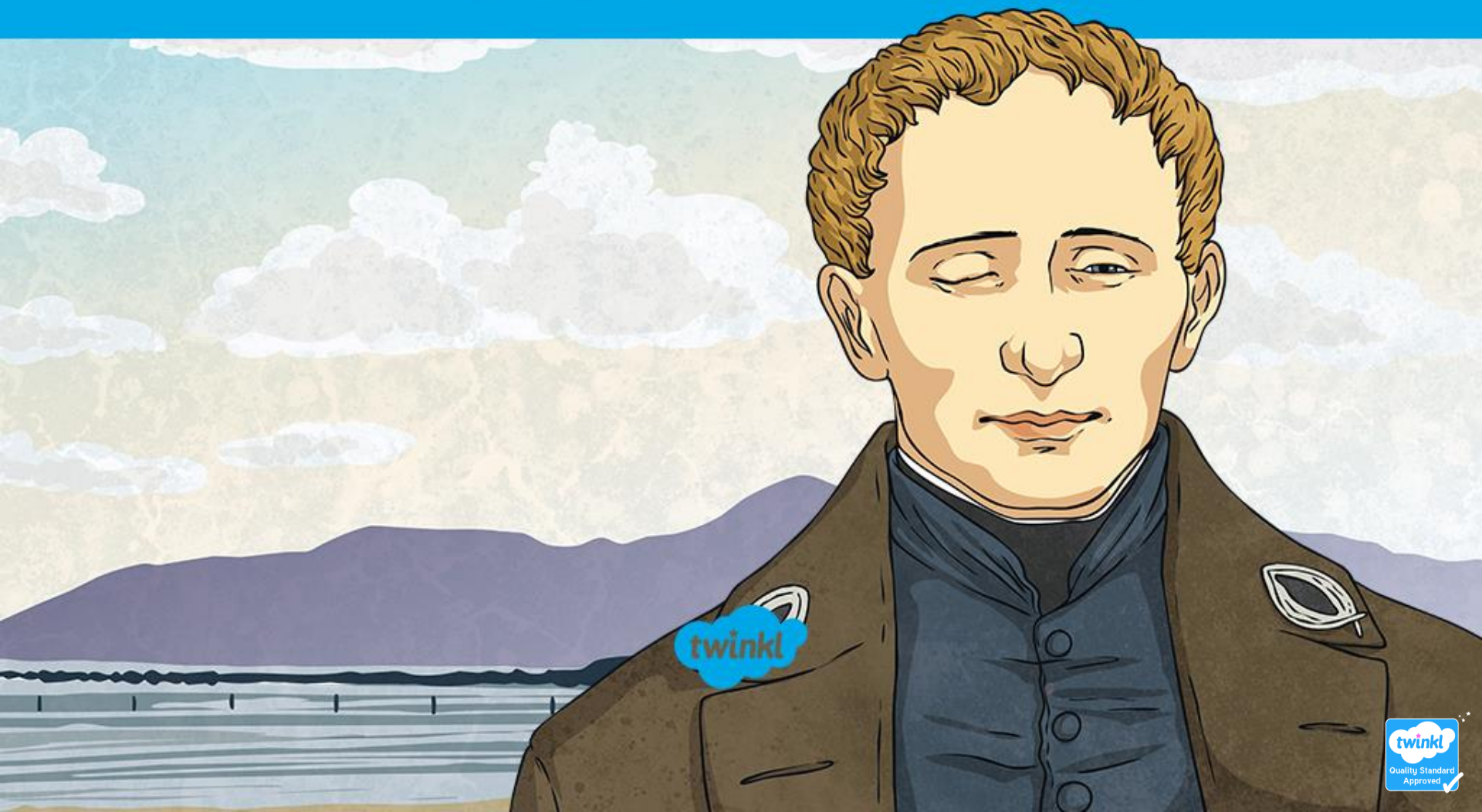


All About

Louis Braille



The Creator of Braille



Have you heard of braille?



What is it?



Who uses it?

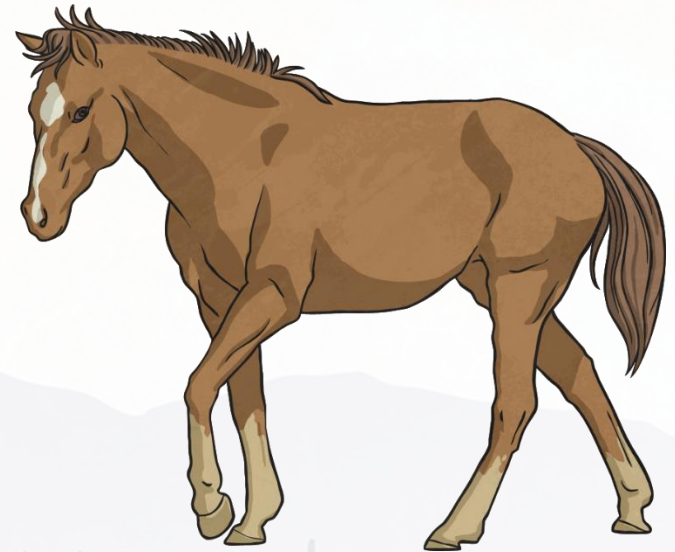


A Terrible Accident

Louis Braille was born on 4th January 1809 in Coupvray, near Paris in France. He had two older sisters and a brother and parents, Monique and Simon-René.

