Issue 4
Vol. 4, 2002
Editor:
Connie Sullivan

South Dakota Braillist Association Newsletter

South Dakota Braillist Association Conference will be joining the Focus on Success II Conference

From the President, Connie Sullivan

Mark you calendar now!

South Dakota Braillist Association will be one of the co-sponsors for Focus on Success II Conference coming in March, 2003.

Everyone is welcome! Individuals who are blind or visually impaired, parents, other family members, students, teachers, professionals in education, rehabilitation and independent living. The program will address education option and issues, vocational rehabilitation and adult services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

The South Dakota Braillist Association will be co-sponsoring two of the trainers. Betsy Burnham and Janie Humphries.

Betsy Burnham is currently employed by the American Printing House for the Blind as an Accessible Media Manager and Trainer for the ATIC Division. Betsy is a Certified Literary Transcriber. She began her career in the field of vision working as a paraprofessional for those students enrolled at the Maryland School for the Blind. After attaining her certification, she began developing the Braille production area of the Instructional Resource Center located at the Maryland School. She left the Maryland School for the Blind and her position as Tactile Media Coordinator after 15 years. In 2001 to begin her current work at APH.

She is a member of the board of the National Braille Association and is chair of the Transcriber and Educators Services Committee. She has presented workshops and has written and published many articles. She has just completed co-writing the *Training Manual for Braille Transcribers Who Work with Publishers' Electronic Files to Create Braille Textbooks,* for the American Foundation for the Blind's commitment to the AFB Instructional Materials Solution Forum.

Janie Humphries is currently the Director of the Educational and Advisory Services Department at the Printing House. Her responsibilities include developing partnerships with university personnel, preparing programs and the development of the National Instructional Partnerships , a project designed to provide training based around curriculum areas and the use of APH products in those areas. The department also administers Federal Quota. Prior to her current position she was a consultant in the outreach department of the Arkansas School for the Blind. She taught preschool, first grade, language arts and a summer program for fourth graders. She is a member of AER and has served two years on the International Board of Directors. She is the recipient of the J. Max Woolly award given by the Arkansas Chapter in honor of the outstanding former superintendent of the Arkansas School for the Blind. Janie Humphries was the co-founder of the "Getting In Touch With Literacy Conference".

I am working with Marge Kaiser to get the CEU credits. We should have more information on this closer to the conference date.

Attached to the Newsletter is a registration form, information about rooms, agenda and information about other presenters for the conference.

See you in March, 2003.

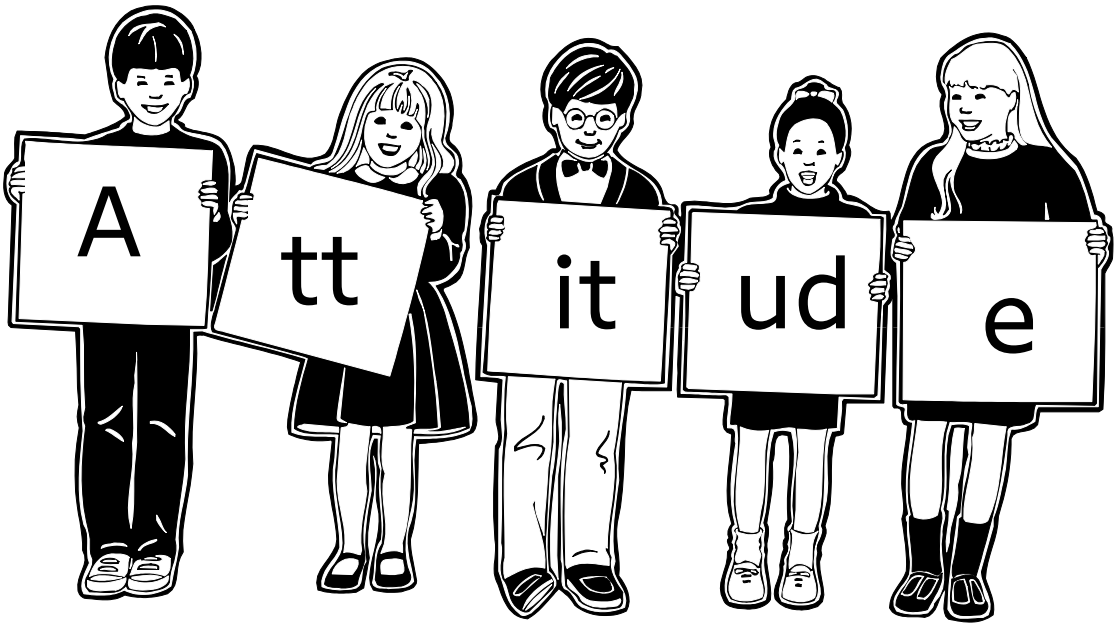
Connie

Attitude

By Charles Swindall

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past; than education; than money; than circumstances; than failures; than successes; than what other people think, say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company… a church… a home. The remarkable thing is that we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past… we cannot change the fact that people act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have… and that is our attitude…

I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it.



Readers Exchange

From *Dots for Braille Literacy*, Spring 2002. All rights reserved. With permission from the American Foundation for the Blind.

A recent discussion on the brlhelp-afb listserve on mental tricks and mnemonic devices to help remember details of the braille code was collected and collated for inclusion into DOTS by Dr. Penny Rosenblum, who teaches personnel preparation classes at the University of Arizona. We all remember what the learning process was like as adult print readers learning a new code in preparation for teaching braille reading and writing. The following list will be valuable for new teachers and for people currently studying to become teachers and transcribers, so thank you, Penny, for submitting this, and thanks to the many teachers who submitted their favorite tip. They are quite creative!

Ways to Remember Tricky Code

Contractions:

- We call and, the, for, a, with whole word contractions the "royals" as they are special; they are the only ones that can be grouped together. I think of them as quite snobbish as they only stick to their own kind.
- The contraction for "ch" represents a mother and child (high dot and a low dot).
- The contraction for "with" looks a bit like half of a printed "w" with the shorter stem in the middle and the longest stroke on the right. That helps you keep it straight from its mirror image buddy, "of." Or you can see the braille "w" in "with" and the braille "o" in "of."
- The contraction for "less" has the taller dot configuration before the "s" (dots 4-6) than the "ness" contraction does (5-6) because "l" is taller than "n."
- The contraction "com" is dropped "com"-pletely as compared to "con."
- The contraction for "which" (dots 1-5-6) is the shape of a "witch's" nose.

Rules:

- To explain the rule of not having two lower signs in succession without being in contact with an upper dot, remember "you cannot build a house with two basements and no upper floor."
- Another way to explain this is "you cannot leave little children along without a(n upper dot) grown up."

Capitalization and Punctuation:

- The exclamation point guy has his back to the sentence, leaning over to yell at the next sentence.
- The exclamation point was a toughie for me until we decided that it looked like a dropped "f" which stands for "Fact!" (as in something that is definite and not in dispute).
- Likewise, the period is a dropped "d" as in "done."
- The capital sign is "married" to the letter so that students have to remember not to "break up the marriage" by incorrectly inserting things between the capital sign and the letter (such as open quotes).

Letters and Numbers:

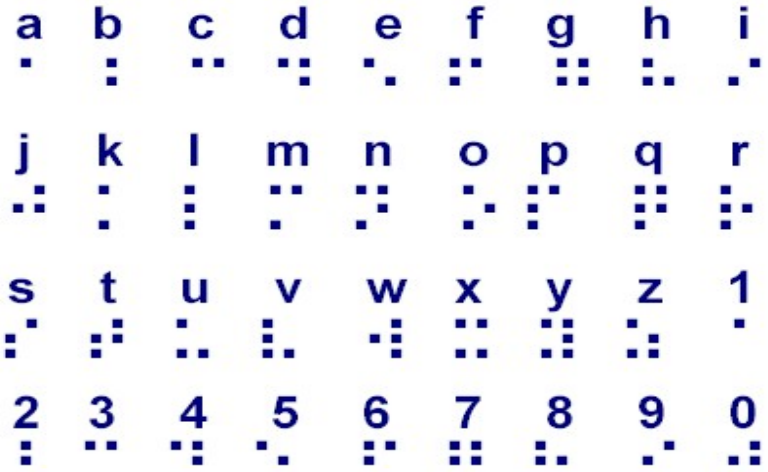
- To remember the dot configuration for "e" and "i" remember that "e to the earth, and i to the sky."
- The symbol for "f" looks like the top of a print capital F; the symbol for "h" looks like a chair, and the word "chair" has an "h" in it.
- I remembered that "h" stands for "8" and "i" stands for "9" because they sound similar.
- To remember the "g" stands for "7," I thought of the guitar chord, G7.
- The word "nine" contains the long I sound, which helped me associate "i" with "9."

