

playbook

human-
made
biome

Cryptoddity — decipher it!

019 **We all have our
secrets**

The world is full of human-made secrets. They can be frustrating or intriguing, and some secrets are harder to keep than others. Open this playbook to learn some techniques for hiding things and for finding what others have hidden — and then set your inner secret agent free!

**Do some real
detective work!
Find a disguise
in the closet or
dressing-up box,
then learn how to
change your voice
and write secret
messages —
and baffle anyone
who tries
to crack
the code you
invented.**

 Scan the QR code on the back cover to access the digital version of this playbook.

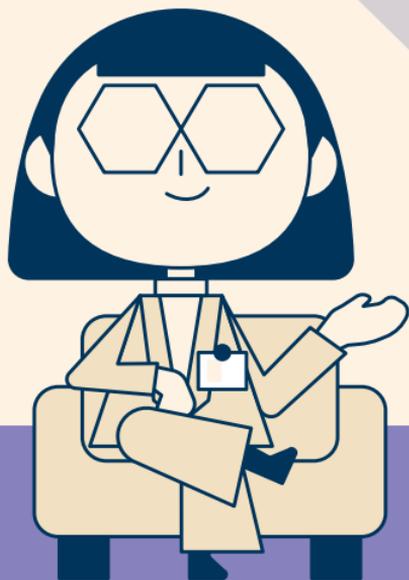
age

7–13



Warnings

Every playoddity kit is designed as a children's experience that is guided by an adult. All the described activities require adult supervision. Safety instructions for each item in the kit can be found on the item's individual packaging.



WARNING!
Choking hazard:
Small parts
Not for children under 3 years

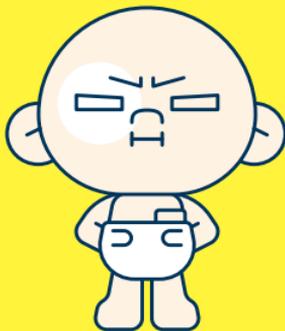


Adult supervision required





Hi, this is The Voice speaking. I'd like to remind you that the most important part of the playoddity experience is the child or children. Without them, you'll just be an adult playing games to avoid responsibilities. So put your phone away, and follow the instructions in this playbook for having a great time! The activities also work without the playbook, if you have your own ideas, but we suggest you have a look at ours first.



Without playbook



With playbook

Unboxing

This kit has been designed by agents so special, their true names are known only to their parents. We've shared our secret knowledge of cracking codes and writing ciphers. Now share your skills with #playoddity — let everyone know about your new career!



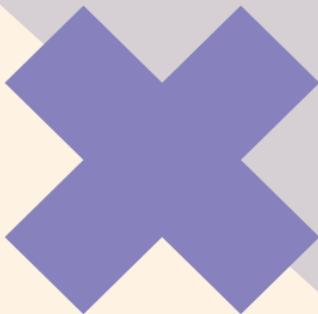
Each item in the kit has a colored sticker:

- Green sticker — item can be used by children and adults
- Red sticker — item should be used by adults only

If any items on the list are missing, or you have problems with any of the products, please get in touch.

Contents of this kit

- **01. Book-shaped safe**
It looks like a real book, but in fact it's a lockable box to hide your secrets in.
- **02. Wooden stick man**
Learn the true meaning of a human-made code.
- **03. Invisible ink pen**
Make every message a secret message.
- **04. Plastic containers**
To create your own hidden treasures.
- **05. Piggy bank**
But not necessarily pig-shaped.
- **06. Glass bottles with corks**
If you have a message, put it in a bottle.
- **07. Voice changer**
An integral part of camouflage.
- **08. Binoculars**
Bring distant objects closer without moving.
- **09. Giant hexagonal pencil**
Recreate an ancient cryptographic method.
- **10. Masking tape**
Use it to help you write ciphers.
- **11. Red lipstick**
To make your messages visible from far away.
- **12. Ink pad**
To create some mysterious fingerprints — or some other prints.
- **13. Magnifying glass with LED**
So you can even search for clues in the dark.
- **14. Pendant necklace with clear compartment**
Keep your most important secrets close to your heart.
- **15. Colored PVC film**
Some ciphers can be deciphered using colored filters.
- **16. Pens with red and blue ink**
To create messages that can be deciphered with filters.