Louis' father owned a harness shop, making leather harnesses for horses. Louis would play in the workshop while his father worked.

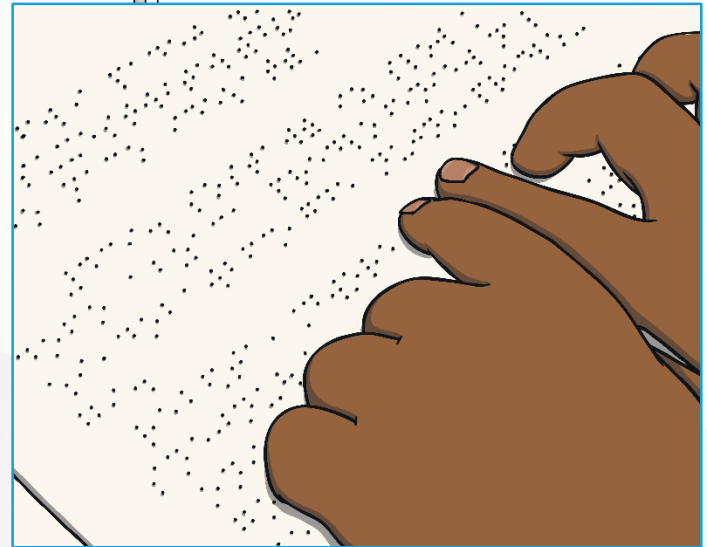
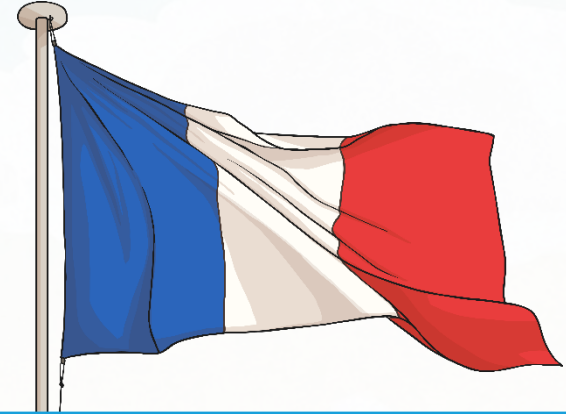
One day, when Louis was three years old, he was playing with a tool and had a terrible accident which resulted in him injuring his right eye. It was immediately blinded and by the age of five, an infection had spread to his other eye, causing the young boy to become completely blind.



A Code for Soldiers

In 1819, Louis gained a scholarship to study at the National Institute for Blind Children in Paris.

Louis became interested in a system invented by Charles Barbier which was made for soldiers on the battlefields. It was a system where raised dots represented phonetic sounds. A person would read them using their fingertips. This meant that soldiers could communicate in the dark and without speaking so as to not alert the enemy to where they were. It was called 'night writing'.



In His Own Words

Louis Braille was driven to enable blind people to learn and communicate. He said:

“Access to communication in the widest sense is access to knowledge, and that is vitally important for us if we [the blind] are not to go on being despised or patronised by condescending sighted people. We do not need pity, nor do we need to be reminded we are vulnerable. We must be treated as equals – and communication is the way this can be brought about.”



Think
about
it

What does this quote tell us about Louis Braille's character?

Braille

By the age of 15, Louis had further developed this system by reducing it to just six dots. These dots would be arranged in different positions to represent words and letters. People would then use their fingers to read, having learnt what the dots meant. It became known as braille.



Planchette

Louis made his own equipment for writing braille – it was called a ‘planchette’. Planchette is a French word meaning ‘little plank’ and it was a small plank of wood with holes in it. He would hold it over the paper and use a tool to make small dips in the paper. When the paper was turned over, it had raised bumps. This also meant that he had to write the braille from right to left and do the codes as mirror images as he was working on the back of the paper

By 1829, Louis had added symbols for maths and music. He became a talented cellist and organist, and in 1833, he went on to teach history, geometry and algebra at the Institute.

In 1837, Louis wrote and published a popular history book in braille over three volumes. He went on to have many more books published which could be read by blind people.



