FREE PRINTABLE PACK · CRYPTOGRAM

# Secret Code Mysteries

Easy to medium · 20–40 minutes each · Age 10 and up

## HOW IT WORKS

Every statement uses the same secret alphabet. Start from the letters you are given, decode the statements, then find the one sentence the facts prove false.

## IN THIS PACK


Code Clerk cases (easy): a shift cipher — pages 2–7

Inspector case (medium): a mixed alphabet — pages 8–10

**Answers** — **pages 11–13**


## PRINTING

Print pages 2–10 for the puzzles and keep the answers back. The sheets are A4 and plain black and white. On US Letter paper, choose “Fit to page”.

## Detective Puzzles

Every puzzle here can be played free, with a new case each time, at detective-puzzles.com/encrypted-alibis/


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# Encrypted Alibis

Case EA-C4F1DTT · Code Clerk · 4 statements · Caesar shift cipher

The Founders Medal vanished from Harrowgate Academy during the evening. Every guest gave a statement, and the bureau's night clerk enciphered the lot before filing. Exactly one sentence in one statement is false. Decode the statements, chart the evening, and find the sentence that cannot be true.

## HOW TO BREAK THE ALIBIS

Every statement is enciphered with the same key: one cipher letter always stands for the same true letter, one to one, and never for itself. The supplied letters on the key worksheet are verified. Decode the statements, chart everyone’s movements against the map and the verified notes, and find the one sentence that cannot be true. Between one marked moment and the next a guest stays put or passes through exactly one passage, and a bolted passage cannot be used at or after the time on its notice. The warrant names the guest and the false sentence.

## VERIFIED BY THE BUREAU

- The groundskeeper is certain Clara was in the refectory at half past seven.
- The head porter swears the choir banner was in the great hall at half past eight.
- The groundskeeper saw Nathaniel in the library at eight.
- The head porter noted the choir banner in the great hall at eight.

## THE MAP

G — the great hall · L — the library · C — the chapel · R — the refectory · P — the porters lodge

The panelled corridor joins the great hall and the library.
The east passage joins the great hall and the refectory.
The cloister joins the great hall and the chapel.
The courtyard path joins the refectory and the porters lodge.
The gravel walk joins the chapel and the porters lodge.

## THE GUESTS

Bertram Hale — bookseller
Mabel Thorne — costumier
Clara Voss — portrait painter
Nathaniel Byrd — astronomer

## THE KEY WORKSHEET

Cipher letter above, true letter below. Supplied letters are already entered.

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M**

---

· E · · H I · · · · · · · ·

**N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z**

---

· R · T · · · · · · A · ·

## THE STATEMENTS

**Bertram Hale — bookseller**

**VLR TFII CFKA F HBMQ QL QEB OBCBZQLOV XQ BFDEQ. F QLLH QEB BXPQ MXPPXDB COLJ**

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**QEB OBCBZQLOV QL QEB DOBXQ EXII XQ BFDEQ. QEB ZELFO YXKKBO TXP FK QEB DOBXQ**

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**EXII TEBK F ILLHBA FK XQ EXIC MXPQ BFDEQ.**

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**Mabel Thorne — costumier**

**F OBJBJYBO PQXKAFKD FK QEB MLOQBOP ILADB XQ EXIC MXPQ PBSBK. F TXIHBA COLJ QEB**

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**MLOQBOP ILADB QL QEB OBCBZQLOV XQ EXIC MXPQ BFDEQ, TFQELRQ PQLMMFKD.**

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**Clara Voss — portrait painter**

**EXIC MXPQ PBSBK CLRKA JB FK QEB IFYOXOV. QEB ZELFO YXKKBO TXP FK JV EXKAP FK**

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**QEB IFYOXOV XQ KFKB.**

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**Nathaniel Byrd — astronomer**

**YBQTBBK EXIC MXPQ PBSBK XKA BFDEQ F OBJXFKBA FK QEB IFYOXOV. YBOQOXJ TXP TFQE**

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**JB FK QEB DOBXQ EXII XQ EXIC MXPQ BFDEQ.**

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# The evidence timeline

Write a room initial where a decoded sentence or a verified note places someone. A square holding two different rooms is a disagreement worth staring at.

| | half past seven | eight | half past eight | nine |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bertram | | | | |
| Mabel | | | | |
| Clara | | | | |
| Nathaniel | | | | |
| the choir banner | | | | |

**THE ROOMS**

G — the great hall · L — the library · C — the chapel · R — the refectory · P — the porters lodge

# Encrypted Alibis

Case EA-C4P7RXO · Code Clerk · 4 statements · Caesar shift cipher

The Opal Tiara vanished from the Empire Theatre during the evening. Every guest gave a statement, and the bureau's night clerk enciphered the lot before filing. Exactly one sentence in one statement is false. Decode the statements, chart the evening, and find the sentence that cannot be true.