Sentences to remember the dot 5, dot 5-6, and dot 4-5-6 contraction groups:

- These over there are theirs.
- Go through those books.
- Where in the world did you learn that word?
- Whose hat is where I sat?
- Upon my word, these are those whose dots are 4 and 5.
- Here, there, and everywhere.
- Many in this world cannot have had their spirit.

" The secret of joy in work is contained in one word — excellence. To know how to do something well is to enjoy it."

Pearl Buck



Brailled Chocolates

The National Braille Factory(NBF) is a source for braille chocolates, NBF has 2 inch X4 inch x 0.25 inch rectangular bars, chocolate dogs, chocolate hearts, and a chocolate Santa Claus just to mention a few. These items come with a braille word or phrase printed on the chocolate along with the print equivalent. NBF can also make custom molds. Chocolates are available in mike, dark, white and sugar-free. Contact them at National Braille Factory, 5040 Victoria Dr., Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V5P 3T8; phone: 877-827-2455 or 604-522-7187; web site: http://www.nationalbraillefactory.com/

Arnold Dunn likes to help people. When he retired from being an engineer, he decided to keep busy by making sets of wooden titles that show the braille alphabet. He sends them to schools for the blind and to blind children all over the US and Canada. He hopes to provide a set to every blind child in the US who wants one, and since he charges nothing for the sets, he doesn't have any trouble keeping busy: as of June, 2002, he has cut drilled, glued, sanded, finished,, and shipped over 1,000 sets of braille blocks!

The tiles are about two and one-half inches long and have beveled edges with no sharp points. The braille cells are presented on each tile by smooth, stubby pegs. The top edge of each tile has been marked with an indentation to help maintain correct orientation of the tiles. The print letter is represented on the back, so these tiles can be used by sighted friends as well. There is a tile for each letter and one for the number sign. Mr Dunn also makes a set of 28 tiltes showing common single-cell contractions from grade 2 braille.

To request a set, contact Mr. Dunn at the address or phone number below. If you write, please include your phone number; if you intend to call, he asks that you call after 12 noon Eastern Time). He prefers to speak with the teacher or parent that will be using each set to find out if there are any special requirements needed for the tiles.

Mr. Arnold Dunn
5130 Brittany Dr. South, Apt 301
St. Petersburg, FL 33715
Phone: (727) 867-3818

Electronic Books to Be Embossed

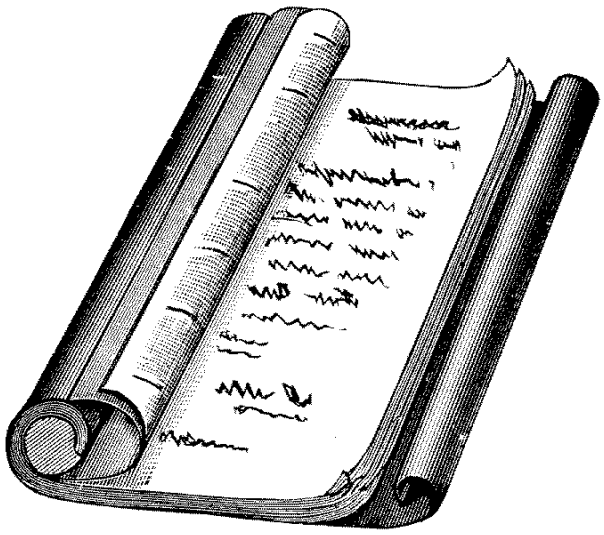
Bookshare.org's extensive online collection of electronic books can now be ordered as hard copy braille books, to be embossed and proofread by professionals at Braille Institute of America, Inc., significantly increasing access to books for braille readers nationwide.

