

Teacher's guide

BrailleNote evolve

**Teach with confidence.
Support independent learning.**



**Step-by-step
setup**

**Everyday
classroom
how-tos**

**Teaching tips
and braille
reference**



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Introduction

This guide can be used to help to teach students of all ages on how to get started with the BrailleNote Evolve.

Introducing students to a Windows computer can provide significant long-term benefits, helping them develop skills that are widely used throughout education and the workplace.

For younger learners, however, transitioning from a familiar braille environment to a traditional screen reader and QWERTY keyboard can sometimes feel overwhelming. There can be many new concepts, keyboard commands and ways of navigating to learn at once, which can be challenging for both the student and the teacher supporting them.

BrailleNote Evolve provides a more gradual pathway. It allows students to continue their braille learning journey while working within a Windows environment and gradually becoming familiar with many of the screen reader skills and commands they may need in the future.

The student remains at the centre of the learning experience. They can continue concentrating on the subjects and activities that are most important to them today, while progressively developing the technology skills they will need for tomorrow.

This guide provides teachers with practical guidance, activities and suggested learning approaches to help students build confidence with BrailleNote Evolve. The aim is not to teach everything at once, but to introduce new Windows and screen reader skills at the right time, allowing the student's knowledge and independence to grow naturally alongside the device.

This guide assumes that you have followed the getting started guide and set up the BrailleNote Evolve for the student. For individual tasks, a series of how to guides are available on the HumanWare support page.

Introducing the BrailleNote Evolve can be a great way to increase a student's engagement and encourage them to develop their braille skills further.

Explain that the device will become an important tool for both creating and accessing schoolwork. Students can use it to write assignments, read documents and access learning materials alongside other resources provided by their teacher.

By introducing the BrailleNote Evolve as part of their everyday learning, students can begin to see braille not only as something they are learning, but as a practical tool they can use to participate more independently in the classroom.



Throughout this guide, a golden key icon appears beside selected sections. This icon highlights important information to remember and refer to as you continue using the BrailleNote evolve.

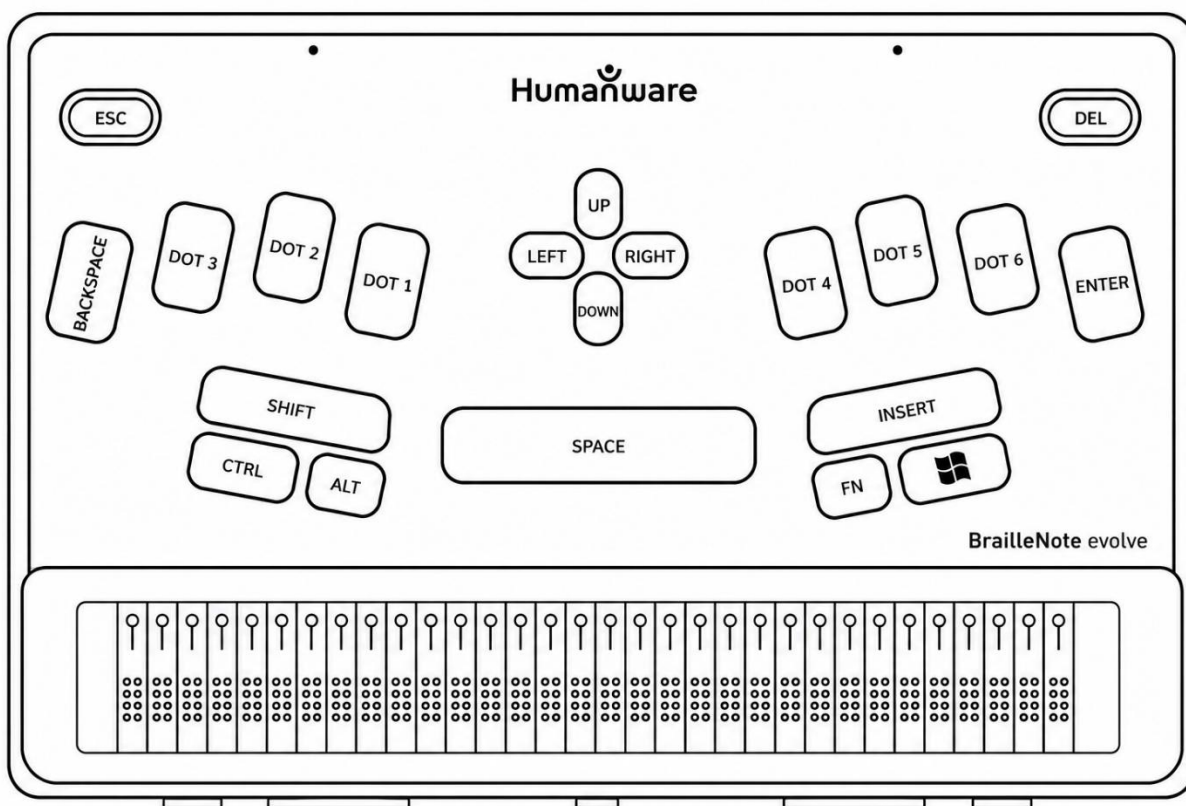
Before you begin

Before your journey evolves it is important to note that you require the following to get the full use of the BrailleNote evolve:

- A Microsoft account (Work/education or personal)
- An office license – BrailleNote evolve comes included with office 365 pre-installed but does not include a license. It is important that you have a license capable of using desktop applications and not just online applications.

Keyboard layout

Here is the layout of the BrailleNote evolve keyboard showing each default key. Please note that the evolve includes stickers which can be applied to the relevant keys.



When teaching a student, the layout of the BrailleNote evolve keyboard, always begin with orientation. Encourage the student to position the device so that the braille display is closest to their body.

A simple reference point can help:

“The braille display is always closest to you. The keyboard is above it.”

With the device turned off, allow the student time to explore the keyboard by touch. Assuming they already have a basic understanding of braille, ask them to locate the braille keyboard and position their hands correctly over the keys.

Students who are moving from a traditional Perkins-style braille may immediately notice that the keyboard feels different. One important advantage is that the keys do not need to be pressed with significant force. The braille character is entered when the keys are released, rather than when they are initially pressed.

For example, when entering the letter **L**, the student can locate and press each required dot key individually and hold them down. The character is only entered once the keys are released. This can be particularly helpful for younger learners who are still developing finger strength, coordination and confidence with braille keyboarding.

1. Teach the braille keys first

The main Perkins-style Braille row runs from left to right: **BACKSPACE – DOT 3 – DOT 2 – DOT 1 | DOT 4 – DOT 5 – DOT 6 – ENTER**

Left hand

Index finger = Dot 1
Middle finger = Dot 2
Ring finger = Dot 3

Right hand

Index finger = Dot 4
Middle finger = Dot 5
Ring finger = Dot 6

Use rapid “show me” prompts rather than asking the student to memorise a list:

“Show me Dot 1.”

“Show me Dot 4.”

“Press Dot 1 and Dot 4 together.”

“Now show me the letter P: Dots 1-2-3-4.”

Connect to known Braille

Use familiar letters to reinforce the physical map: **A = Dot 1, B = Dots 1-2, C = Dots 1-4, P = Dots 1-2-3-4.**

2. Add Backspace, Enter and Space

The location of Enter and Backspace is reversed from the Perkins Braille with the Enter key on the right side.

Backspace

Far left of the Braille row. A useful phrase is: “Backspace lives with your left little finger.”

Enter

Far right of the Braille row. A useful phrase is: “Enter lives with your right little finger.”

Space

Use either your left or right thumb key to press the space bar.

Home

The round button on the front centre edge. Teach it early as a reliable “safe key” for returning to the Main Menu.

Practise moving away from the normal Braille hand position and returning to it:

Practice script

“Hands home. Find Space. Hands home. Find Enter. Hands home. Find Backspace.” Repeat in random order until movement becomes automatic.

3. Introduce the arrow-key island

Between Dot 1 and Dot 4 are four arrow keys. Teach them first as one tactile group:

Teacher language

“This is the navigation island in the middle of the keyboard.”

UP Arrow

Move to the previous item or line

Down Arrow

Move to the next item or line

Left Arrow

Move left / navigate backward where supported

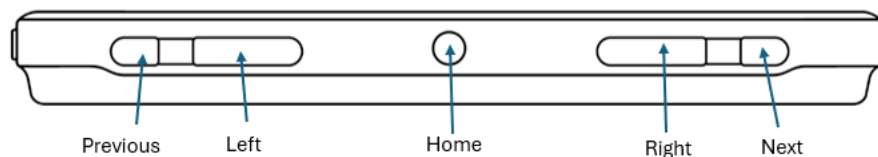
Right Arrow

Move right / navigate forward where supported

Make the keys meaningful immediately. From the Main Menu, ask the student to press Down to hear/read the next application, then Up to return.

4. Teach the front thumb keys

Along the front edge, teach the controls from the centre outward:



Home: round central button; returns to the KeySoft Main Menu.

Left / Right: pan the braille display.

Previous / Next: move through items.

Tactile activity

Ask: “Find Home. Move one button left. Return to Home. Move one button right.” Build the map from the centre outward.

5. Teach Esc and Delete

These keys are not part of the modifier keys, therefore they cannot be disabled. Top left, above the backspace is known as the Esc key. This key is used to Escape prompts or dialog windows. It is different to exiting an application. It is also the key that is used to unlock the lock screen to enter your pin. The spacebar and enter keys can also be used to get to the “Enter your pin” prompt from the lock screen. Top right, above the enter key is the delete key. The delete key can be used in various ways including deleting text and delete individual files.

6. Leave modifier keys until later

Do not introduce all Windows modifier keys during the first layout lesson unless the student is already an experienced computer user. Add them only after the core tactile map is secure. These keys can also be disabled from the KeySoft Control centre, and it’s recommended that they are for younger students to avoid accidentally pressing them.

Left of the space bar:

- The longer key at the top is the SHIFT key.
- Below on the left is the CTRL
- Right of the ctrl key is the ALT key

Right of the space bar:

- The longer key at the top is the INSERT key.
- Below on the right is the Windows key.
- Left of the windows key is the FN key

7. Introducing the braille display and cursor routing keys

Begin by asking the student to locate the braille display at the front of the device. Explain that this is where information that may also be spoken aloud is presented in **refreshable braille**, allowing them to read and interact with what is happening on the device using their fingertips.

For some students, this may be their first experience of refreshable braille, particularly if they have previously used a traditional Perkins Braille or mainly read braille on paper. Allow plenty of time for exploration, as the experience can initially feel quite different.

Students may immediately notice that the braille dots feel firmer or less “squashy” than the braille they are familiar with. Using the student’s own words to describe what they feel can be helpful.

Reassure them that this difference is completely normal and that, with regular use, their fingers will gradually become more familiar and comfortable with reading refreshable braille.

At this stage, the goal is simply to encourage exploration and build confidence. There is no need to focus on reading speed. Allow the student time to feel the cells, recognise familiar braille characters and become comfortable with this new way of accessing braille.