## HOW TO BREAK THE ALIBIS

Every statement is enciphered with the same key: one cipher letter always stands for the same true letter, one to one, and never for itself. The supplied letters on the key worksheet are verified. Decode the statements, chart everyone’s movements against the map and the verified notes, and find the one sentence that cannot be true. Between one marked moment and the next a guest stays put or passes through exactly one passage, and a bolted passage cannot be used at or after the time on its notice. The warrant names the guest and the false sentence.

## VERIFIED BY THE BUREAU

- The stage doorkeeper saw Felix in the dressing room at half past nine.
- The call boy recalls the velvet cloak standing in the stage at ten.
- The head usher recalls the velvet cloak standing in the stage at half past nine.

## THE MAP

S — the stage · F — the foyer · D — the dressing room · O — the orchestra pit · G — the green room

The pass door joins the foyer and the green room.
The stalls door joins the foyer and the orchestra pit.
The prompt corridor joins the green room and the stage.
The iron stair joins the green room and the dressing room.
The pit steps joins the stage and the orchestra pit.

## THE GUESTS

Felix Norwood — concert violinist
Quentin Ash — stage magician
Winifred Page — librarian
Leopold Frank — clockmaker

## THE KEY WORKSHEET

Cipher letter above, true letter below. Supplied letters are already entered.

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M**

---

· · · A · · · E · · · I ·

**N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z**

---

· · · N O · · · · T · · ·

## THE STATEMENTS

**Felix Norwood — concert violinist**

**L ZDV LQ WKH JUHHQ URRP DW QLQH. BRX ZLOO ILQG L NHSW WR WKH IRBHU DW KDOI**

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**SDVW QLQH. L ZDV LQ WKH JUHHQ URRP DW WHQ.**

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**Quentin Ash — stage magician**

**GLUHFWOB DIWHU KDOI SDVW QLQH L PRYHG IURP WKH JUHHQ URRP WR WKH VWDJH. L**

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**UHPHPEHU VWDQGLQJ LQ WKH VWDJH DW WHQ.**

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**Winifred Page — librarian**

**L ZHQW EB ZDB RI WKH SLW VWHSV IURP WKH VWDJH WR WKH RUFKHVWUD SLW DW KDOI**

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**SDVW QLQH. WKH YHOYHW FORDN ZDV LQ WKH VWDJH ZKHQ L ORRNHG LQ DW KDOI SDVW**

---

**WHQ.**

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**Leopold Frank — clockmaker**

**WKH YHOYHW FORDN ZDV LQ WKH VWDJH ZKHQ L ORRNHG LQ DW QLQH. TXHQWLQ ZDV ZLWK**

---

**PH LQ WKH JUHHQ URRP DW KDOI SDVW QLQH. L ZDONHG IURP WKH JUHHQ URRP WR WKH**

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**IRBHU DW KDOI SDVW QLQH, ZLWKRXW VWRSSLQJ.**

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# The evidence timeline

Write a room initial where a decoded sentence or a verified note places someone. A square holding two different rooms is a disagreement worth staring at.

| | nine | half past nine | ten | half past ten |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Felix | | | | |
| Quentin | | | | |
| Winifred | | | | |
| Leopold | | | | |
| the velvet cloak | | | | |

**THE ROOMS**

S — the stage · F — the foyer · D — the dressing room · O — the orchestra pit · G — the green room

# Encrypted Alibis

Case EA-I1TMJNS · Inspector · 5 statements · substitution cipher

The Crystal Decanter vanished from the Grand Aurora Hotel during the evening. Every guest gave a statement, and the bureau's night clerk enciphered the lot before filing. Exactly one sentence in one statement is false. Decode the statements, chart the evening, and find the sentence that cannot be true.

## HOW TO BREAK THE ALIBIS

Every statement is enciphered with the same key: one cipher letter always stands for the same true letter, one to one, and never for itself. The supplied letters on the key worksheet are verified. Decode the statements, chart everyone’s movements against the map and the verified notes, and find the one sentence that cannot be true. Between one marked moment and the next a guest stays put or passes through exactly one passage, and a bolted passage cannot be used at or after the time on its notice. The warrant names the guest and the false sentence.

## VERIFIED BY THE BUREAU

- The desk clerk saw Nathaniel in the dining room at half past seven.
- The night porter places Iris in the lobby at half past nine.
- The lift attendant is certain Mabel was in the terrace at half past seven.
- The lift attendant is certain Bertram was in the terrace at half past seven.
- The night porter saw Bertram in the ballroom at half past eight.