Books available from Bookshare.org originate primarily as scanned books submitted by members and volunteers. Subscribers pay an annual fee to be able to access the full collection. With the launch of this new partnership, ordering a book in hard copy braille can be done all in one visit, directly from the Bookshare.org website. There is no requirement to be a subscribing member to the Bookshare.org service to order embossed books.

Bookshare.org is at http://www.bookshare.org and the Braille Institute of America, Inc. is at http://brailleinstitute.org .

Braille
(author unknown)
Louis Braille with six small dots
Tied the alphabet in knots.
With ingenious stratagem,
'Till like puppets on a string
They easily jumped through the ring!

Novel, textbook, magazine…
Through six small dots the world was seen.



Test Central — APH

Betsy S. Burnham, Chairman, Transcriber and Educator Services
Taken from the National Braille Association Bulletin Volume 38, No, 2

A new section of the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) Research Department has been formed, called Test Central. Test Central staff plan to maximize the test performance of blind and visually impaired individuals through research, education and communication. One of the primary goals to Test Central is to ensure that the highest quality tests and assessments are provided in accessible formats to persons who are blind and visually impaired. Test Central's five tracks include:

Test adaptation
Adaptation and development of test-related tools and materials
Education and relationship building
Identification and development of new tests
Basic research into test-related issues

A unique feature of Test Central is that its council members consist of professionals from the field of education of the visually impaired, test developers and publishers. The building of relationships between these professionals is greatly needed and very exciting! Working relationships with these groups will help ensure that valid and reliable test and assessment instruments as well as sample tests, pre-test materials and adapted devices (braille/large print rules) are available in a timely manner.

Another exciting goal of Test Central is to develop guidelines for editing tests into various media, as well as guidelines for test developers of state assessments. Such guidelines will provide a framework for different editors to present adapted test items in a similar way, will help determine fair test items for assessing the skills and abilities of blind and visually impaired students, and will provide standard methods of administering tests to students with visual impairments. Such measures will help maximize student performance and test results, and enhance the reliability and validity of the assessment.

Other important Test Central activities include developing and making available a variety of position papers on common issues and areas of concern. For example, should a blind student be allowed to use an abacus to work math problems when their sighted peers are allowed to use paper and pencils for the same?

Should blind students be allowed to use speech-accessible calculators in the test environment when the other students are allowed to use basic function calculators in the test-taking situation? Position papers in response to commonly asked questions will provide a basis for decision making as test personnel determine fair and appropriate accommodations for blind and visually impaired test takers.

Guidelines and information learned through Test Central will be freely shared with APH staff, Ex-Officio Trustees, blind and visually impaired individuals and their teachers and family members, and other parties involved in test design and development, test administrations, scoring, test taking, and educational and career planning personnel.

Thanks to Debbie Willis, Manager of Special Projects (APH), for this information regarding Test Central.

"If you read to a child, you show the child a glimpse of the world we live in… IF YOU TEACH THAT SAME CHILD HOW TO READ, YOU OPEN UP THE WHOLE WORLD."

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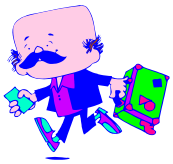


Tuesday's Tip with Dr. Zimmerman

Taken from Tuesday's Tip with Dr. Zimmerman #50 newsletter.

It may not have been your choice to get knocked down, but it is your choice whether or not you try to get back up.

Comment:

Life isn't fair. You know that. Some people have more than their share of difficulties, and some people get more breaks than they deserve.

What fascinates me is how people respond to their difficulties. Some people use their difficulties as an excuse for their lack of achievement, while others use their difficulties as the motivation for their success.

I remember one set of identical twins who were raised by an almost constantly drunk alcoholic father. At age fourteen the twins were sent to separate foster homes, not to be reunited for some thirty years.

When they were brought together at age 44, they were interviewed on a TV talk show. One of the twins had become an alcoholic like his father, while the other one had become a teetotaler. When the TV host asked them why they turned out the way they did, they both gave the same answer. Each of them said, "What do you expect? How could I turn out any differently considering the father I had?"

Simply put, it wasn't so much their difficulty that made the difference in life. It was their response to the difficulty that made them a winner or a loser.

The same is true in your life. Your attitude determines your altitude. Good attitudes tend to bring good results, and bad attitudes tend to bring bad results. In fact, your attitude will defeat you faster than any problem you'll ever have or any competition you'll ever encounter.

So how do you develop a good attitude, an attitude that will help you get back up when you get knocked down? You need to do three things.

First, REFUSE TO BLAME ANYONE OR ANYTHING FOR YOUR PROBLEMS OR SITUATION. That's not easy. And it's not natural. After all, your company, your boss, your parents, your friends, and your spouse might even deserve some blame.

The problem is, it doesn't work. It doesn't change anything, and it doesn't make anything better. All blame can do is keep you stuck or make you spiteful, neither of which will turn you into a winner.

Take your job, for example. Maybe you feel stuck in a job that is going nowhere, or maybe you think your company is doing nothing to invest in your career development. A loser could spend hours in the employee lounge talking about those issues, blaming the boss or the company.

Or maybe you feel slighted when it comes to education. You never had the chance to get the schooling you wanted. As one person said, "When I went to school, all I had was a pencil and the kid next to me. And I think if he'd really applied himself, I could have been somebody."

So the first step in positive attitude development is refusing to blame. Even though it may be justified, don't do it. Just accept the fact that some days you are the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.

Second, CHOOSE TO BELIEVE IN YOURSELF. That's right, choose! Even though you may have some doubts, even though the balance sheet of your life may show more liabilities than assets, you deserve to believe in yourself. Sugar Ray Robinson, the boxing champ, said, "To be a champ, you have to believe in yourself when nobody else will." Or Dolly Parton said, "I'm not offended by all the dumb blonde jokes because I know that I'm not dumb ... and I also know that I'm not blonde."

And it doesn't matter how you come to that conclusion. You may take a spiritual approach and decide that God doesn't make junk. Just the fact that He made you is enough to decide you're worthwhile. Or maybe you take a cold, analytical approach and decide you can believe in yourself simply because you're a survivor. You've survived tough times in the past, and that alone is enough to decide to believe in yourself.

If that sounds easier said than done, all you have to do is start affirming it. Tell yourself twenty times a day, a hundred times a day, "I like myself. I like myself. I like myself." Eventually your subconscious mind will start to accept your affirmation, and you will be able to believe in yourself.

Finally, to develop your positive attitude, DO SOMETHING TO MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS. That might sound strange, but that's the way it works. If you do some things to help others, things you can feel good about, you can't help but strengthen your own positive attitude. You're starting a blessed circle. Your good actions reinforce your good attitudes -- which in turn generates more good actions, and the circle continues.

That was the case with one young man who appeared in the early television Fruit-Of-The-Loom commercials. Even though he was a successful actor, he didn't feel good about himself. He had a weight problem.

One day he found a note on his car that inspired him to do something about his problem. The note said, "Fat people die young. Please don't die."

The young man went on a crash diet and lost 110 pounds in three months. Unfortunately, his dramatic weight loss so damaged his body he had to be hospitalized. After this devastating experience, he decided to start all over and learn how to lose weight safely through sound nutrition and proper exercise. Once he learned that, he was determined to find some way to share his knowledge with others who were troubled with obesity.

He was so enthusiastic about his new-found knowledge, and he was so excited about helping others that people were immediately attracted to him. He made weight-loss education his business and enthusiasm his partner. Today Richard Simmons is recognized across the world for his weight-loss crusade. But he couldn't have done it without first deciding to do something that would make a positive difference in the lives of others.

Action:
You may invest in the stock market, or you may believe real estate is the way to a better financial future. But this week, decide to invest in yourself. Choose to believe in yourself a little bit more than you did last week. Tell yourself over and over, "I like myself. I believe in myself." Say it until you believe it. It will be one of the best investments you'll ever make.

Have a fantastic week!
Dr. Alan Zimmerman

Katie Player

What is katieplayer™?
In a nutshell, katieplayer™ is a DAISY digital book player.

If you would like to learn more about what makes a DAISY digital book, we suggest you visit the informative web site of the international DAISY consortium: http://www.daisy.org.

The current version of katieplayer™ (1.0) plays DAISY version 2.X "text plus audio" books. katieplayer™ version 2.0 (scheduled for late fall/early winter release) will also play DAISY version 3.X "text only" books such as those offered by Bookshare.

