

National Mathematics Day Activity

Title of activity	Pigpen cipher
Author(s)	The Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT) Inc.
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Each cipher and code activity has a suggested level: lower primary, upper primary or junior secondary. However, many of the activities can be enjoyed by students (and teachers!) of all ages.

For more information about this resource, please contact:



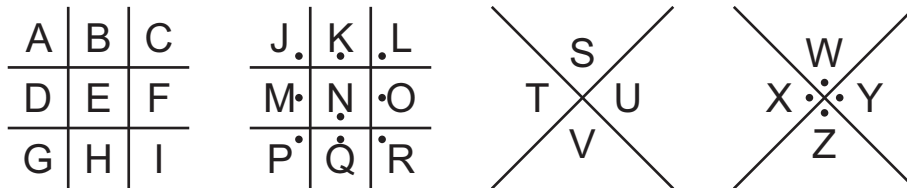
The Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers Inc.
ADDRESS GPO Box 1729, Adelaide SA 5001
PHONE +61 8 8363 0288
FAX +61 8 8362 9288
EMAIL office@aamt.edu.au
INTERNET www.aamt.edu.au



Pigpen cipher

[primary]

In a pigpen cipher, each letter is replaced with its corresponding symbol. It is a form of mono-alphabetic substitution cipher.



It is called the pigpen cipher because the symbols look a bit like pigpens, with the straight lines being the sides of the pen and the dots being the pig!

The pigpen cipher is also known as the Freemasons' cipher or masonic cipher. One of the earliest examples can be seen in the cemetery at Trinity Church, New York, on the headstone of James Leeson who died in 1794. The headstone shows Masonic symbols and has an inscription across the top. In pigpen cipher it would be:

◻◻◻◻◻◻◻◻ ◻◻◻◻◻◻
R E M E M B E R D E A T H

- What does this message say?

◻◻◻◻◻◻◻◻ ◻◻◻◻◻◻◻◻

- How would this message look if it were written in pigpen cipher?
after dark

- Can you write your own message, or a letter to a friend, in pigpen cipher?
- What do your spelling words look like in pigpen cipher?