

CRACKING THE CODE

MICRO-MYSTERY ACTIVITY



Part 1: Decode the Book

Each question comes from a small detail in *Cracking the Code*. Use the hint to crack it, then answer the question.

1. Illinois' Wild Lab

Question:

Which Illinois lab had windmills, a lighthouse, greenhouses, a bear cage and even an alligator pool, where America's first big codebreaking team got rolling?

Ciphertext:

. - . . . - . . -
- . . - - . - -

Answer:

Hint: In Morse code, letters are separated by spaces.

2. Mary's Sneaky Mail Service

Question:

In 1586, secret notes for Mary, Queen of Scots weren't hidden in a horse's saddlebags—they rolled out of a brewery. What were they hidden inside?

Ciphertext:

U O O F W O T V

Answer:

Hint: Use the Pigpen cipher to unravel the clue.

3. The Monster That Sent Messages

Question:

I share my name with a many-headed beast. At a spy school by Lake Ontario, I blasted encoded radio transmissions across the ocean in seconds. Who am I?

Ciphertext:

O F K Y H

Answer:

Hint: Use the Caesar Cipher to move each letter back 7 places.



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Ciphers available on page 3.

Part 2: Make-Your-Own-Code Challenge

Ready to be a codemaker? Follow these steps and swap with a friend to try and crack each other's secrets!

1. Pick a fact from the book to use as your riddle.

Examples:

- I'm a metal puzzle that still keeps a secret at the CIA. What am I? (Answer: KRYPTOS.)
- I am the location of the Bombe machine that helped break enemy codes in WWII. Where am I?
(Answer: BLETCHLEY PARK)
- I scramble text in a way that filters out automated access, ensuring only humans can access websites. (Answer: CAPTCHA)

2. Choose a cipher to hide your answer. Example ciphers are available on the following page.

3. Code your message:

Question:

Coded answer:

4. Trade and get cracking! Swap your riddle with a partner. Can they decode your answer? Time each other and see who cracks it first!

Answer decoded:

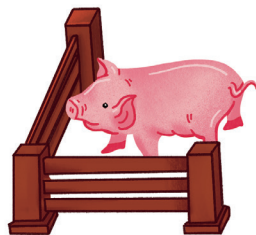


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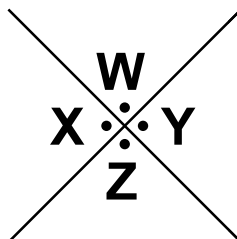
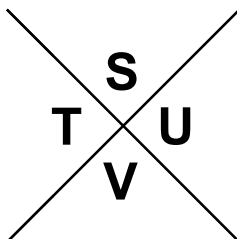
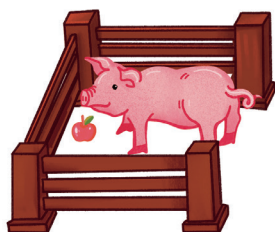
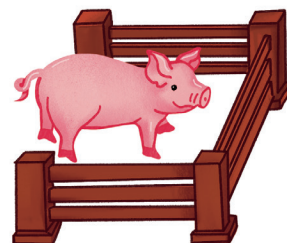
CIPHERS:

Pigpen Cipher



A	B	C
D	E	F
G	H	I

J	K	L
M	N	O
P	Q	R



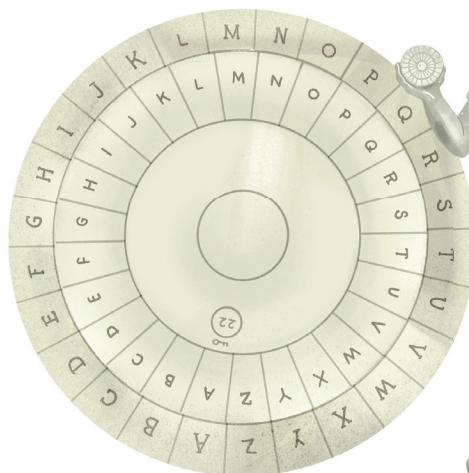
Morse Code

A	• —
B	— • • •
C	— • — •
D	— • •
E	•
F	• • — •
G	— • • •
H	• • • •
I	• •
J	• — — — —
K	— • — —
L	• — • •
M	— —
N	— •
O	— — —
P	• — — •
Q	— — • —
R	• — • •
S	• • •
T	—

U	• • —
V	• • • —
W	• — —
X	— • • —
Y	— • — —
Z	— — • •

1	• — — — —
2	• • — — —
3	• • • — —
4	• • • • —
5	• • • • •
6	— • • • •
7	— • • • •
8	— • • • •
9	— • • • •
0	— • • • •

Caesar Cipher



ROT13 Cipher

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