The full, public release of katieplayer is now available! Download the full featured version 1.0.1 now and try it free for 30 days! Link to learn more about some of the unique features that make katieplayer™ *the* powerful, yet friendly and cost effective option for DAISY digital talking book playback on your Mac or Windows computer.

Please visit http:\\www.katieplayer.com.

Get on the Braille Trail!

From *Dots for Braille Literacy*, Spring 2002. All rights reserved. With permission from the American Foundation for the Blind.

Based on the popular and enthusiastically received Braille Bug, who happily inhabits the American Foundation for the Blind's website at http:\\www.afb.org/braillebug, *The Braille Trail: An activity Book,* and its companion, *The Braille Trail Parent/Teacher Guide*, offer students, parents and teachers, a delightful and fascinating introduction to braille.

Designed to teach sighted children about braille and to encourage literacy among all children — sighted and visually impaired — *The Braille Trail* offers games, activities, and a wealth of information on braille, assistive technology used by people who are visualy impaired and are readers of braille, and the biographies of Helen Keller and Louis Braille. *The Braille Trail: An Activity Book* contains 44 pages of games, graphics, and activities that students can enjoy on their own.

The Braille Trail Parent/Teacher Guide is an important companion that provides discussion questions and activities based on the *The Braille Trail* that parents, teachers and other group leaders can use to promote learning in a fun-packed way. Kids can even use the enclosed braille sheets to learn their names in braille and decidpher secret codes. Promote braille literacy with our students in an engaging and interesting way with *The Braille Trail!*

The books are available from AFB Press. *The Braille Trail: An Activity Book* and braille sheets set is sold in packs of 20 for #30.00 (ISBN: 0-89128-863-5). *The Braille Trail Parent/Teacher Guide* comes with the *Activity Book* and braille sheets for $24.95 (ISBN: 0-89128-862-7). To order, contact:
AFB Press
PO Box 1020
Sewickley, PA 15143-1020
Phone: 800-232-3044 or 412-741-1398
Or order online at http:\\ www.afb.org/store

APHontTM: A Font for Low Vision

APHontTM (pronounced Ay'-font), was developed by APH specifically for low vision readers. APHont embodies characteristics that have been shown to enhance reading speed, comprehension, and comfort for large print users.

The APHont Regular typeface is the first part of a font suite that will also include APHont Bold, Italic, and Italic Bold. APH offers APHont Regular through free distribution. Note: When the complete APHont Suite is available, it will be sold as an APH product.

Features:

- More even spacing between letters.
- Higher crossbars.
- No serifs.
- Wider letters.
- Heavier letters.
- Underslung "j" and "q".
- Letters more open.
- Larger punctuation marks.

Product Brochures:

- APHont .BRF

Trademark and Copying Information: You may copy APHont Regular to distribute to your friends at no charge. Note: APHont is trademarked material. APHont may not be altered or copied for sale without express written permission from APH.

Note: APH makes no claim that APHont is an appropriate font for children who are just learning to read. **Ordering Info:**

- **APHont Regular: A Font for Low Vision**
  Catalog #: NA
  Price: FREE
  Download Now

"Those who trust us, educate us."
- George Eliot

Recorded Textbooks Go Digital for Students with Visual Impairments, Learning Disabilities.

Princeton, NJ (August 16, 2002) — Students who are visually impaired or who have severe learning disabilities will have unprecedented access to the contents of textbooks and other educational materials with the nationwide (September 3, 2002) release of digitally recorded textbooks on CD from Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic® (RFB&D®).

"RFB&D's AudioPlus™ digitally recorded textbooks are a long-awaited innovation in reading technology for people with disabilities who cannot read standard print effectively," says RFB&D President & CEO Richard O. Scribner. "They level the playing field for students with disabilities because they offer functionalities that significantly enhance the ability to study and research."

To listen to RFB&D's AudioPlus digitally recorded textbooks, students need a portable CD player equipped to play RFB&D's books or a standard multimedia computer equipped with a CD-ROM drive and specialized software. Playback hardware and software will be available through RFB&D for nonprofit sale.

