# Quotation marks and apostrophes in UEB

## The problem

The International Council on English Braille (ICEB) is reviewing the braille signs used to represent the apostrophe and quotation marks in Unified English Braille (UEB).

In print, the apostrophe is represented using the same or similar symbol as single quotation marks. In braille, these identical print symbols are represented with different braille symbols according to their meaning. Intervention may be required from braille transcribers to obtain correct braille, and automated braille generated for use on a refreshable braille display can contain errors.

This document gives four options for alternative representations of the apostrophe and quotation marks in UEB. Please read the document carefully and share your opinion with us via the online survey at <u>www.surveymonkey.com/r/UEB-apostrophe</u>. The UEB Code Maintenance Committee will consider your responses in deciding whether to change the signs used for apostrophe and quotes.

Briefly, the braille output may depend on how the print has been generated: with 'straight' or 'directional' apostrophes and single quotes. Different countries and publishers may use "double" or 'single' quotes as their predominant quotes with the other kind used as inner quotes (quotes within a quote). Apostrophes may therefore be the same print sign as the predominant or inner quotes.

Sounds complicated? Suffice it to say, all these variations are routinely found in print and it can currently lead to braille errors.

This document concentrates on how the braille might appear. If you would like more technical information about the problem, including a longer list of examples and how they are encoded in print, please contact ueb@iceb.org.

### **Option 1: Current UEB rules**

This option is to keep everything unchanged.

The current rules state that:

- Predominant quotation marks (single or double) are represented by the single-cell, nonspecific quotation marks, lower h :: and lower j ::
- Apostrophes are represented by dot 3

Even with a good translation program, manual intervention is usually required to achieve the correct braille. For some publications, this may take the bulk of the time for the transcription process. Screen readers cannot guarantee correct braille.

Note that even with correct transcription, the braille reader often does not know what kind of quotes are being used (single or double).

#### Example 1:

In print, using single quotes:

'OK, that's fine. I'll meet you there.'

Correct braille:

Possible incorrect braille if automated with no manual intervention. Other variations are also possible.

or

#### Example 2:

This example contains internal quotes for speech within speech.

In print, using double then single quotes:

"What did you mean by 'next lesson'?" she asked. "It's the end of term!"

Correct braille:

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Possible incorrect braille translation. Again, other variations are possible.

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#### Example 3:

This final example contains apostrophes used for omitted letters in speech.

In print, using single quotes:

'I would 'cept I can't find nothin' else.'

Correct braille:

Possible incorrect braille:

or

# Option 2: lower g for opening single quote and dot 3 for closing single quote

In this option, we propose:

- Double quotes are always lower h : and lower j :
- Apostrophe is always dot 3 🕂
- Open single quote is lower g
- Close single quote is dot 3  $\therefore$  because it is the same in print as the apostrophe

Advantages include: simplifying the rules on quotes and apostrophes; giving a fixed, singlecell braille sign for each print symbol allowing better automated translation; and the braille reader is aware of whether the print uses single or double quotes. Disadvantages include: opening and closing single quotation marks are non-symmetrical; and the open single quote (dots 2356) could potentially be misread as a Standard English Braille open bracket by some readers familiar with the older braille codes.

Note that manual intervention may still be needed in some cases.

#### Example 1:

In print, using single quotes:

'OK, that's fine. I'll meet you there.'

In braille:

#### Example 2:

In print, using double then single quotes:

"What did you mean by 'next lesson'?" she asked. "It's the end of term!"

In braille:

#### Example 3:

In print, using single quotes:

'I would 'cept I can't find nothin' else.'

In braille:

Note: this example may still need manual editing to get correct braille due to the placement of an apostrophe at the start of a word.

#### Option 3: all single quotes are dot 3

In this option, we propose:

- Double quotation marks are represented as lower h : and lower j :
- Single quotes and apostrophes are all represented by dot 3

Advantages: this can be fully automated by braille translation software and screen readers; braille readers are aware whether the print uses single or double quotes.

Disadvantages include: the single quote could be mistaken for a capitals indicator; and the single quotes are not directional.

#### Example 1:

In print, using single quotes:

'OK, that's fine. I'll meet you there.'

In braille:

#### Example 2:

In print, using double then single quotes:

"What did you mean by 'next lesson'?" she asked. "It's the end of term!"

In braille:

#### Example 3:

In print, using single quotes:

'I would 'cept I can't find nothin' else.'

In braille:

# Option 4: single quote and apostrophe depend on position

In this option we propose:

- Single quotes or apostrophes at the start or end of words are represented by lower g
   ::
- Apostrophes within a word are represented by dot 3
- Double quotation marks are represented as lower h 👬 and lower j 👬

Advantages: this can be fully automated by braille translation software and screen readers; braille readers are aware whether the print uses single or double quotes; the single quote cannot be confused with a capitals indicator.

Disadvantages include: apostrophe is represented by two different symbols in braille, dependent on its position; single quotation marks are not directional; and the beginning and end of quotes may be confused by the presence of apostrophes at the beginning or end of a word.

#### Example 1:

In print, using single quotes:

'OK, that's fine. I'll meet you there.'

In braille:

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Example 2:

In print, using double then single quotes:

"What did you mean by 'next lesson'?" she asked. "It's the end of term!"

In braille:

#### Example 3:

In print, using single quotes:

'I would 'cept I can't find nothin' else.'

In braille: