

Worksheet 2 - The Dancing Men Cracking Codes

'The moment Cubitt left, Sherlock Holmes rushed to the table, and laid out all the slips of paper containing dancing men in front of him. For two hours I watched him as he covered sheet after sheet of paper with figures and letters. Sometimes he was making progress and whistled and sang at his work.'

Codes and ciphers have fascinated people for many years. They have been created for many different purposes and used in a wide variety of situations. Some well-known codes and ciphers are:

- **Morse Code**
- **Semaphore**
- **Caesar Cipher**
- **ASCII code**

Task 1: Research one of the codes listed above or a code of your own choice. Include the following information:

- What symbols/pictures does this code use?
- Why was this code invented?
- Where did it originate?
- When and how is it used?

Task 2: Create a secret message using your chosen code (around 50 – 100 characters long).

Task 3: Present your research project to an appropriate audience using visual aids to support your presentation (e.g. posters, a slide show, Smartboard, props etc). Display the secret message you prepared in Task 2 and show your audience members how to decipher it. See how fast they can decode the secret message.

Tips for presenting an oral report:

- ◇ Project your voice so that the audience can clearly hear what you are saying.
- ◇ Maintain a steady, even speaking pace making sure you don't rush through it.
- ◇ Look as though you are interested in the material you are presenting by keeping your face animated.
- ◇ Maintain eye contact with your audience during the presentation as much as possible.

Extension Activities:

- Create an information text about world famous unsolved codes.
- Create a biographical text about Sherlock Holmes.