Allow the student time to explore the display while the device is turned off. Encourage them to feel:

- The row of braille cells
- The individual braille dots within each cell
- The cursor buttons above the cells (More explanation of these buttons will follow later)

Tactile activity

Suggest counting how many individual cells there are available and prompt them to go to a specific cell number.

The best approach is to get them counting using the cursor routing keys which are above the braille cells.

Once the device is turned on, show the student how the braille changes automatically as they move through menus or open different information.

The introduction to the cursor buttons can be shown when your student is confident on knowing how to create a document.

Great! Now that your student is becoming familiar with the keyboard layout, it's time to introduce some basic menu navigation and start putting those keys into practice.

This guide focuses primarily on using KeySoft navigation and braille keyboard commands, allowing the student to build confidence navigating the BrailleNote Evolve without needing to immediately learn the purpose of every Windows modifier key. However, side by side in event of a different key combination, this will show under the NVDA method. This can help towards transitioning over to touch typing skills and screen reader skills if and when you choose the time is ready.

By keeping the commands familiar and braille-focused, students can concentrate on developing essential navigation skills first. As their confidence grows, Windows and screen reader commands can then be introduced gradually, providing a natural pathway towards greater independence and more advanced computer skills.

Connecting a screen

You may wish to connect an external monitor to the BrailleNote Evolve so that you can follow what the student is doing in real time. This can be particularly helpful when providing instruction, demonstrating new tasks or supporting the student as they work independently.

Using a monitor can also help create a more inclusive classroom environment. Teachers, teaching assistants and classmates who may have limited knowledge of braille can see the student's work as

it appears on screen, making it easier to understand what they are doing and interact with them directly.

This can encourage greater collaboration with sighted peers, allowing classmates to work alongside the student rather than relying on a teacher or students with visual impairments to interpret or communicate what is happening.

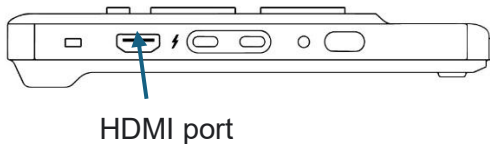
The aim is to make the BrailleNote Evolve part of the wider classroom experience, helping the student participate, collaborate and share their work in the same way as their peers.

External Monitor

Using an HDMI cable, you can connect the BrailleNote Evolve to an external monitor or screen by plugging the cable into the HDMI port on the left side of the device.

Once connected, and provided the external display is powered on, the BrailleNote Evolve should automatically display its screen on the monitor.

This simple **plug-and-play** approach makes HDMI one of the easiest ways to view the student's work on a larger screen, with little or no additional setup required.

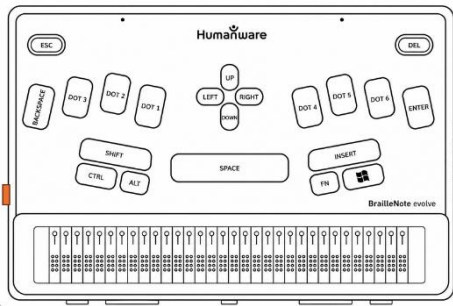


With the screen plugged in you may also want to view the braille display in real-time on the screen without needing to keep interrupting the student. Visit [Braille Viewer](#) for more information.

Getting started

This document assumes that you or your network administrator has gone through the Windows Wizard and add all of the essential application and security add on required.

Powering on the evolve



On the left side of the BrailleNote, press and hold the power button, as indicated above, for approximately 2–3 seconds. You will feel a vibration to confirm that the BrailleNote Evolve is starting up.

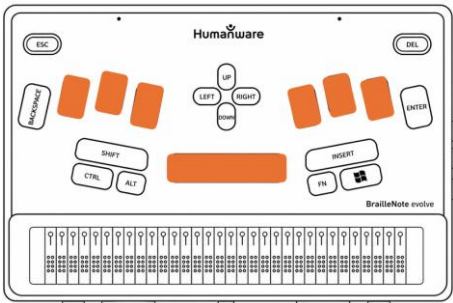
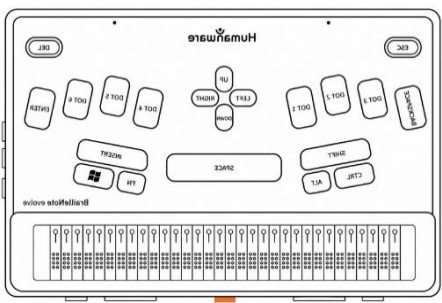
During the startup process, the braille display will show a rotating loading indicator. Younger learners often enjoy feeling this change as the device boots, making it a useful opportunity to reinforce the concept of refreshable braille.

Encourage the student to place their fingers lightly on the display and notice how the braille dots change dynamically. This provides a simple, engaging demonstration of how refreshable braille can continuously update to represent different information on the screen.

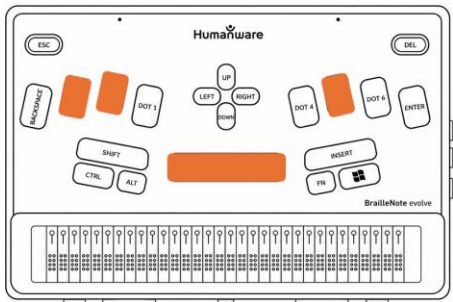
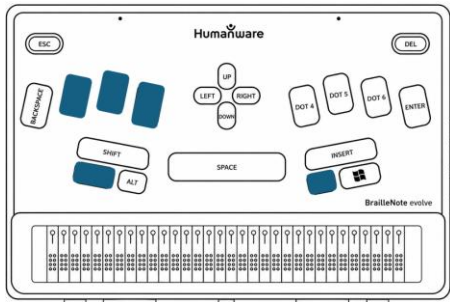
Press the Esc Key to be prompted to enter your pin. Enter your pin following the correct braille rules. (If your pin contains numbers, ensure to use the number sign, and letter sign if the pin is mixed with letters). After typing your pin, wait a further 20 seconds to announce main menu window.

Here are some of the common shortcuts that you will need to know to start using the BrailleNote Evolve.

The BrailleNote should start at the KeySoft main menu. In any event that you need to return to the main menu you can press either of the following keys. These are some of the most important keys to remember, for whatever reason if you get lost or unsure where you are on the evolve you can start at the very beginning.

Home (Main Menu)	
	
Dots 1,2,3,4,5,6 and Space	Home button

Application switcher can be used when dealing with multiple open applications. For example perhaps you want to jump from using your email to your word document. When opened, you can quickly jump to any opened application by pressing the first letter of the application name or use your basic navigation method.

Application switcher	
	
Space + Dots 2-3-5	CTRL + F12

Useful tips

Before handing the device over to a student you might want to change some settings that are evoked through Windows which may interrupt the student.

Here are some of our useful tips that we recommend changing for a more seamless experience.

Widgets

By default, Windows enables widgets to display. This can be very disruptive to both the student and Teacher. To disable the widgets, do the following: (You can also plug in a mouse and keyboard if you prefer.

1. Open the Windows Settings by pressing **Enter + Q**.
2. Select Personalization item then taskbar.
3. Turn off Widgets.

Setting the startup experience for Word, PowerPoint and Excel

Refer to the following how to guide - [Customising the startup experience with office applications](#)

Using the Braille IME Keyboard

Braille IME is a keyboard designed to provide improved support for entering Braille within the Windows environment on BrailleNote evolve.

Switching to Braille IME

Braille IME may not always be active when the student begins working. To switch keyboards and activate Braille IME, use either of the following commands:

- **ENTER + SPACE**
- **ENTER + BACKSPACE + I**

You will need to switch to Braille IME each time the BrailleNote evolve is started from a cold start or restarted.

How to recognise when Braille IME is not active

Students can identify when they are not using the Braille IME keyboard by checking the Braille shown in an edit field.

When Braille IME is not active, the edit field will display **brackets**, represented by:

- **Dots 1-2-3-4-6-7-8**
- **Dots 1-3-4-5-6-7-8**

This is a useful indication that the student should switch to the Braille IME keyboard before continuing.

Applications that do not support Braille IME

There may be occasions when Braille IME is not supported by a particular application or edit field. This should not prevent the student from entering Braille; they can continue typing using the available keyboard input method.

Recommended setting

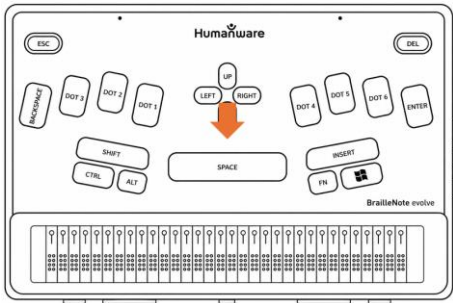
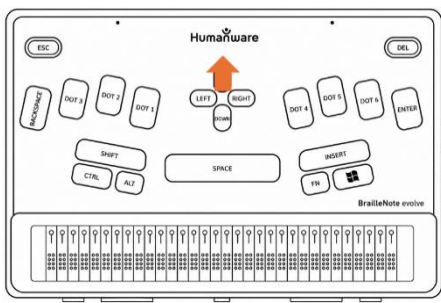
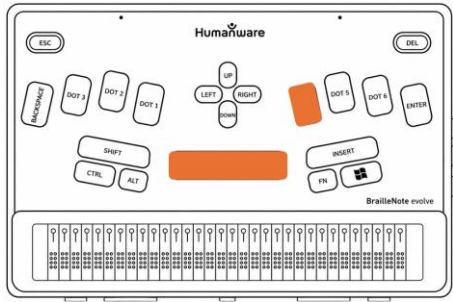
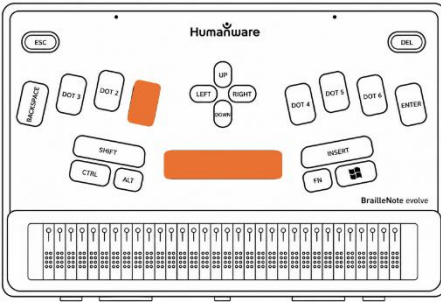
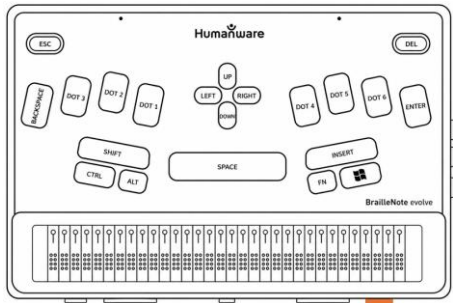
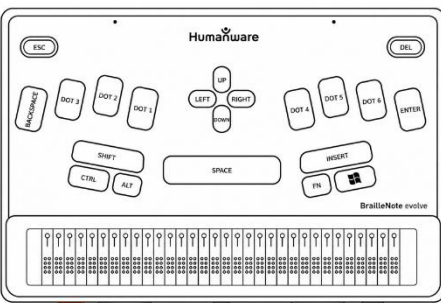
To reduce the need for students to repeatedly switch keyboards, it is recommended that **Braille IME is set as the default keyboard**.

For students who primarily use Braille for input, making Braille IME the default provides a more consistent experience when working within the Windows environment on BrailleNote evolve.

