**Rules and information**

**NATIONWIDE BRAILLE READERS ARE LEADERS CONTEST FOR KIDS**

**2018-19**

Sponsored by the   National Federation of the Blind of Illinois (NFBI) in partnership with the NFB Jernigan Institute and The American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults.

After an NFB affiliate in any of the 50 states has submitted a $100 entrance fee, an unlimited number of blind or visually impaired children in that state can participate in the contest. The deadline for submission of the entrance fee is December 1 2018. Contact Patti Chang of the NFBI at [pattischang@gmail.com](mailto:pattischang@gmail.com) for transaction details. Individuals desiring to participate in the contest should make sure their state is taking part in the contest before they register.

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=General Contest Information

* Sponsors: the National Federation of the Blind of Illinois (NFBI) in partnership with the NFB Jernigan Institute and The American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults.
* Purpose: to promote the joy of reading for pleasure; to promote a pride in Braille as a viable literacy medium equal to print; and to demonstrate the importance of independent reading in the development of Braille literacy skills.
* Eligibility: blind and low vision Braille-reading students who are enrolled in a kindergarten through twelfth grade educational program in any of the 50 states, or residents of a state who are enrolled in a similar educational program in another state. Note for students to be eligible, their resident NFB state affiliate must submit a $100 entrance fee as described above.

=Registration

registration opens November 1 2018, but may be submitted as late as January 19 2019. Obtain a registration form by visiting [www.nfbofillinois.org](http://www.nfbofillinois.org)/nationwide-bral-contest.

=Submitting the REGISTRATION Form

You are encouraged to fill out the registration form electronically, then submitting it as an attachment to an email message. Send to Deborah Stein at [dkent5817@att.net. Please put Nationwide BRAL plus the contestant’s name in the subject line.](mailto:dkent5817@att.net.%20Please%20put%20Nationwide%20BRAL%20plus%20the%20contestant's%20name%20in%20the%20subject%20line.%20)

If you prefer to handle the registration form as a hard copy, print a copy of the form by visiting the website, fill it out, then mail to:

Nationwide BRAL Contest

Deborah Stein

5817 N. Nina Ave.

Chicago, IL 60631

Note: registration forms must be submitted by January 19 2019.

=SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES

* November 1 2018: Registration for the contest opens. Note registration may be done later as described below.
* December 1 2018: The beginning of the contest, and the first day participants can count the pages they have read.
* January 19 2019: The end of the contest, and the last day participants can count their pages. Also the last day to submit a registration form.
* February 2 2019: Reading logs must be submitted by a certifying official by midnight.
* March 2019: winners will be announced/notified.
* April 2019: Prizes and gift bags will be mailed out.

=Breaking Down the Contest

Contestants compete against their same-grade peers across all participating states to read the most Braille pages during the reading period. There are five grade categories in the competition: grades K-1, grades 2-3, grades 4-5, grades 6-8 (middle school), and grades 9-12 (high school).

NOTE: Students classified as “un-graded,” or those who have reading delays, should register in the same category as their same-age peers. For example, a sixteen-year-old student who reads at a third grade level should register in the high school category. However, he or she may read third grade materials. We have found that when students read material appropriate for their reading level, they are able to be competitive with their same-age peers.

=Prizes

* First-place winners in each grade category: $25
* Second-place winners in each grade category: $15
* Third-place winners in each grade category: $10

Honorable Mention

The contest judges may award honorable mentions in each grade category to participants who have shown significant efforts but aren’t a first, second, or third place winner. The award will be $10.

The Kelly Doty Award

This award is named in memory of Kelly Doty, a former member who worked tirelessly within the NFB of Illinois and was prominent in promoting Braille literacy.

This award is given in her honor to students who have overcome multiple handicaps to become Braille literate. Examples of those eligible for this award might be students who, in addition to their visual impairment, have cognitive and/or physical disabilities, are English as a second language learners, are students with brain injuries, or are students who have been otherwise educationally disadvantaged.

A certifying official should fill out the appropriate portion of the registration form giving information about a student to be considered for this award.

The winners of the Kelly Doty Award will receive $25. That can be in addition to any other prize won as a result of pages read.

At the discretion of the contest officials, each participating contestant may receive additional gifts.

= RULES FOR THE CONTEST

* Contestants must meet the eligibility criteria.
* The NFB state affiliate of the contestant must have submitted a $100 entrance fee to the NFBI.
* All materials read must meet the criteria for acceptable materials (see below).
* All materials must be read from December 1 2018 through January 19 2019.
* Each registration form must have the name and contact information of a certifying official.
* Incomplete information on the registration form or the reading log form may disqualify a contestant for prizes or awards.
* Not meeting the required dates for registration or the submission of a reading log will disqualify a contestant.
* All decisions of the judges are final.

=Certifying OFFICIAL

The certifying official is responsible for:

* registering the student for the contest.
* assisting, if necessary, the student in finding suitable extracurricular Braille books and other materials to read for the contest.
* verifying the student read the Braille material listed, and that the material was read between the beginning and ending dates of the contest.
* submitting the reading log in an accurate, complete, and timely fashion.