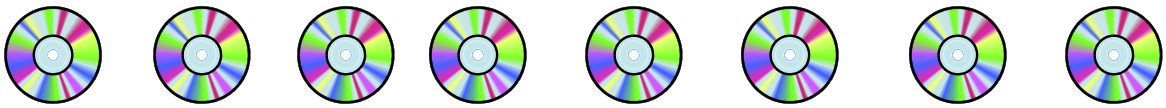
With RFB&D's AudioPlus digitally recorded textbooks, students will enjoy:

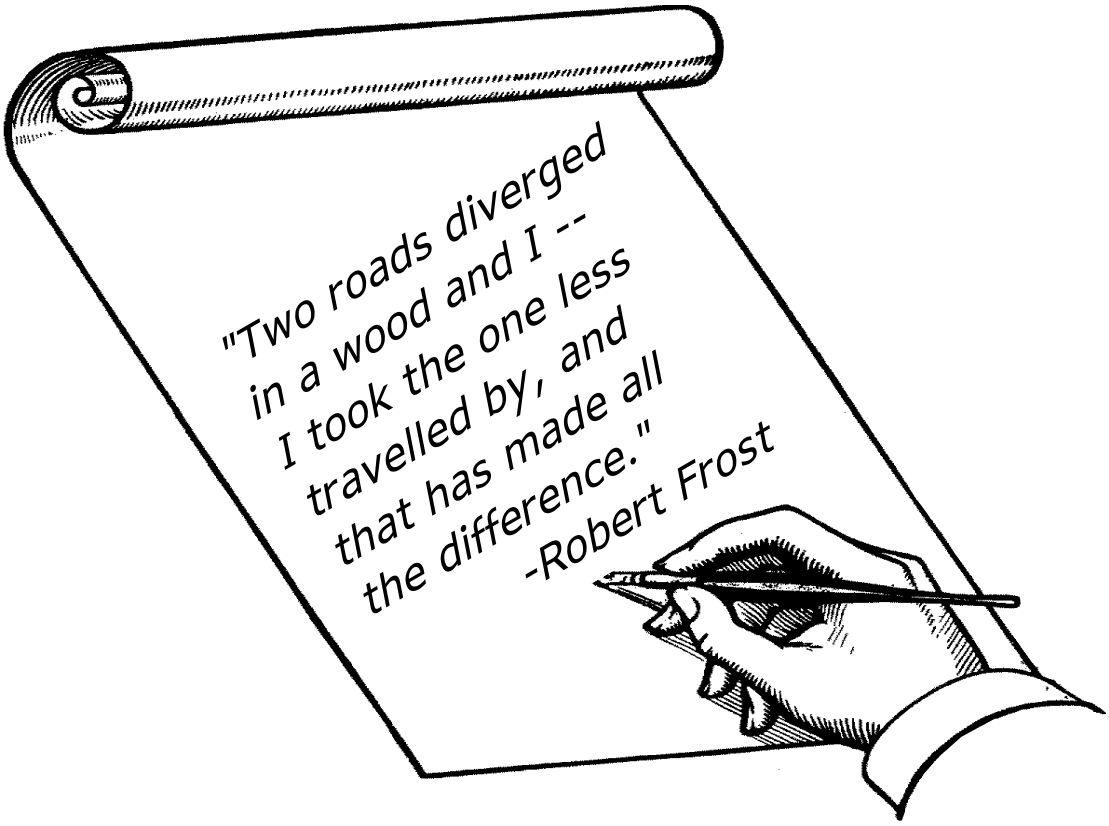
Instant access — Digitally recorded textbooks allow instant access to any page, chapter or subheading in a book with the touch of a button - there is no need to fast-forward through and count embedded beep tones as is done with books recorded on analog cassette tape.

Convenience —- Digitally recorded textbooks are stored on CDs, which hold more than 40 hours of recorded material. Therefore, the contents of a standard textbook, which requires eight to 12 RFB&D cassettes, will now fit onto a single CD. Portability, ease of navigation and bookmarking capabilities make digitally recorded textbooks from RFB&D more effective study tools for students with print disabilities.

Better audio quality — Digital audio technology produces recordings with significantly less noise ("tape hiss") than analog recording.

The digitally recorded textbooks will continue to be ordered from RFB&D through the South Dakota Braille & Talking Book Library. Players for the CD books will not be available through the Library.





Happy Holidays