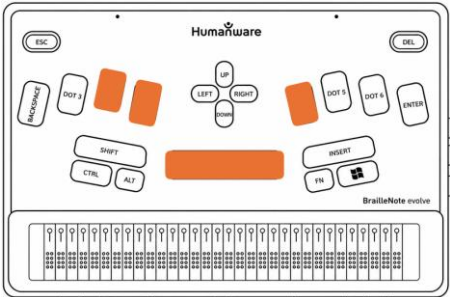
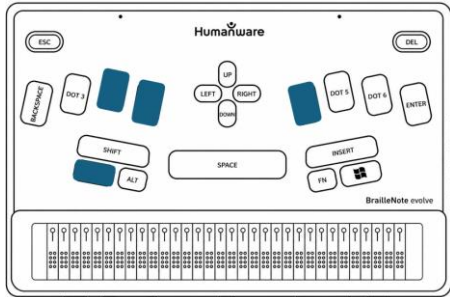
Follow the [“Setting the Braille IME as the default keyboard”](#) for guidance.

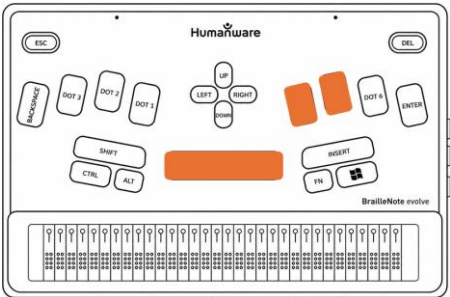
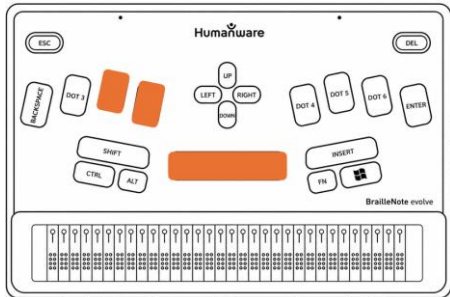
Basic Menu Navigation

When at the main menu, get the student to move by item and review the braille display each time. There are several methods of moving by item as shown below:

Move to the next and previous item	
	
Down arrow	Up Arrow
	
Space + Dot 4	Space + Dot 1
	

Move to the next and previous item	
Next Thumb Key	Previous Thumb Key
Activity: Ask the student to move through the list of applications and check which one is in focus on their braille display. To validate the student's braille skills, you could recommend they turn speech off.	

Find	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Space + F	CTRL + F

Tab and Shift + Tab	
KeySoft	
	
Tab = Space + Dots 4-5	Shift + Tab = Space + B

Tab and Shift + Tab

When using a screen reader in the Windows environment, Tab and Shift + Tab are two of the most important commands for moving between interactive items on the screen.

Tab moves the focus forward to the next interactive control, such as a button, link, edit box, checkbox, or menu option.

Shift + Tab moves the focus backward to the previous control.

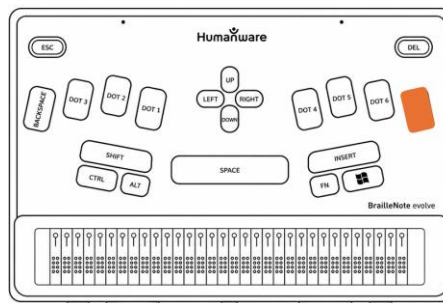
Activity: At the main menu, there are three interactive items on the screen.

- List of applications
- Power button
- Find/search

Get the student to move through these available interactive items.

Selecting an Item and New line

KeySoft



Enter key

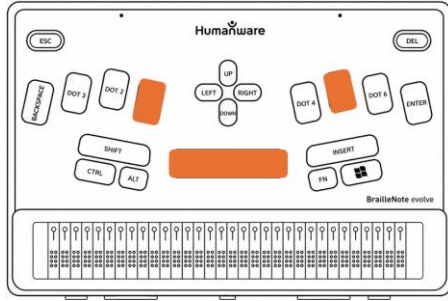
Activity: Together with the exit application method, (space + E) get the student to open and exit applications. Suggest they use methods like the “find” option and even throw in the task to select the power button and select restart device.

Exit Application

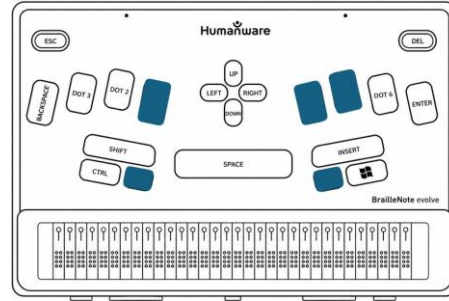
KeySoft

NVDA

Selecting an Item and New line

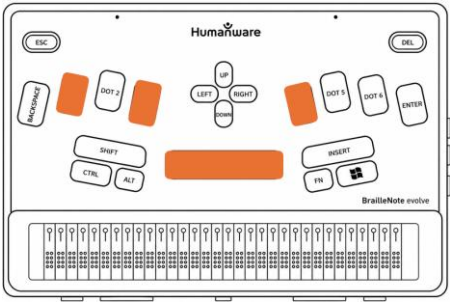
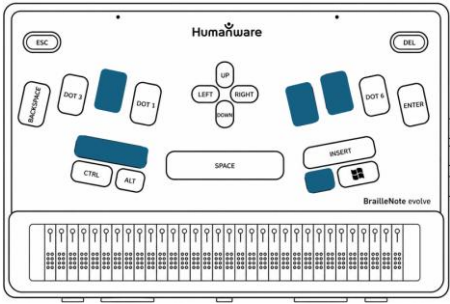


Space + E



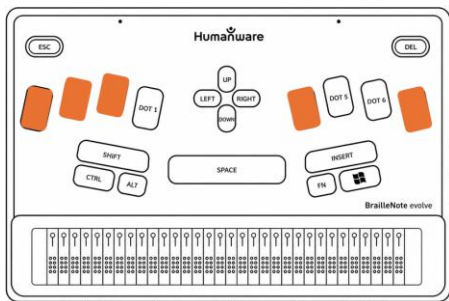
ALT + F4



Context Menu	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Space + M	SHIFT + F10
The Context Menu is one of the most useful shortcuts to remember because it can help the student discover what actions are available at any given moment. There are two main types of context menu to be aware of. When working within a KeySoft environment, such as the Main Menu or a core KeySoft application, the Context Menu is provided by KeySoft and presents options that are relevant to the current screen or item. In third-party applications, such as Microsoft Office, the application may provide its own context menu. When using the HumanWare Office add-ins, many of the available actions are instead accessed through the Application Menu. For more information on using these commands within Microsoft Office, refer to the section on the Application Menu shortcut.	
Activity: From the Main menu, open the context menu. Navigate through the list of available items and discover what options are available. If you are feeling brave, get the student to pin an application from all items menu and then later unpin. This is a great way to customise the main menu to only show the applications you often use. To close the context menu, press the Esc key.	

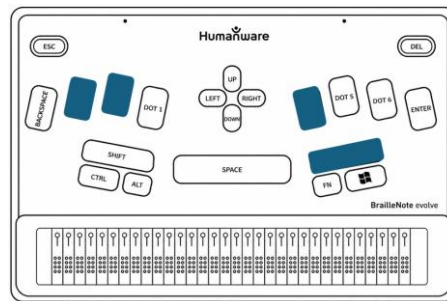
Toggle Speech on/off

KeySoft



Backspace + Enter + S

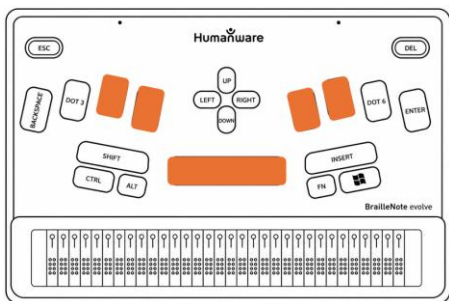
NVDA



INSERT + S

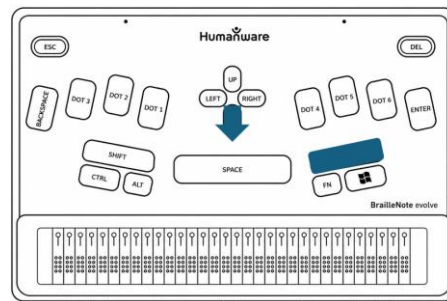
Read all

NVDA + KeySoft



Space + G

NVDA



INSERT + Down Arrow

Stop Speech	
NVDA + KeySoft	NVDA
Backspace + Enter	CTRL

First-letter navigation

When in the main menu First-letter navigation can be used to quickly jump to a specific item. For example, pressing the letter W will take you to the first application beginning with W.

In addition, multiple character search can be used. For example, if you know the first few characters of an item you want to jump to like “Clock”, type the letter C, followed by L will jump you to items beginning with those letters.

Configuring language profiles

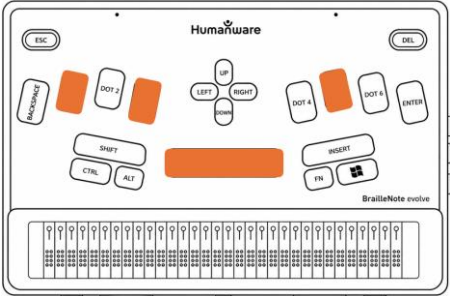
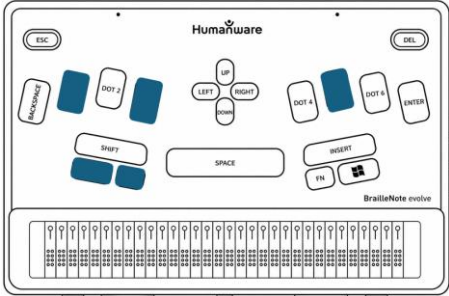
Before students begin creating or reading documents, it is important to make sure the correct braille and voice settings are configured. Such settings may include selecting the learning braille tables or the supported Method 2/method 3 language braille tables applicable for German/French/Italian and Spanish.

BrailleNote Evolve supports up to four language profiles, which can be useful for students who work in more than one language. This section focuses only on configuring the current active profile.

Language Profiles allow you to set the preferred voice, braille input, braille display table and maths braille table. Any changes made to the active profile take effect immediately.

You may not need to teach younger students how to manage these settings themselves, but teachers should understand where they are located and how to adjust them when needed.

