Words
Special Activity

Visit the Special Mystery Museum

Spell words and dance your way through an epic museum party! Tap on each object to learn more about it.

Hints

To get started, open Osmo Words and then tap on this special button.

SECRET

MYSTERY

FIND

TRACK

W I N
Special Costumes!

Spell all words to unlock a special Crown!

Genius Spotlight: Edgar Allan Poe

"Cryptography" is the art of writing and solving secret codes. If you were writing a note with top-secret information, you'd want to use cryptography. That way, if someone got ahold of it, they wouldn't be able to read it unless they knew what code (or "cipher") you were using.

One of the most famous cryptographers is Edgar Allan Poe!

Edgar was an American poet and author of dark, mysterious tales. His interest in cryptography appears in "The Gold-Bug," a story centered around cracking a secret code found on a piece of scrap paper.

Keep Reading for a Fun Activity →

More about: Edgar Allan Poe

When "The Gold-Bug" was published in 1843, cryptography was considered very mysterious to most people, the codes almost impossible to break. Edgar, however, believed you could decode almost any secret message using simple logic.

He put this to the test while working as a newspaper editor, inviting readers to send in their own ciphers. Sure enough, Edgar solved all but one of about 100 reader-submitted ciphers! He published an essay called "A Few Words on Secret Writing" around this time, too.

Edgar's work helped popularized cryptography, which is now used in all sorts of ways to keep information private. Check out the activity below to try your hand at writing cryptograms!

"The Gold-Bug" as it appeared in The Dollar Newspaper, June 21, 1843, with the illustration on the bottom right.

Create Your Own Cryptograms

Try writing using the Atbash cipher! This secret code reverses the alphabet so the first letter (A) is written as the last letter (Z), etc.

For example, the word "DOG" would be written as "WLT.

Key

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

My secret codes

My name:

My favorite color:

My best friend(s):

My favorite book:

My street:

Now, try writing out a whole sentence!