Teachers, librarians, and parents/guardians may serve as certifying officials. Each participant only needs one certifying official.

The contestant, certifying official, and/or parent/guardian may be contacted if the contest judges have questions or need additional information about an entry. Judges may, based upon the information available to them, adjust the number of pages read or disqualify a contestant. All decisions of the judges are final.

=Reading Material Guidelines

The overall purpose of the contest is to encourage extracurricular reading for pleasure, so the following lists of acceptable and unacceptable contest reading materials are given. The lists also take into account the fact that most of what students in kindergarten, first, and second grades learn in school is connected to reading, and therefore there is not always a clear distinction between required reading and recreational reading.

All material must have identifiable source information that can be checked for verification such as author, publisher, or sponsoring organization.

1. Acceptable (recreational or independent reading)

* Books: fiction or nonfiction, hardback or paperback, Braille only or print-and-Braille format, mass-produced or individually transcribed
* Magazines
* Stand-alone articles or tracts with identifiable authors and/or publishers. For example, NFB Braille literature (such as banquet speeches), or reprints of articles that originally appeared in the Braille Monitor
* Manuals for club activities. For example, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Blue Birds, 4-H Club, etc.
* Religious publications. For example, portions of the Bible, Koran, Torah, Sunday school lessons, meditations, etc.
* Materials read in school during free-reading time, in the library, or under any circumstance where students are allowed freedom to choose what they read.
* Supplemental reading books to beginning reading series, such as those that come with the Patterns reading series from the American Printing House for the Blind
* Books from the Accelerated Reading Program list
* Cookbooks, but only if an attempt is made to read the book in its entirety, not recipe by recipe (children’s cookbooks are often designed so that they are easily read from cover to cover)

1. Not Acceptable (materials required for school assignments, reference materials, and other reading material not designed to be read in its entirety)

* Textbooks and related materials assigned as required reading by the student’s teacher or educational program
* Dictionaries
* Encyclopedias
* Menus
* Cookbooks (see exception above)
* Items without identifiable source information that can be checked for verification, such as author, publisher, or sponsoring organization

=Recording Your Reading (READING LOG)

To find the official reading log, visit the website, [www.nfbofillinois.org/nationwide-bral-contest](http://www.nfbofillinois.org/nationwide-bral-contest). The reading log is designed to allow the recording of 25 entries. If the contestant has more entries than that, submit multiple copies of the reading log.

To receive full credit for the pages read during the contest, it is crucial that the material read is recorded accurately. Before the contest begins, look over the reading log and instructions to ensure that you understand what information you will be required to provide.

instructions For Filling Out the Reading Log

1. Material Title: Please provide the title of the book, magazine, etc.

2. Author: Please give the author’s name

3. ISBN (if available): This ten- or thirteen-digit number aids us in tracking down books and verifying their page length. In Braille books, the ISBN is generally listed in the first few pages with the other bibliographical information. (We are aware that some Braille books do not have ISBNs; if you cannot find the ISBN for a book you may leave this field blank.)

4. Material Transcribed by: Please tell us where you acquired the Braille reading material:

a. Bookshare: If you downloaded a .brf file from [www.Bookshare.org](http://www.Bookshare.org), please place an “x” next to “Bookshare.”

b. WEB-BRAILLE: If you downloaded a .brf file of a book transcribed by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) at www. loc.gov/nls, please place an “x” next to “WEB-BRAILLE” for that entry.

c. Home/School: If the material was transcribed by school district personnel or at the contestant’s home, please place an “x” next to “Home/School” for that entry.

d. Agency: If you received the material in hard copy Braille from an organization/agency outside the school, please place an “x” next to “Agency” for that entry.

5. Type of Material: Place an “x” next to the appropriate choice identifying whether the material read was a book, magazine, article, or other.

6. Did the Contestant Complete the Book: Please indicate if the contestant completed the book with a “yes” or “no.”

7. Date Completed or Stopped Reading: Please indicate the date the contestant completed the book or stopped reading the book. If the contestant begins a book, takes a break from reading it, and then picks the book back up to finish it, you only need to record the final date.

8. Number of Pages: Record the number of Braille pages read in the book. If the contestant only read 200 pages of a 400-page book, then you should record only 200. See the Common Questions & Answers section below for more details.

9. Times Read: Contestants in grades K-5 are permitted to read books up to three times. Please record the number of times a book is read if appropriate. See the Common Questions & Answers section below for more details.

10. Total Pages: Please record the total pages read for each entry by multiplying the “number of pages” by the “times read.”