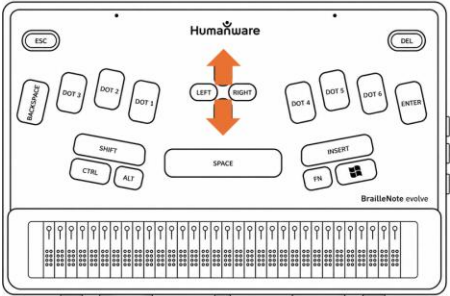
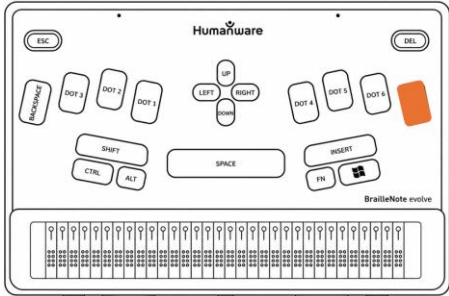
Step 1 – Open the options menu

KeySoft option menu	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Space + O	CTRL + ALT + O

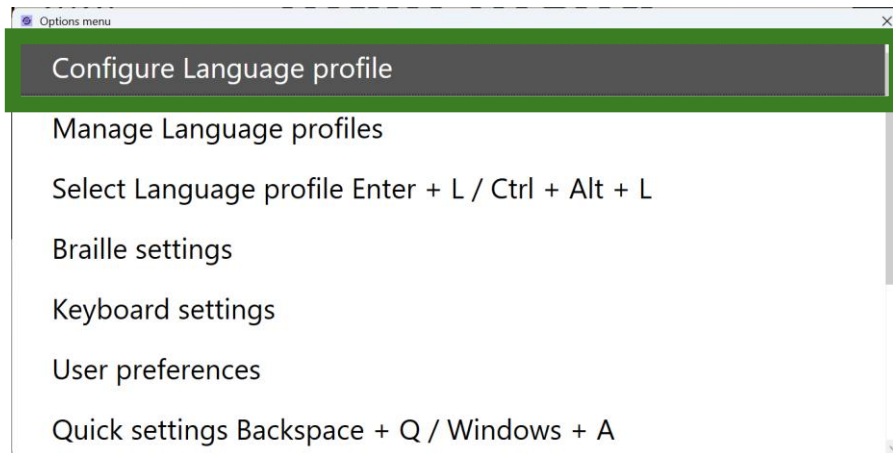
Step 2 – Select Configure Language profile

Use the Up and Down Arrow keys to move the focus to the “Configure language profile”, then press ENTER.

Navigate to the “Configure Language profile

KeySoft	
	
Use the Up and Down key to move	Press Enter

KeySoft



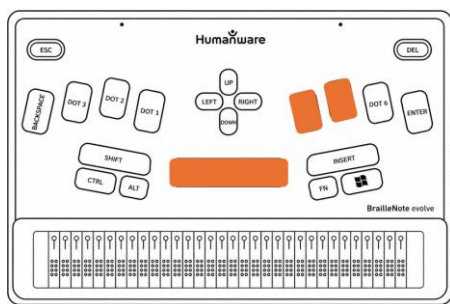
Step 3 – Moving through and changing settings

The current active language profile dialog will open with various options available. Move through the available items using Tab and Shift+Tab. When you want to change something specific, use the Up and Down Arrow keys. Remember Tab is Space with dots 4 and 5, and shift tab is Space with dots 1 and 2.

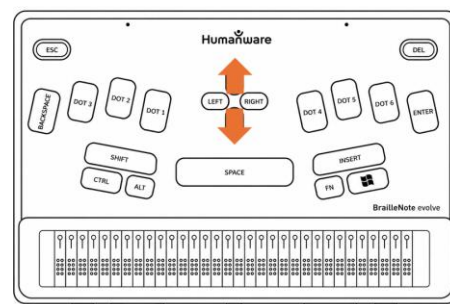
Once you have made the necessary changes, use the TAB command to move to the OK button.

Move through the Items and make necessary changes

KeySoft

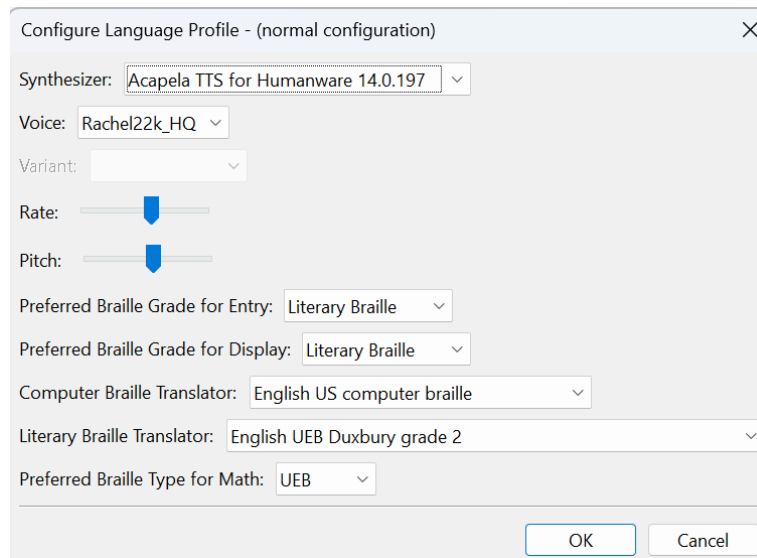


Press TAB = Space + Dots 4 + 5



Press Up or Down to make changes

KeySoft



Well done! You have now successfully configured the active language profile.

You may be wondering how to change the speech synthesizer to **Acapela** and select a different voice. This requires one additional step, as Acapela voices must first be downloaded through the **KeySoft Control Centre** before they can be selected within a language profile.

For step-by-step instructions on downloading and changing voices, refer to the dedicated [Changing the Synthesizer and Voice](#) guide.

Saving your braille settings to NVDA (Applicable for Sign-in and Security dialogs)

Once you have configured your language profile it is advised that you ensure you have saved the settings to NVDA. If you fail to save the settings you may find that during login screen and security dialogs your braille settings will not be the same. This is because NVDA save version is launched for these events.

Open the NVDA menu by pressing **INSERT + N**.

Select Preferences, then settings.

Under General, navigate to “Use currently saved settings during sign in and on secure screens”. Press enter on this option to open a dialog box. Make sure to enable all available add-ons.

- Acapela HumanWare
- Brailnote evolve for NVDA

- HumanWare Braille Translators
- HWMATH

Word – The Basics

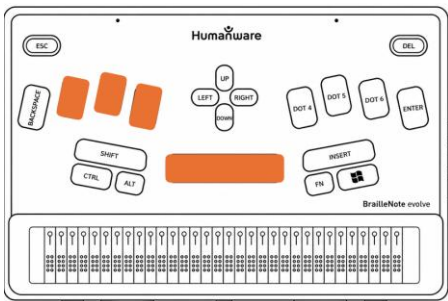
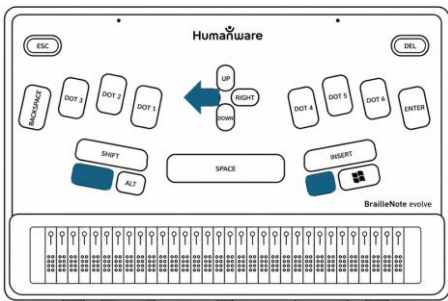
Now that you have configured your braille profile you are ready to start being creative. Our next session will cover how to work with Word. To continue this next session, you will need an active subscription of office 365 or a perpetual license. Upon starting Word for the first time, you may well be asked if you want to install the HW Word add-in. Make sure to select “Install”.

The HW Word add-in gives Word a similar KeySoft feel. The great thing here is that you can do so much in Word, yet it can feel like KeySoft when using the HW Word add-in.

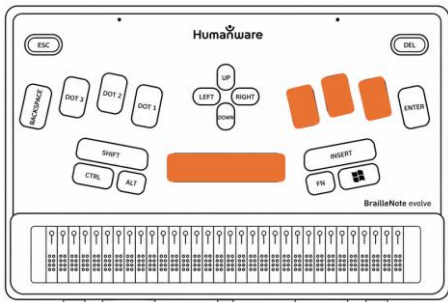
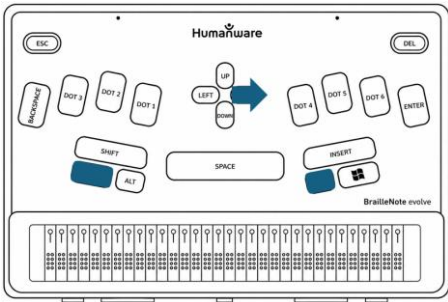
Here are some of the basic reading commands you will need to know when using Word.

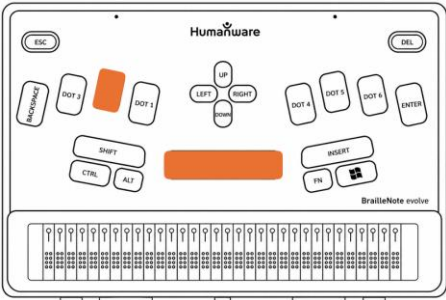
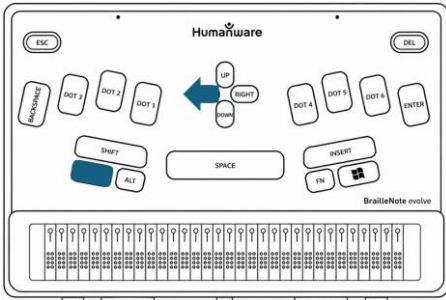
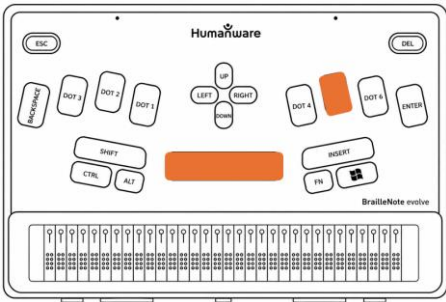
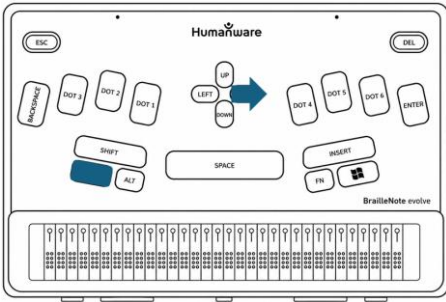
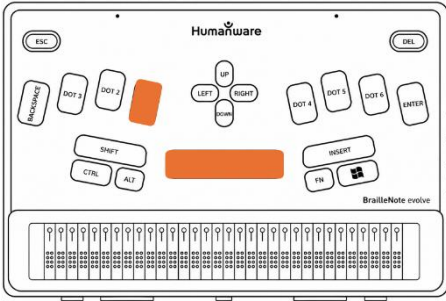
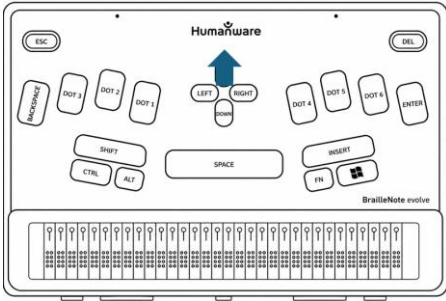
Basic reading commands

