

Caesar Cipher Practice Worksheets

Secret Code Challenges for Young Codebreakers

How Does the Caesar Cipher Work?

A Caesar cipher is one of the oldest and simplest secret codes! You shift every letter in your message by a fixed number of positions in the alphabet. For example, with a shift of +3, A becomes D, B becomes E, and so on. When you reach the end of the alphabet, it wraps around: X becomes A, Y becomes B, Z becomes C.

Example: Shift +3 Reference Chart

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

Quick Example:

To encode "HELLO" with shift +3: H->K, E->H, L->O, L->O, O->R = KHOOR

To decode, just shift each letter backwards by the same number!

What's Inside:

- Level 1:** Beginner Codebreaker (Shift +1) - 5 messages
- Level 2:** Secret Agent (Shift +3) - 5 messages
- Level 3:** Master Decoder (Shift +5) - 5 messages
- Bonus:** Create Your Own Secret Messages!

Level 1: Beginner Codebreaker (Shift +1)

Tip: Each letter in the coded message is shifted 1 position forward. To decode, shift each letter 1 position back!

Reference Strip (Shift +1): Top = coded letter, Bottom = real letter

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 | |
| V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| 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 | A | |

Decode These Secret Messages:

1 MPPL VOEFS UIF CFE

Answer: _____

2 HP UP UIF USFF

Answer: _____

3 DIFDL UIF CBTLFU

Answer: _____

4 ZPV BSF DMPTF

Answer: _____

5 UIF LFZ JT IFSF

Answer: _____

Great job! When you are done, check your answers on the last page.

Level 2: Secret Agent (Shift +3)

Tip: This time, each letter is shifted 3 positions forward. To decode, shift each letter 3 positions back!

Reference Strip (Shift +3): Top = coded letter, Bottom = real letter

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

Decode These Secret Messages:

1 ORRN XQGHU WKH WDEOH

Answer: _____

2 JR WR WKH WUHH

Answer: _____

3 FKHFN WKH FORVHW

Answer: _____

4 BRX DUH DOPRVW WKHUH

Answer: _____

5 ILQG WKH KLGGHQ VWDU

Answer: _____

You are getting better! Check the answer key when you are finished.

Level 3: Master Decoder (Shift +5)

Challenge! Each letter is shifted 5 positions forward. Think carefully and take your time!

Reference Strip (Shift +5): Top = coded letter, Bottom = real letter

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

Decode These Secret Messages:

1 Q T T P G J M N S I Y M J H T Z H M

Answer: _____

2 L T Y T Y M J L F W I J S

Answer: _____

3 Y M J H Q Z J N X N S Y M J G T C

Answer: _____

4 X J F W H M S J F W Y M J I T T W X

Answer: _____

5 D T Z X T Q A J I N Y

Answer: _____

Amazing work, Master Decoder! Check the answer key to see how you did.

Create Your Own Secret Messages!

Now YOU become the codemaker!

Exercise 1: Encode with Shift +2

Plain text: MY NAME IS _____

Encoded: _____

Exercise 2: Encode with Shift +3

Plain text: THE TREASURE IS HIDDEN

Encoded: _____

Exercise 3: Write Your Own Message!

Choose your own shift (1 to 25): Shift = _____

Your message: _____

Encoded: _____

Blank Reference Grid (fill in your shifted alphabet):

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 |
| v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v | v |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Give your encoded message to a friend and see if they can crack it!

Answer Key

No peeking until you have tried!

Try to solve all the messages before looking at the answers!

Level 1: Beginner Codebreaker (Shift +1)

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1. MPPL VOEFS UIF CFE | = | LOOK UNDER THE BED |
| 2. HP UP UIF USFF | = | GO TO THE TREE |
| 3. DIFDL UIF CBTLFU | = | CHECK THE BASKET |
| 4. ZPV BSF DMPTF | = | YOU ARE CLOSE |
| 5. UIF LFZ JT IFSF | = | THE KEY IS HERE |

Level 2: Secret Agent (Shift +3)

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. ORRN XQGHU WKH WDEOH | = | LOOK UNDER THE TABLE |
| 2. JR WR WKH WUHH | = | GO TO THE TREE |
| 3. FKHFN WKH FORVHW | = | CHECK THE CLOSET |
| 4. BRX DUH DOPRVW WKHUH | = | YOU ARE ALMOST THERE |
| 5. ILQG WKH KLGGHQ VWDU | = | FIND THE HIDDEN STAR |

Level 3: Master Decoder (Shift +5)

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------|
| 1. QTTP GJMNSI YMJ HTZHM | = | LOOK BEHIND THE COUCH |
| 2. LT YT YMJ LFWIJS | = | GO TO THE GARDEN |
| 3. YMJ HQZJ NX NS YMJ GTC | = | THE CLUE IS IN THE BOX |
| 4. XJFWMH SJFW YMJ ITTWX | = | SEARCH NEAR THE DOORS |
| 5. DTZ XTQAJI NY | = | YOU SOLVED IT |

Bonus - Exercise Answers:

Exercise 1 (Shift +2): "MY NAME IS ___" encodes to "OA PCOG KU ___"

Exercise 2 (Shift +3): "THE TREASURE IS HIDDEN" encodes to "WKH WUHDVXUH LV KLGGHQ"

Congratulations, Codebreaker! You cracked all the codes!