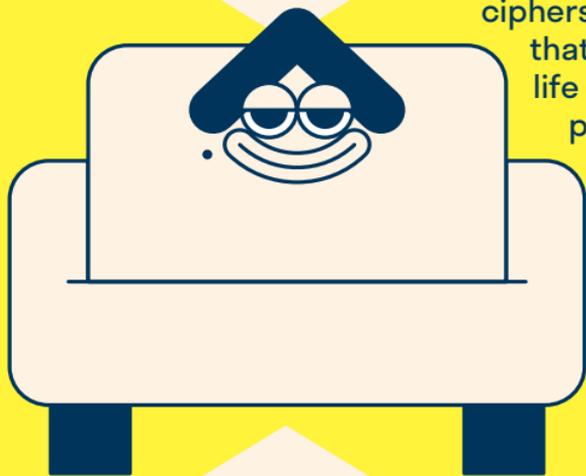


Notes and ideas

Every **covert mission** involves a story that keeps you on the edge of your seat. The **spies** and **agents** face overwhelming odds, risking everything to crack the code and uncover the truth. But we'll let you into a little secret. You — yes, you — have the potential to **be just like them**. Do you feel up to the challenge?

Get into the role

To become a **secret agent**, first you need to take a good look at secret agents. And as it's impossible to find real secret agents around us (they're under deep cover, of course), we'll have to **search for them in movies!** Make it a **Spy Movie Night**. Movies about secret agents might show them analyzing clues, solving codes, and cracking ciphers — but remember that movies aren't real life and don't always present realistic solutions. Call it **poetic license**.



A secret body language

Yes, you can use your own **body** to create a secret language. But with the help of the **wooden toy**, it's even easier. Use the cards that come with the toy to guide you, and choose **a pose** for each letter of the alphabet. On a sheet of paper, write **the letters from A to Z**. Next to the letters, draw the poses.

Talking poses

You've just made your very own **cipher key**! Using it, you can turn any words you want into a group of little dancing **stick men**, and no one else will be able to read it. The **same principle** applies to any other simple cipher. Make a key — then only you can translate it!

You'll find a **wooden stick toy** in the kit. Don't be fooled — we won't be playing with it. We'll be creating a **secret code** that only we can understand! Try moving its arms and legs into weird and fanciful **positions**.



Your own language

No special tools needed — just a piece of paper and a bit of imagination. Did you know that letters can be **turned into numbers**? You just need to agree on what number each letter represents. The easiest way is to **make a list** of all the letters and then write the numbers next to them. A is next to 1, B is next to 2, and so on. For example, “MOM” is M-0-M, and that becomes 13-15-13 in the world of numbers. Now try it out yourself. If you use a more **random method** for your cipher key, such as A to 16 and B to 12, it becomes **even more challenging** to solve.

Reverse it!

All you have to do here is **rearrange words**. Break up the words into pieces and put the pieces in reverse order! And now you have a **ready-made secret language**. “Oh, this is my favorite book!” becomes “Ho, isth si ym terivofa okbo!” Or you can go even further and do it with every single letter: “Ho, siht si ym etirovaf koob!” Can you speak this language out **loud**?

A box full of secrets

There's a **lockable box** inside this kit. Yes, we put a box inside the box — because everyone loves boxes, right? And guess what's waiting for you **inside**? A special place to keep all of **your secrets**.

Modify your voice

Did you know you can record an encoded voice message? Make yourself sound even more mysterious by using an amplifier. Or try speaking while inhaling instead of exhaling. Open your mouth, inhale, and say a vowel at the same time. Then practice with consonants. Say your words syllable by syllable while inhaling until you get the right rhythm. And if you use an amplifier, your voice will sound even more distorted! Record it on your phone. Just make sure you don't disturb the neighbors.

Secret time capsules

In the kit, there are some transparent containers. You can use them to hold a drawing, a note, or even a small item like a coin or a toy. Hide the container in a place that's easy to get to, like in the backyard or somewhere close to the house. Then you can play that game where you guide others to find something — you know, it's called "Hot or Cold." You can also leave hidden clues for each other and make it a fun family activity!

Mysterious letters in invisible ink

Using the pen from the kit, write your own **secret message** in invisible ink. You could, for example, **write down** the place where you hid some of that delicious candy. Or you could **make a sketch** of the location. When you want the secret message to be seen, shine the **blue light** from the pen cap on it, and it will be revealed.