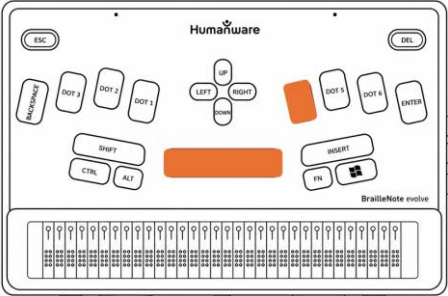
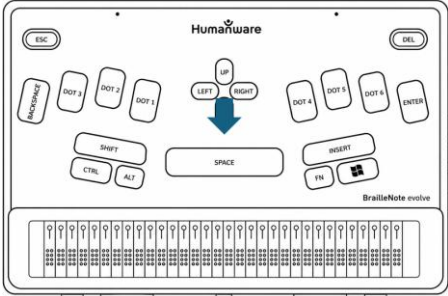
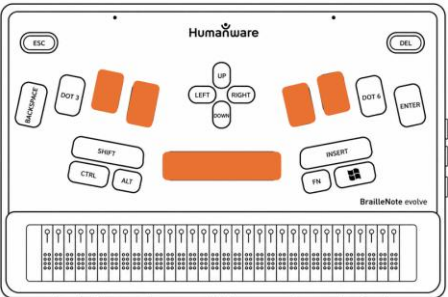
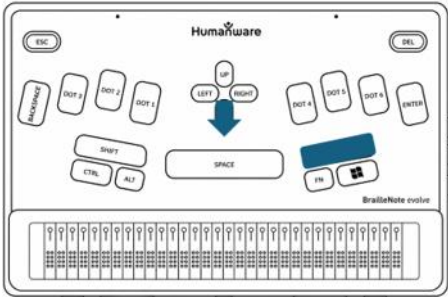
Top of Document

KeySoft	NVDA
	
Space + L	CTRL + FN + LEFT ARROW

Bottom of Document

	
Space + 4-5-6	CTRL + FN + RIGHT ARROW

KeySoft	NVDA
<i>Previous Word</i>	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Space + Dot 2	CTRL + LEFT ARROW
<i>Next word</i>	
	
Space + Dot 5	CTRL + RIGHT ARROW
<i>Previous Line</i>	
	
Space + Dot 1	UP ARROW

KeySoft	NVDA
Next Line	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Space + Dot 4	DOWN ARROW
Read All	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Space + G	INSERT + DOWN Arrow
Stop Speech	
KeySoft	NVDA

KeySoft	NVDA
Enter + Backspace	CTRL

You may want to consider changing the way Word starts up, instead of taking you through the selection of templates you can set it to just open a blank document immediately.

Here is a guide to follow if it's of interest. [Customising the startup experience with office applications](#)

Important: When typing it's likely that you are not using the Braille IME keyboard. This is the recommended keyboard to use when typing on the BrailleNote, however it's not applicable everywhere nor will it automatically switch to it after restarting the device.

To find out about Braille IME and what it means check out this section - [Braille IME Keyboard](#)

From the main menu, navigate to and select the “Word application.

Upon opening Word you will notice that the UI differs from the traditional Word with the cleaner ribbon and simple look. Through the Add-in this makes Word feel like KeySoft.

Using the Cursor and Panning keys

Activity: Get the student to start typing braille and witness that each time you enter you will receive immediate braille feedback.

Ask the student to make changes to word. Example, ask them to type “The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog”.

Get them using their Right and Left thumb key to read all on the braille display.

Ask them to change the word “fox” to “cat”. Using their cursor routing buttons, position the cursor after the letter “x”. Dots 7 and 8 should appear in the space between the word fox and jumped. Press backspace until the word is no longer seen. Then type “cat”.



Application Menu

The Application Menu is available within the Office environment and applies to the following applications:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Outlook
- Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft PowerPoint

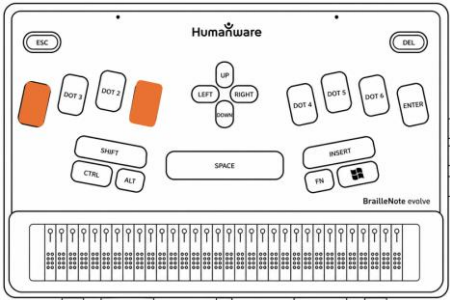
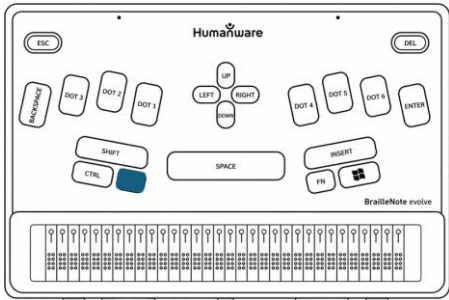
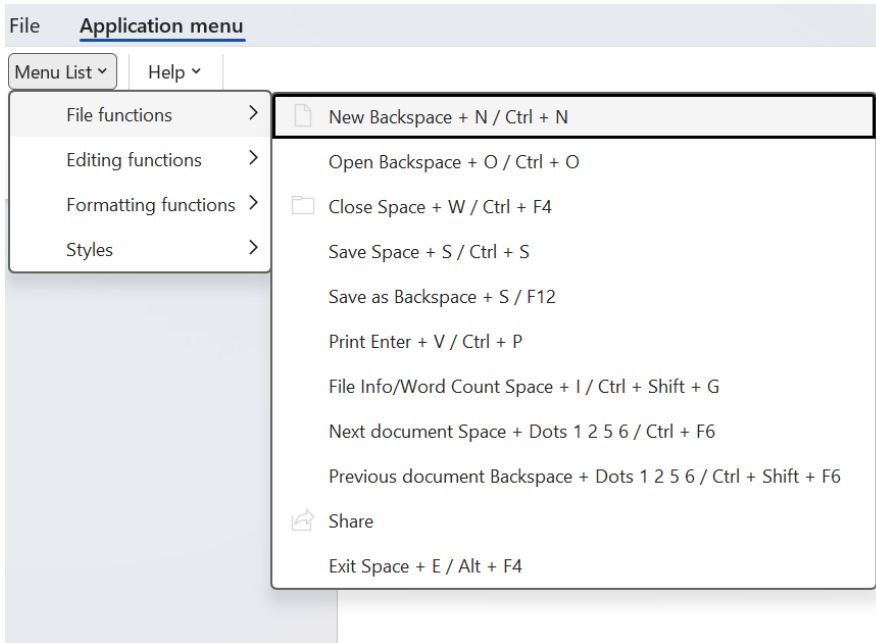
This menu provides a direct connection to HumanWare’s KeySoft Add-ins for Microsoft Office. It functions similarly to a context menu, helping users complete tasks more efficiently in a braille-centred way.

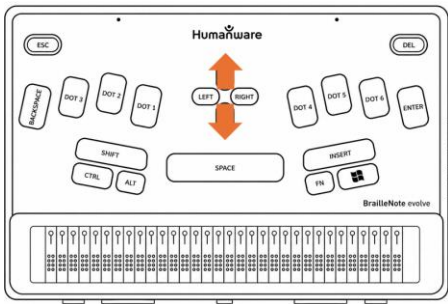
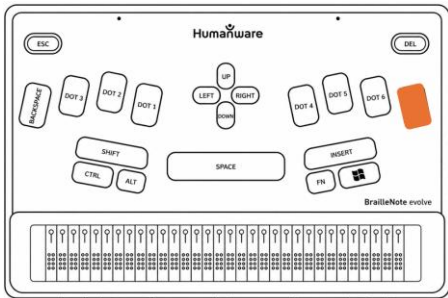
The Application Menu is designed to support learning and productivity by providing guided access to features, including both braille input commands and QWERTY input equivalents, making it easier to build familiarity with screen reader workflows in Office applications.

Because Microsoft Office already includes its own Context Menu (**SPACE + M**), a different method of interaction is required within the Office environment.

When using a KeySoft application, the standard command for the Context Menu remains **SPACE + M**. However, within Microsoft Office applications, the equivalent KeySoft Application Menu is accessed using **BACKSPACE + A**.

Using the Application Menu

Using the Application Menu	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Backspace + A	ALT
	
Provided the KeySoft add-ins are enabled, pressing BACKSPACE + A will open the Application Menu. You will be presented with a list of categories. Use the Up and Down Arrow keys to navigate through the categories. Each category contains a further list of available tasks and where applicable with their braille and qwerty shortcut. Press ENTER on a selected item to perform that action.	

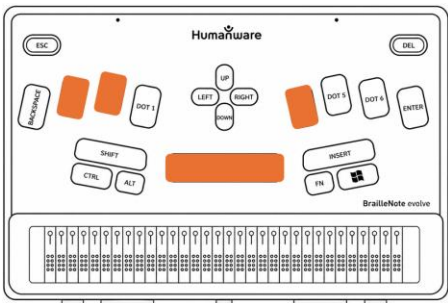
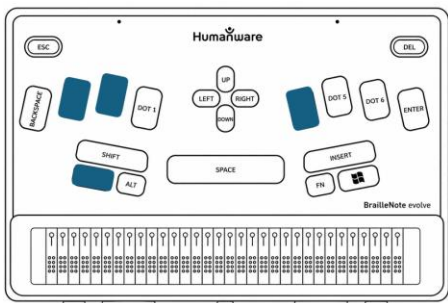
Using the Application Menu	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Up and Down Arrow	ENTER

The Application Menu includes a curated set of commonly used tasks, designed to support everyday workflows. It is also intended to help beginners or users who may have modifier keys disabled, allowing them to complete key actions without needing to rely on shortcut commands.

If required, KeySoft Add-ins can also be disabled. For more information, refer to the [“Enable and Disable KeySoft Add-ins”](#) guide.

Saving a document

When you are ready to save your work, you can either look up the command using the application menu or if you know the shortcut press **Space + S**.

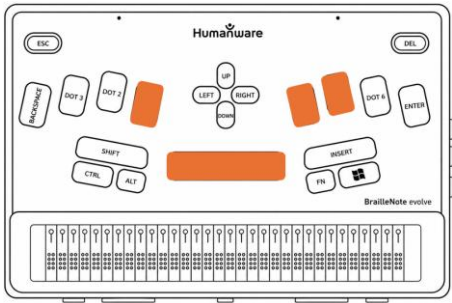
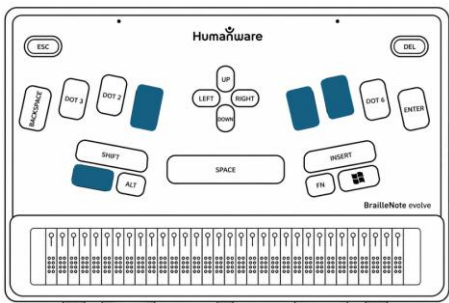
Save	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Space + S	CTRL + S

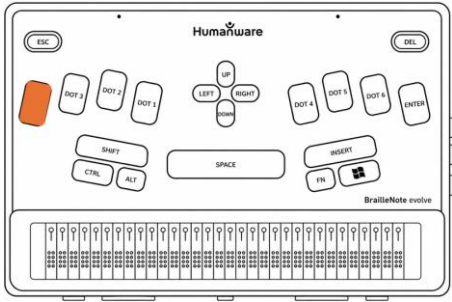
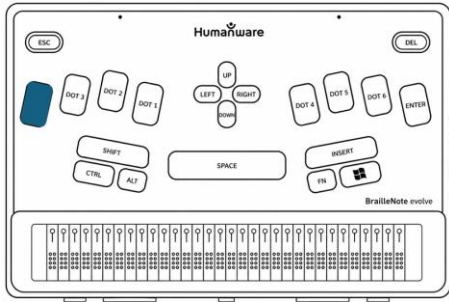
KeyFiles will now open placing you in the document name field. If you want to move to a different folder or drive, make sure you are placed in the relevant section by using your **Space + Dot 1 + Dot 2**.

