

Activity

Activity 1:

- Teacher introduces the posted vocabulary words. Ask for examples of blindness and senses
- Ask the students to name their own senses. Post them on the board as they are named. Are there 5? (*Vision, Hearing, Smell, Taste, Touch*) Are they correctly identified?
- Teacher or an assigned student can share some background info on Louis Braille (see Braille history websites, above). Ask students then to remember and share at least 3 important ideas about Louis Braille's life.
- Ask students what having impaired vision might be like. Student thoughts can be recorded for all to view and think further on ideas and feelings of vision impairment.
- Distribute a few alphabet blocks in a small paper bag. Warn students not to look, but rather to identify each letter by feeling it. Discuss the results, and take turns sharing. Was this method successful? Why or why not?
- Place several alphabet letter ink stamps that spell a word into small bags. Form student groups, have students reach into the bag, without looking and record the letters they feel, then try to determine a word from the letter scramble. When everyone has had a turn, take the stamps out so that students can see whether their sense of touch provided the correct answers. Discuss the results with students. Was the method of letter identification helpful, or successful? Why or why not?
- After the students have completed the activities, have them write about their experiences in their journals. Encourage students to include thoughts about both their frustrations and their successes with the letter identification.
- Students can also be encouraged to share this activity with their parents or other family members

Objectives

- Learn about the challenges faced by people with impaired vision
- Become familiar with Louis Braille and his contributions
- Experience how other senses can assist in understanding

Materials

Computers with internet access to these Braille history sites: www.ideafinder.com, www.brailleplus.net, <http://inventors.about.com>

Alphabet blocks or letters

Alphabet ink stamps

Small paper bags

Paper punch and construction paper

Glue sticks and index cards

Student journals

Vocabulary

- Louis Braille
- Braille alphabet
- Blindness
- Senses

Activity 2:

- The Braille Alphabet handout is distributed to students. Have them study it for a few minutes to determine if they see the system of six cells that Louis Braille invented for the alphabet. After discussion of how letters are formed in Braille, then students will punch dots from construction paper, and glue them to an index card to create a Braille version of his or her name. Teacher and aides are encouraged to participate too. Place the cards in a box. Have students take turns pulling one out and “reading” the name.
- The activity could be extended by converting one word from a list of words posted on the board by the teacher. Again, students would draw them from the box and try to determine the word, using the cell idea and the Braille alphabet. Trying to do it by feel, without vision, would make it even more realistic.

Summary

This time is for journal writing by students. A possible situation could be posed for writing, such as: *“If you were blinded later in your life at the age of 24 by a serious accident, what would you do to deal with the challenge of being visually impaired? Because you had full vision up until the age of 23, how would that influence your challenge of no longer being able to see? Describe which of your 4 remaining senses are going to be the most helpful to you without any vision, and why.”*

Notes for Teachers

Read over and be familiar with material found at the Braille history sites

The Braille Alphabet is a separate document which will be needed to complete the activities of this lesson

Reflection

- ✓ Now that we have talked about and become very aware of our five senses, what do you think happens to the senses of a person with a hearing or vision impairment?
- ✓ If you were forced to lose either your hearing or your vision, which would you choose to lose and why?

Home Connection

Students can share with parents or family members some of their activities from this lesson or ask them questions to get their insight into sudden vision impairment. *What would happen if your vision was suddenly totally impaired?*