The End of a Pioneer

Louis Braille became ill with a lung condition which is thought to have been tuberculosis. He died on 6th January 1852, two days after his forty-third birthday.

Louis Braille was buried in Coupvray but in 1952, his contribution to the wider world was recognised and his remains were exhumed and buried at the Panthéon in Paris. In an unusual request, the Mayor of Coupvray insisted Braille's hands remained in the town he had been born in.



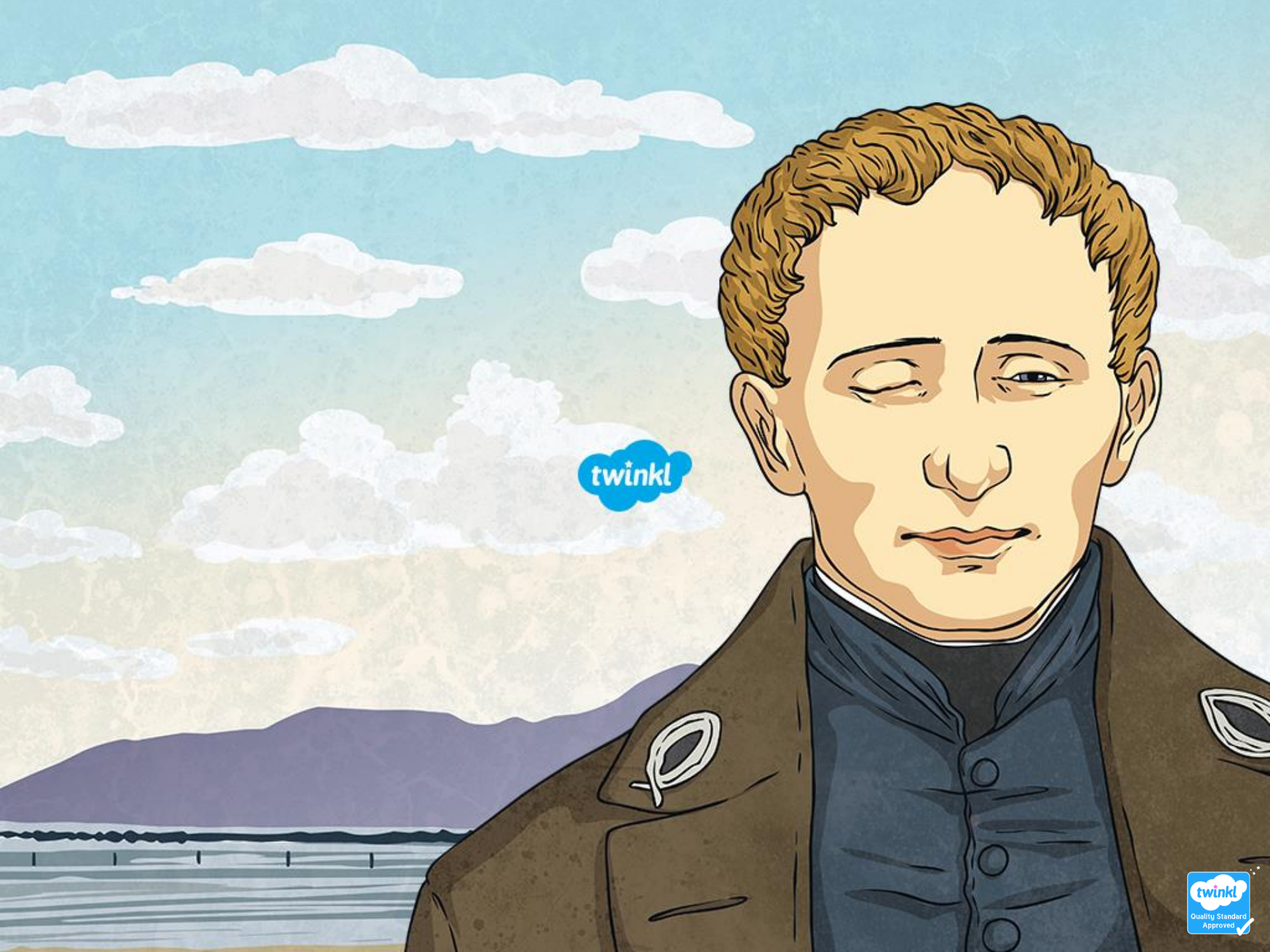
His Legacy

Louis Braille's writing method of braille was never used at the Institute during his lifetime. However in 1854, through the persistence of the blind students, the system was finally adopted at the Institute.

The braille system has remained largely the same since Louis created it and it is now recognised as the literary form of the written word for those who are blind to use.

He changed the world for blind people and will always be remembered for the difference he made.





twinkl