Continue to explore the next section on File Manager for help on what to do next.

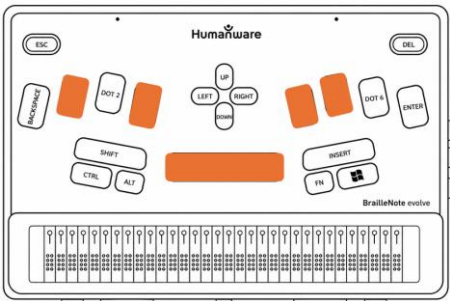
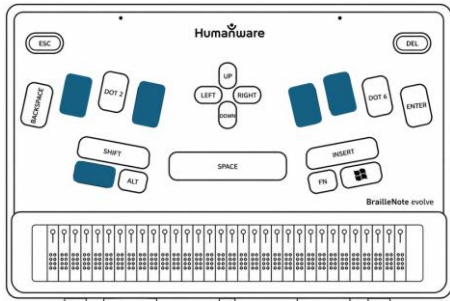
File Manager: KeyFiles

When using the KeySoft Add-in with office, KeySoft's file manage "KeyFiles" overrides the windows explorer. This makes for a better user experience without getting lost in the tree structure exposed by windows explorer. Instead, you can use a braille focused file manager allowing you to quickly move to shared drives and local folders. All storage options will be available through KeyFiles including OneDrive. For Google drive you will need to install the desktop application and then it will show in KeyFiles.

Drive Selection	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Space + D	CTRL + D

Moving a level up	
KeySoft	NVDA
	

Moving a level up	
KeySoft	NVDA
Backspace	BACKSPACE

New Folder	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Space + N	CTRL + N

Activity:

Open KeyFiles and get the student to create new folders and subfolders.
Remember to use the context menu (Space + M) if you get stuck on how to achieve something.

Working with mathematics

The benefit of using Microsoft Word is that already it supports MathML. This means that you as a teacher can provide math expressions in a word document and when opened on the evolve it should translate according to what math braille table is selected.

There are two different approaches when working with Math.

- Inserting Math expressions can be done entirely within Word.
- Insert Graphs, you will need to use KeyMath to create the graph.

We are going to walk you through inserting a math expression.

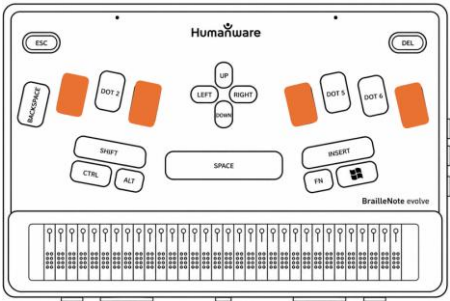
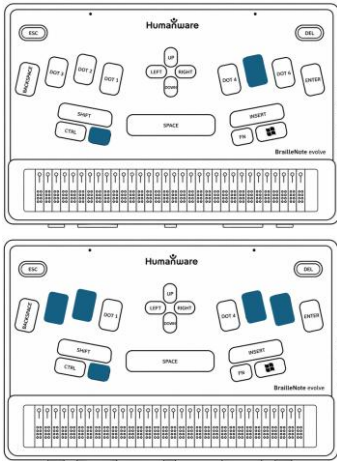
Activity:

Get your student to write the following:

Lesson 1.0 – Working with Math expressions, then press Enter to create a new line.
Now they are ready to insert a math equation using the equation editor.

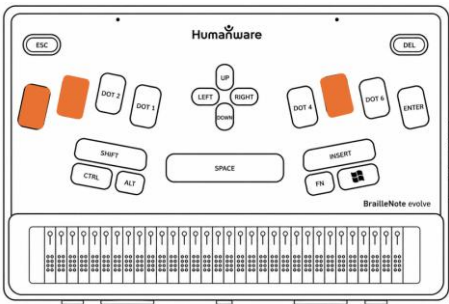
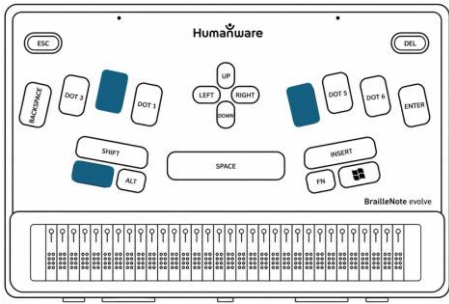
Equation editor

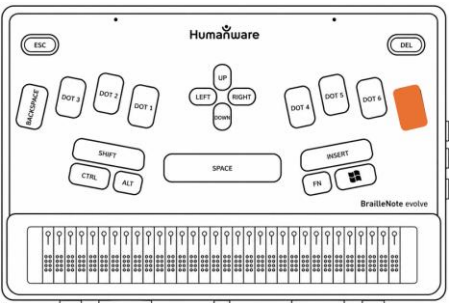
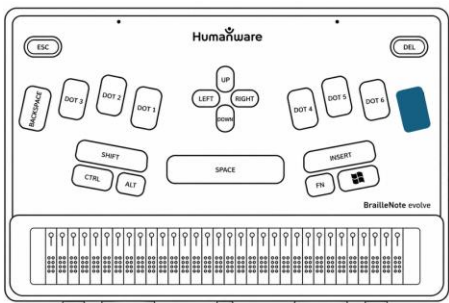
To insert a math expression, you can either use the Application menu or press **Enter + M**.

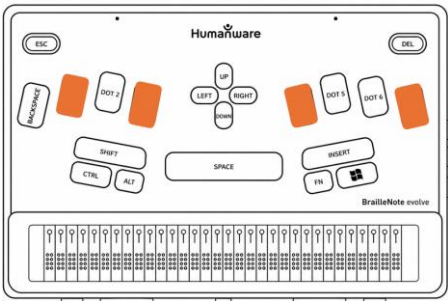
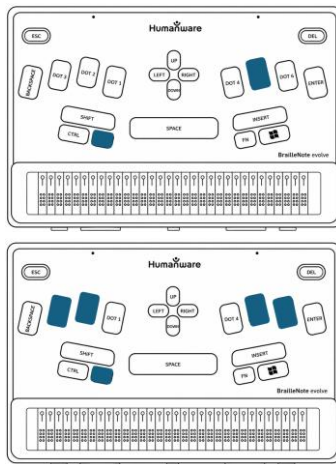
Insert Math	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Enter + M	ALT + = Hold ALT, Press dot 5, then press dots 2,3,5,6

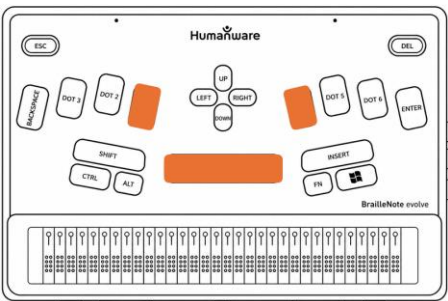
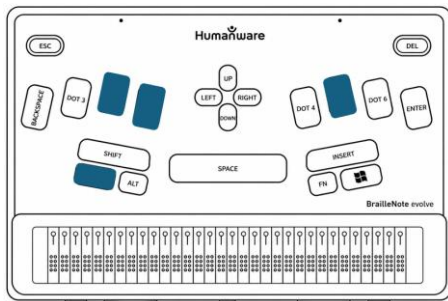
When in the equation editor a great way of learning math braille is by using **the insert symbol selector**. This will give you a long list of math expressions you can enter following the selected braille math code.

It's a great way to ask your student to go find out how you enter the plus or greater than sign in braille.

Insert math braille symbol	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Backspace + Dots 3-5	CTRL + I
Activity: Get your student to create a new math expression and find a symbol that they don't know in braille.	

Complete MathML entry	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Enter	ENTER

Multiple equation	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Enter + M	ALT + = Hold ALT, Press dot 5, then press dots 2,3,5,6
If you wanting to submit multiple equations, pressing insert equation command again will automatically submit the equation and keep you in the equation editor ready to continue with the next equation.	

Announce expression	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Space + C	CTRL + H

When reading a document containing MathML objects, including equations you have added, format markers identify the mathematical content. The beginning of an equation is indicated by the “ed” sign followed by the letters “ms”, while the end is indicated by the “ed” sign followed by the letters “me.”

Math start marker = ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠

Math end marker = ⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨

Edit the equation

To edit an equation, position the cursor on it and press **Enter with M** to open the Equation Editor. This step is essential, as attempting to edit the equation directly within the document will prevent the mathematical code from being entered correctly.

Inserting graphs

When creating or working with graphs, you will need to use KeyMath, the built-in mathematics application. KeyMath is available from the Main Menu and provides both a scientific calculator and a graphing calculator.

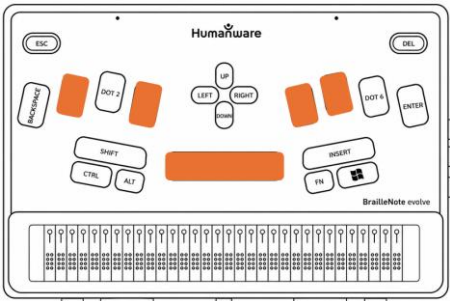
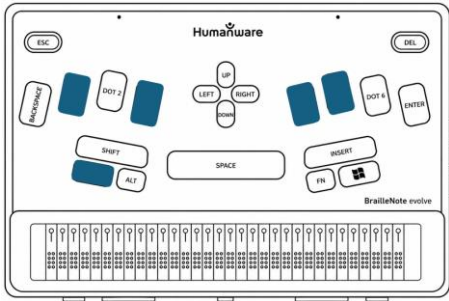
For the most efficient workflow, open KeyMath before you begin working in your document. Once KeyMath is open, return to the Main Menu and open the Word Processor.

With both applications running, you can use the [Application Switcher](#) to move quickly between the Word Processor and KeyMath. This allows you to enter equations, create or modify graphs in KeyMath, and then easily return to your document without needing to reopen either application.

Using KeyMath

KeyMath is the onboard graphing calculator which support both Nemeth and UEB support. Before starting KeyMath, make sure to check what your preferred math code is from the [language profiles](#).

When first opening KeyMath you will be prompted to press **Space with N** to start a new expression.