Message in a bottle (no ocean needed)

You've already learned some **ciphers**. Now use one of them to write a secret message on **a small piece** of paper, and put it inside a **bottle**. You can even add some dried flowers or leaves if you want. Close the bottle tightly and **hide** it somewhere, or put it in a public place for others to find. And then they have to **decode** the message!

Dactyloscopy is not a dinosaur

This activity will allow you to discover something **very interesting** about yourself and your family. Using the **ink pads** in the kit, take the fingerprints of everyone in your family. Then **compare** them side by side. You'll be surprised to see how different they are — there are even differences between **twins!**

Jewelry design

The kit includes a **pendant necklace** with a compartment. Cut out your paper **fingerprint**, and place it inside. Add a strand of hair, beads, dried flowers, or sequins — or anything else that will make your unique print even more **special**.

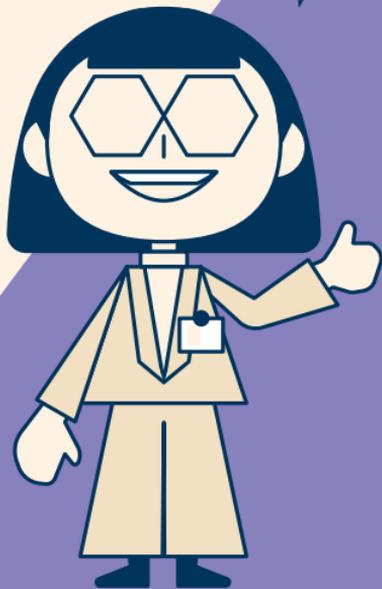
Body language and facial expressions

First, get together with your family members and make a list of unique hand gestures and facial expressions. Then use some lipstick to make your mouth stand out and grab the binoculars from the kit. Spread out, and take turns using the binoculars to read each other's messages created from the gestures and facial expressions.

Speaking gibberish

The principle is very simple. The consonants are doubled, and the letter “y” is inserted between them. “Are you leaving?” becomes “Aryre you lyleavyvinyn-gyg?” Or you can make it easier by just adding a funny ending or suffix to each word! So, for example, “Are you ready?” becomes “Arebop youbop readybop?”

Remember that fingerprints are used for important purposes like security, so you should always keep yours safe — and secret!



Using the scytale

Well, what do you know, the ancient Greeks found a way to send short messages without smartphones. They used a scytale — a cylinder with paper wrapped around it. You can make one yourself!

1. Take one of the big pencils from the kit and wrap the white masking tape around it without overlapping. You can also use a long strip of paper — cut several strips and stick them together with the masking tape to make one long strip. Use a piece of masking tape at each end to keep the paper tightly wound round the pencil.
2. Carefully write your message along the length of the pencil. Write one letter in the center of each turn of the tape or strip. You can write several lines of words, using each “face” of the pencil as a guide.
3. When you're finished, unroll it. The result will be a strip of random letters.
4. Only someone with a cylinder (or pencil!) of exactly the same diameter will be able to read your message — by wrapping the strip around it. If the strip is wound on a cylinder that's smaller or larger than yours, the message cannot be read.
5. Send your message to a friend or family member, and tell them how to decrypt it!

Nowadays, scholars think that the ancient Greeks might have used scytales not for encryption but to **store messages** conveniently, or as a way to confirm that a message was from the **expected sender** (who used a scytale of a specific size).



Mystery item

As if this kit didn't contain enough mysteries already, we've **added** an item that makes it that much more **intriguing**. Because real secret agents love to go that **extra mile**, don't they?

Search terms

 tic-tac-toe cipher	
nautical alphabet	
NATO phonetic alphabet	
Morse code	
binary code	
zigzag cipher	
Atbash cipher	
Caesar cipher	

Question time

-  Do you know about any famous coded messages that no one has been able to crack?
 -  Has anyone ever sent you a message that you didn't understand? Did it use a cipher?
-  Have you ever heard a conversation in a secret language?
 -  Do you think there are any secret agents among your friends?

Creativity time

Practice writing letters backwards. Write some regular letters or words, then hold a mirror next to the letters. Copy the reflection on another piece of paper so that the letters look like they do in the mirror. Clever!

There's more
out back —
follow the
arrow!



If this playbook gets completely encrypted and you lose the cipher key during the activities — don't worry. You can always find the digital version online if you follow the QR code. And while you're on the website, check out our other kits. They're awesome!

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