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Directions for Part 2**

You will now review your notes and sources, and plan, draft, and edit your narrative story. You may use your notes to refer to the sources.

Now read your assignment and the information about how the story will be scored; then begin your work.

**Your Assignment:**

The local newspaper is having a writing contest. The topic is about how you would communicate with someone who does not speak your language. The audience for your story is your teacher, the editor of the newspaper, and the community. The winning entry will be published in the local newspaper.

Now, you are going to write a narrative story to submit to your teacher. For your story, imagine a new student has just enrolled in your school. The student is from a foreign country and does not speak any English. Your teacher has asked you to help the student feel welcome by learning how to communicate with the rest of the students. In your story, describe how you develop a way to communicate. The story should be several paragraphs long.

Writers often do research to add realistic details to the setting, characters, and plot in their stories. When writing your story, find ways to incorporate information and details from the sources. Make sure you develop your characters, the setting, and the plot. Use details, dialogue, and description where appropriate.

**REMEMBER: A well-written narrative story**

- is well-organized and stays on topic
- has an introduction and conclusion
- uses details from the sources
- develops ideas fully
- uses clear language
- follows rules of writing (spelling, punctuation, and grammar)

**Now begin work on your narrative story.** Manage your time carefully so that you can plan, write, revise, and edit the final draft of your narrative story. Write your response on a separate sheet of paper.