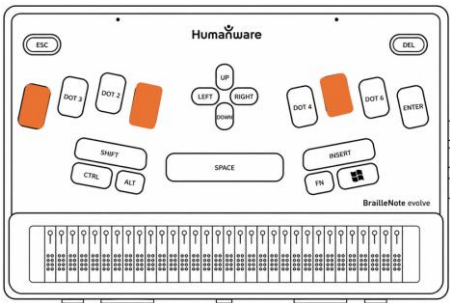
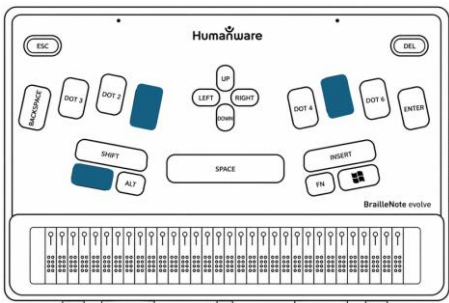
Create a new expression	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Space + N	CTRL + N

After submitting your expression, you will be in a list of all your expressions. Each expression beforehand will show a status of the expression. It would show if the expression were graphable, calculated or error.

Before the expression you may have one of the following:

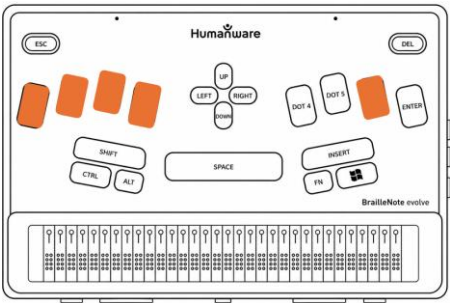
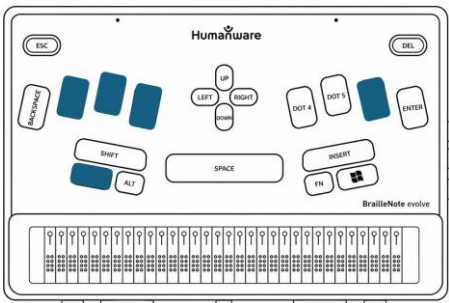
- “**GE**”- This mean Graph enabled, meaning that expression typed has created a graph.
- “**NG**” – This means that graph is hidden. You can toggle to hide/unhide expression by pressing Backspace + L.
- “**ER**” – An error has occurred in the expression.
- “**CE**” – Calculator expression. This will be shown if you perform a calculation.

Once you have created your graph, you can copy it and paste it into your document.

Export Content	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Backspace + E	CTRL + E

You will be prompted to “Move to clipboard”.

Open the document where you want to paste the graph. Choose the right location using your cursor keys and then perform the paste command.

Paste	
KeySoft	NVDA
	
Backspace + V	CTRL + V

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to explore this resource handbook.

We hope it has provided you with the confidence to begin using the BrailleNote Evolve with your students and has given you practical ideas for supporting their learning journey. Every student learns differently, and the BrailleNote evolve has been designed to grow with them—from their first experiences with refreshable braille through to becoming confident, independent users of Windows technology.

The journey doesn't end here.

The remainder of this handbook includes a collection of step-by-step "How To" guides, practical tips, and reference materials that you can return to whenever you need them. You'll also find a Braille Alphabet reference and other useful resources to support both teaching and day-to-day classroom use.

We encourage you to explore, experiment, and most importantly, enjoy discovering everything the BrailleNote evolve has to offer.

Thank you for supporting braille literacy and empowering the next generation of braille readers.

Happy teaching, and enjoy using the BrailleNote evolve!

For any feedback

How to Guides



TEACHER RESOURCES

BrailleNote Evolve

HOW-TO GUIDE



*Practical classroom support,
setup, and teaching guidance*



Customising the startup experience with office applications

The BrailleNote Evolve comes included with the office applications pre-installed but not licensed. The following applications include a KeySoft addon to help braille users that are familiar with KeySoft:

- Word
- Excel
- PowerPoint
- Outlook classic

Starting Microsoft Office Applications Without the Startup Screen

This guide explains how to open Microsoft Office applications directly into a blank document, bypassing the startup screen.

Why Remove the Startup Screen?

When opening applications such as Microsoft Word, Excel, or PowerPoint, Office may first display a startup screen showing templates, recent files, and suggested documents. Disabling this screen allows the application to open directly into a new blank document, which can make navigation quicker and more accessible.

Microsoft Word

Step 1: Open Microsoft Word

Launch Microsoft Word from the Start Menu, Desktop shortcut, or taskbar.

Step 2: Open the Options Menu

1. Press **ALT + F** to open the File menu.
2. Press **T** to open Word Options.

Step 3: Locate the Startup Option

1. In the Word Options window, ensure the General category is selected.
2. Press **SPACE + Dots 1-2** (*shift+tab*) until you reach the option:

“Show the Start screen when this application starts”

Step 4: Disable the Startup Screen

1. Press **SPACEBAR** to uncheck the option.
2. Press **ENTER** to save the changes.

Word will now open directly to a blank document.



Braille Viewer

The Braille Viewer allows braille content from the display to be shown visually on an external screen. This can be useful when working with a sighted teacher, colleague, family member, or support person who wants to view the braille you are reading or typing without needing to look directly at the braille display.

When enabled, and an external screen is connected to the device, the contents of the braille display are shown visually at the top of the screen.

To enable the Braille Viewer:

1. Open the **Options Menu** by pressing **SPACE + O**.
2. Use the **Up Arrow** and **Down Arrow** keys to navigate to **Display Braille Viewer**.
3. Press **ENTER** or **SPACE** to enable the option.

Alternatively, you can quickly toggle the Braille Viewer using the shortcut:

BACKSPACE + ENTER + V

Once enabled, braille output from the device will be displayed visually on the connected external screen.



Application Switcher

The BrailleNote Evolve includes an **Application Switcher**, which allows you to open a window displaying all currently running applications. This feature is useful for quickly moving between open applications without returning to the main menu. It can also be used to close applications that are no longer needed.

The Application Switcher is part of the KeySoft workflow. However, if modifier keys are enabled, you can also use the traditional Windows application switching methods.

Open the Application Switcher:

1. Press **SPACE + DOTS 2-3-5**.
2. A list of currently open applications will appear.
3. Use the **Up Arrow** and **Down Arrow** keys to move through the application list, (or first-letter navigation to get to a specific app).
4. Press **ENTER** on the application you want to switch to.

The selected application will open immediately, allowing you to continue where you left off.

Alternatively, if you want to close the application press **Backspace with Dots 2-3-5-6** or the **delete key**.



Office KeySoft Add-ins

The **KeySoft Add-ins** enhance a range of Microsoft applications to provide a more braille-centred user experience. When enabled, these add-ins create an environment similar to the traditional KeySoft interface, helping early learners build confidence and succeed when using Windows-based computers.

The first time you open a supported Microsoft application, you may be prompted to install the **HumanWare KeySoft Add-ins**. If prompted, select **Install**. Once installed, the add-ins can be enabled or disabled at any time according to user preference.

KeySoft Add-ins also introduce **KeyFiles** integration for opening and saving documents, helping streamline file management within the KeySoft workflow. In addition, the built-in **Equation Editor** is managed through KeySoft to ensure optimal translation between braille and print formats, supporting a smooth experience in both directions.

Enable and Disable Add-ins

If you wish to disable or enable the Add-ins you can do this through the KeySoft Control centre. One of the reasons for disabling the add-ins is because you prefer to use the windows explorer for file saving and opening.

Follow these steps to enable/disable the add-ins:

1. From the Main Menu, press **SPACE + O** to open the options menu.
2. Using your **UP and DOWN arrow** keys, navigate to the KeySoft control centre item, then press **ENTER**, (or press **"K"** twice).

(Alternatively, you can select the KeySoft Control centre from the All Applications menu.

3. In the Keysoft Control centre, make sure you are on the tab control so you can move through the various tabs available. Press **TAB** key until you are on tab control then you can use the **RIGHT and LEFT** arrow keys to move through the available tabs.
4. Select the Office Add-in Manager tab. Press **TAB** key to move to the list of available options.
5. The list of add-ins will be shown with a check box. Use your **UP and DOWN** arrow keys to move through the available add-ins. Press **ENTER** or space to check or uncheck them. When checked the add-in will be enabled.
6. When finished, **TAB** to the close button or press **SPACE + E**.

Troubleshooting

If you experience issues with the KeySoft Add-in, it may have been disabled within the Microsoft Office application. In some cases, this cannot be resolved through the KeySoft Control Centre and must be re-enabled directly in Office settings.

Note: You may need to enable modifier keys if they are currently disabled, or ask a sighted assistant to use a mouse if required.

To re-enable the add-in:

1. Open the **File** menu in the Office application by pressing Alt+F.
2. Select **Options**, or press **T** to access it via the keyboard.
3. In the category list, use the **Up** and **Down Arrow** keys to navigate to **Add-ins**.
4. Press **TAB** repeatedly until you reach the **Manage: COM Add-ins** dropdown.
5. Use the **Arrow Keys** to select **Disabled Items**, then press **ENTER**.
6. Press **TAB** to move to the **Go** button and activate it.
7. A list of disabled add-ins will appear.
8. Locate the KeySoft add-in (shown as **HW-XXXX**), select it, and choose **Enable**.
9. Close and restart the Office application for the changes to take effect.



BrailleNote Evolve Knowledge Levels

Braille IME Keyboard

Windows does not natively recognise a braille keyboard, so braille input is normally handled by the screen reader and the keyboard layout selected during Windows setup.

Traditional screen reader braille input can make editing contracted braille difficult. The cursor may not always go exactly where expected within a word, and entering a letter that is also a contraction can accidentally add extra text.

BrailleNote Evolve solves this with Braille IME, providing a more familiar BrailleNote-style experience. It allows you to position the cursor directly on a braille cell and edit contracted braille more accurately.

You may notice Braille IME is not active if unexpected symbols appear while typing, such as the large **“and”** or **“y”** signs.

The following section provides a more detailed explanation of how Braille IME works:

A good example is the word **“band.”**

In contracted braille, **“band”** can be written using the letter **b** followed by the **“and”** contraction. This means the whole word may only take up **two braille cells**, even though it has four letters.

With **Braille IME**, you can move the cursor to the word and make a change, such as changing **“band”** to **“sand.”** BrailleNote Evolve understands that the **“and”** cell is a contraction and keeps the word correct.

Without Braille IME, the computer may not understand that the braille cell represents several letters. This means that changing just one part of the word could accidentally change or break the whole word. Another example is adding a letter to an existing word. Without **Braille IME** enabled, the braille translator may treat the letter you enter as a contraction rather than as a single letter.

For example, if you type **“sil”**, press Space, and then try to add the letter **“k”**, NVDA’s braille translation may interpret **“k”** as the word **“knowledge.”** This could result in the word becoming **“silknowledge”** instead of **“silk.”**

To avoid this and make editing contracted braille more reliable, it is recommended that you use **Braille IME**.

Changing the Keyboard entry

Each time the BrailleNote Evolve restarts it will inevitably load the default keyboard which is NOT Braille IME. This means when you're using an application like Word, you will need to switch the keyboard layout to Braille IME. There is a solution around this which means changing some of your keyboard options, more is explained at the end of this guide.

However if you want to immediately change the keyboard there are two ways to do this:

- Using the KeySoft method, press **Backspace + Enter + I**
- Using Modifier keys, press **Windows and Space**

Each press will toggle between your available keyboard layouts.