11. Notes: Space is provided for you to supply any other relevant information about an entry.

=Submitting the Reading Log

You are encouraged to fill out the reading log electronically, then submitting it as an attachment to an email message. Send to Deborah Stein at [dkent5817@att.net. Please put Nationwide BRAL plus the contestant’s name in the subject line.](mailto:dkent5817@att.net.%20Please%20put%20Nationwide%20BRAL%20plus%20the%20contestant's%20name%20in%20the%20subject%20line.%20)

If you prefer to handle the reading log as a hard copy, print a copy by visiting the website, [www.nfbofillinois.org/nationwide-bral-contest](http://www.nfbofillinois.org/nationwide-bral-contest). Mail completed reading logs at the end of the contest to:

Nationwide BRAL Contest

Deborah Stein

5817 N. Nina Ave.

Chicago, IL 60631

Note: Reading logs must be submitted by February 2 2019.

=Common Questions & ANSWERS

1. Q: What if I didn’t know about the contest until after it began? Can I still enter?

A: YES. registration forms can be submitted until February 1 2018.

1. Q: If I enter late, can I still count the Braille pages I have read since December 15 2017?

A: YES, but only if your certifying official can verify that you read those pages.

3. Q: What constitutes a Braille page?

A: Each side of an embossed piece of paper is considered one page. If you read both sides, then you have read two pages. This is true even if there are only two Braille lines on one side.

4. Q: Can I count title pages, tables of contents, Brailled descriptions of illustrations, etc.?

A: YES.

5. Q: What if I don’t finish reading a book? Can I count the pages that I did read?

A: YES.

6. Q: Can I read the same book more than once?

A: YES, but only under the following conditions: the student must be at an elementary (5th grade or below) reading level; no book may be read more than three times; and the certifying official must clearly identify which titles have been read more than once, how many times read (two or three), and indicate the number of Braille pages read in each reading. For example: “Frog and Toad,” 3 x 20 pages = 60 pages.

7. Q: How do I count pages if I read material from the Bible?

A: You must record the book(s) of the Bible you read (e.g. Proverbs, Matthew, etc.), AND you must read whole pages. Please do not give chapters and verses read. Acceptable -- Bible, Book of Job: 20 pages. Not acceptable -- Psalms 8, 24, and 32.

8. Q: I have to transcribe books for my beginning reader. Most of these books have only a few words on a page. If the print book has more pages than my Braille transcription, how do I count pages for the contest?

A: For the purposes of this contest, the number of Braille pages counted per children’s picture books should never be less than the number of print pages in that book. This rule should be followed even if the transcription of the entire book end up as one Braille page. To avoid confusion, we suggest that the books be transcribed page for page, one Braille page for each print page, whenever possible.

9. Q: My student reads a lot of electronic books with a refreshable Braille display. Are these eligible? If so, how will the Braille pages be counted?

A: MAYBE. Formatted files with a .brf extension -- for example, files from Bookshare.org and NLS WEB-BRAILLE -- will have Braille page numbers in the file. These are acceptable. If you wish to use other scanned or non-.brf formatted files for the contest, you must contact the contest officials in advance for guidance and approval in how to determine the Braille page count. PLEASE NOTE: IF USING A REFRESHABLE DISPLAY, ANY SPEECH ACCESS ASSOCIATED WITH THE BRAILLE DISPLAY MUST BE TURNED OFF AT ALL TIMES DURING THE READING OF PAGES FOR THIS CONTEST.

10. Q: My Bookshare files don’t have page numbers in them. How do I count pages?

A: There are settings that users can set up that do insert page numbers in Bookshare files. In your Bookshare account settings, you can tell it how to handle BRF files that it creates for you. For example, you can tell it to do "embossable Braille" or not, and you can adjust the line length. If you're using Bookshare files for the contest, you should use the embossable, 40-cell line variety. The embossable ones show the Braille page numbers in addition to the print page numbers.

11. Q: I have trouble finding enough Braille material for my older students. Do you have any suggestions?

A: YES. The National Federation of the Blind has free Braille materials suitable for blind youth, including recent issues of the Braille Monitor magazine and Braille copies of our Kernel Book series. To request a literature list (large print or Braille) contact: National Federation of the Blind, Independence Market, 200 East Wells Street at Jernigan Place, Baltimore, Maryland 21230; (410) 659-9314, extension 2216; or [eringlein@nfb.org](mailto:eringlein@nfb.org). You may also find appropriate reading material on NFB ShareBraille. Visit [www.nfbsharebraille.org](http://www.nfbsharebraille.org). Also visit the NFB of Illinois website, [www.nfbofillinois.org,in](http://www.nfbofillinois.org,in) the Nationwide BRAL Contest area for a list of Braille material sources.

12. Q: Are the contest forms available on the Web site so that I can print out more copies?

A: YES. Visit [www.nfbofillinois.org](http://www.nfbofillinois.org)/nationwide-bral-contest.

**=Contact Us**

Do you still have questions? Contact us at:

mail:

Nationwide BRAL Contest

Deborah Stein

5817 N. Nina Ave.

Chicago, IL 60631

Phone: 773-203-1394

Web: [www.nfbofillinois.org](http://www.nfbofillinois.org)/nationwide-bral-contest

Email: dkent5817@att.net. Please put “Nationwide BRAL Question” in the subject line.