Set Braille IME as the Default Keyboard

Although the Braille IME keyboard may not work in every application or text field, you can set it as the default keyboard so that it is automatically selected whenever it is supported.

To set Braille IME as your default keyboard:

1. Open Windows Settings by pressing **Enter + Q**.
2. Select Time & language.
3. Select Typing.
4. Select Advanced keyboard settings.
5. Open the keyboard drop-down list and select the keyboard that includes Braille IME.

Braille IME will now be used as the default keyboard wherever it is supported.

If you do not see a keyboard containing Braille IME, you will first need to add it:

1. Open Windows Settings and select Time & language.
2. Select Language & region.
3. Under Language, locate your default language.
4. Open More options for that language and select Language options.
5. Navigate to the Keyboards section and select Add a keyboard.
6. Select the keyboard that includes Braille IME.

Once it has been added, return to Advanced keyboard settings and follow the previous steps to set it as your default keyboard.



BrailleNote Evolve Knowledge Levels

Changing the Synthesizer and Voice

BrailleNote evolve includes several speech synthesizers including:

- eSpeak
- Microsoft Speech API Version 5
- Windows OneCore voices
- Acapela TTS for HumanWare

You can install additional speech synthesizers through the Microsoft Store or a standalone installer.

Acapela will not be available when you first configure your language profile until you have downloaded a voice. Follow the steps below to install one.

Step 1: Open KeySoft Control Centre

1. Press **Space with O** to open Options.
2. Press **K** until you reach **KeySoft Control Centre**.
3. Press **Enter** to open it.

Step 2: Locate the Updates tab

KeySoft Control Centre may automatically check for updates. Wait for this check to finish.

Press **Space with dots 4 and 5 (Tab)** to move through the controls until you hear **Updates tab**.

Step 3: Open Manage Voice

1. From the **Updates** tab, press the **Right Arrow** until you reach **Manage Voice**.
2. Press **Space with dots 4 and 5 (Tab)** to move into the list.

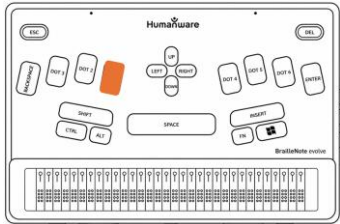
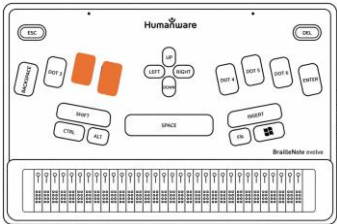
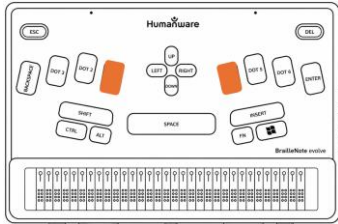
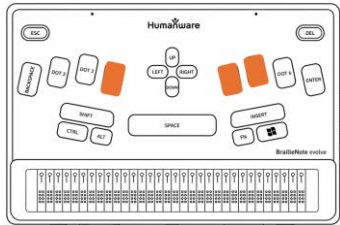
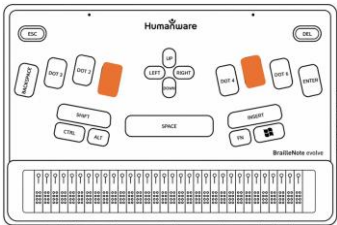
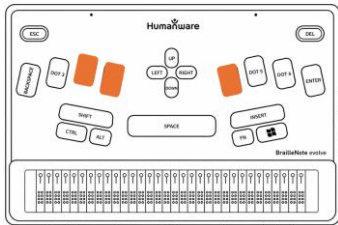
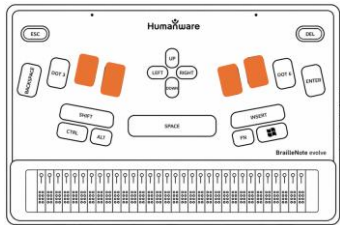
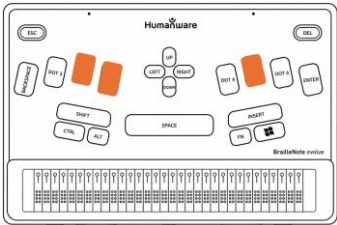
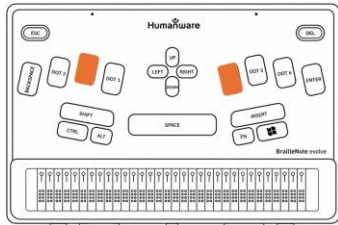
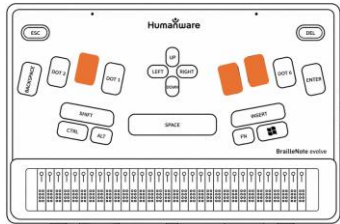
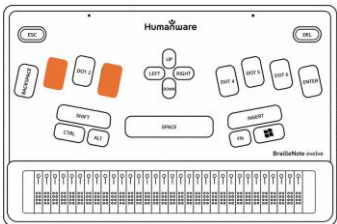
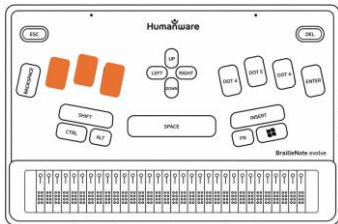
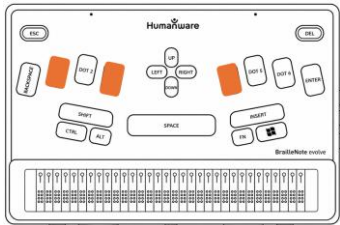
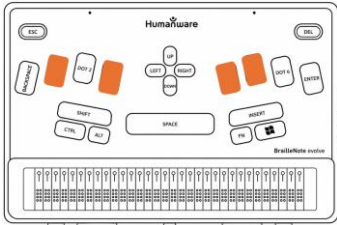
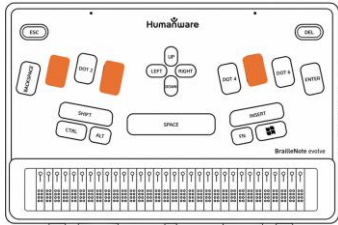
Step 4: Choose and install a voice

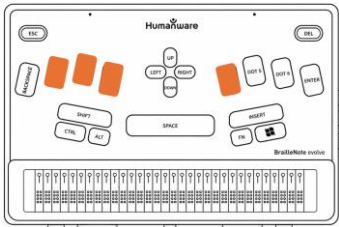
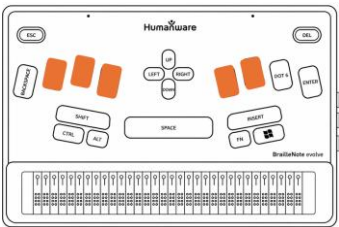
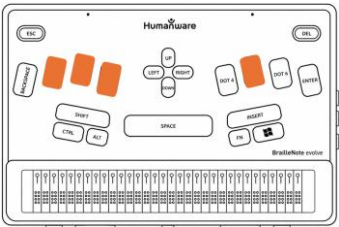
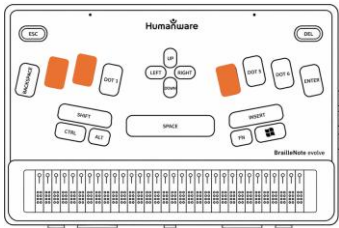
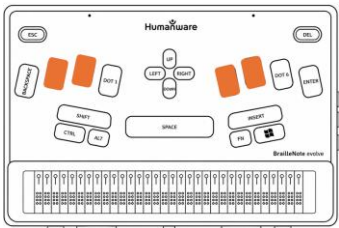
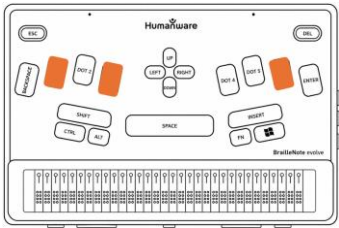
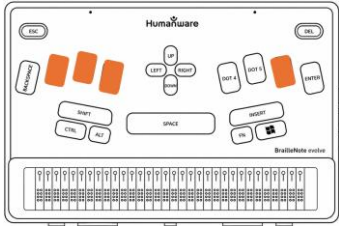
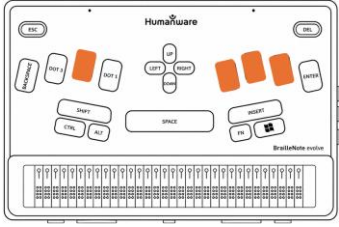
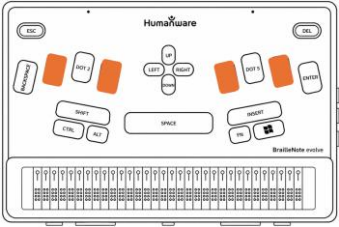
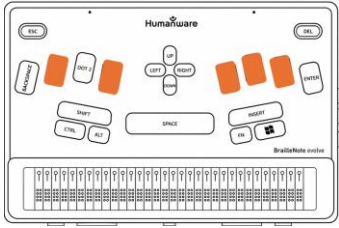
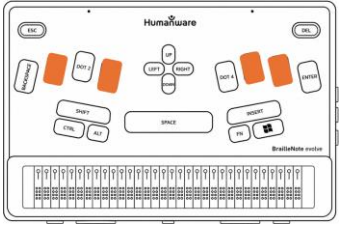
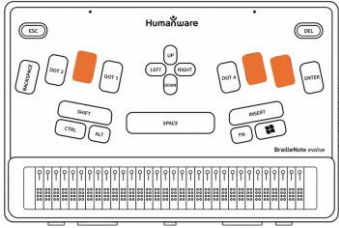
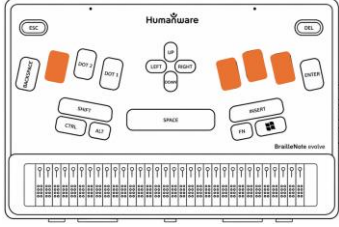
1. Use the **Down Arrow** to select **Add Voice**, then press **Enter**.
2. Use the **Up and Down Arrows** to browse the available languages.
3. Press **Enter** on your preferred language to view its voices.
4. Use the **Up and Down Arrows** to browse the voices. Pause on a voice for approximately **three seconds** to hear a sample.

5. Press **Enter** on the voice you want to install.

Note: You can install up to **four voices**. If you already have four installed, adding another will prompt you to choose which existing voice to replace.

Braille Alphabet

		
A / 1 = ⠠	B / 2 = ⠡	C / 3 = ⠢
		
D / 4 = ⠣	E / 5 = ⠤	F / 6 = ⠥
		
G / 7 = ⠦	H / 8 = ⠧	I / 9 = ⠨
		
J / 0 = ⠩	K = ⠪	L = ⠬
		
M = ⠭	N = ⠮	O = ⠯

		
P = ⠏	Q = ⠒	R = ⠗
		
S = ⠎	T = ⠞	U = ⠥
		
V = ⠺	W = ⠭	X = ⠭⠬
		
Y = ⠽	Z = ⠵	Full Stop
		
Number sign = ⠼		