## THE MAP

L — the lobby · B — the ballroom · K — the kitchen · S — the smoking room · T — the terrace · D — the dining room

The mirrored doors joins the lobby and the ballroom.
The palm corridor joins the lobby and the dining room.
The brass door joins the lobby and the smoking room.
The service door joins the dining room and the kitchen.
The tall windows joins the ballroom and the terrace.
The veranda steps joins the dining room and the terrace.
The folding screen joins the ballroom and the dining room.
**Notice: The palm corridor was locked and chained from half past eight onward.**

## THE GUESTS

Mabel Thorne — costumier
Bertram Hale — bookseller
Theodora Bliss — headmistress
Iris Chandler — botanist
Nathaniel Byrd — astronomer

## THE KEY WORKSHEET

Cipher letter above, true letter below. Supplied letters are already entered.

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M**

---

· T · E · · · · · · I · ·

**N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z**

---

· · · · A · · · · · · · ·

## THE STATEMENTS

**Mabel Thorne — costumier**

**K WRF CDEBERT KH BUD BDEERSD RB URGO LRWB WDNDH. IKEDSBGP ROBDE URGO LRWB**

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DKZUB K TMNDI OEMT BUD BDEERSD BM BUD CRGGEMMT. BUD WDRGDI DHNDGMLD FRW WBKGG KH BUD CRGGEMMT RB URGO LRWB HKHD.

---

**Bertram Hale — bookseller**

K GDOB BUD BDEERSD RB URGO LRWB WDNDH RHI FDHB WBERKZUB BM BUD CRGGEMMT. K WRF HRBURHKDG KH BUD CRGGEMMT RB DKZUB. RB URGO LRWB HKHD K HMBKSDI TRCDG KH BUD CRGGEMMT.

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**Theodora Bliss — headmistress**

RB DKZUB K FRW KH BUD IKHKHZ EMMT. RB URGO LRWB DKZUB K FRW KH BUD IKHKHZ EMMT. K GDOB BUD IKHKHZ EMMT RB HKHD RHI FDHB WBERKZUB BM BUD CRGGEMMT.

---

**Iris Chandler — botanist**

BUDMIMER RHI K FDED CMBU KH BUD GMCCP RB URGO LRWB WDNDH. K BMMY BUD CERWW IMME OEMT BUD WTMYKHZ EMMT BM BUD GMCCP RB DKZUB. K FRW KH BUD GMCCP RB HKHD.

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**Nathaniel Byrd — astronomer**

K FRW KH BUD WTMYKHZ EMMT RB URGO LRWB WDNDH. K FRW KH BUD CRGGEMMT RB HKHD. K EDTDTCDE WBRHIKHZ KH BUD GMCCP RB URGO LRWB HKHD.

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# The evidence timeline

Write a room initial where a decoded sentence or a verified note places someone. A square holding two different rooms is a disagreement worth staring at.

| | half past seven | eight | half past eight | nine | half past nine |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mabel | | | | | |
| Bertram | | | | | |
| Theodora | | | | | |
| Iris | | | | | |
| Nathaniel | | | | | |
| the silver tray | | | | | |
| the sealed envelope | | | | | |

### THE ROOMS

L — the lobby · B — the ballroom · K — the kitchen · S — the smoking room · T — the terrace · D — the dining room

# Answer key

## THE KEY

| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P |

| N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C |

A Caesar shift of 23: every true letter moved 23 places along the alphabet.

## THE STATEMENTS IN CLEAR

### Bertram Hale — bookseller

- You will find I kept to the refectory at eight.
- I took the east passage from the refectory to the great hall at eight.
- The choir banner was in the great hall when I looked in at half past eight.

### Mabel Thorne — costumier

- I remember standing in the porters lodge at half past seven.
- I walked from the porters lodge to the refectory at half past eight, without stopping.

### Clara Voss — portrait painter

**FALSE: Half past seven found me in the library.**

- The choir banner was in my hands in the library at nine.

### Nathaniel Byrd — astronomer

- Between half past seven and eight I remained in the library.
- Bertram was with me in the great hall at half past eight.

## HOW THE CASE READS

1. The statements decode with a Caesar shift of 23: each true letter was moved 23 places along the alphabet.
2. Bertram's account threads cleanly: every line agrees with the verified notes and the map allows every move.
3. Mabel's account threads cleanly: every line agrees with the verified notes and the map allows every move.
4. Nathaniel's account threads cleanly: every line agrees with the verified notes and the map allows every move.
5. Clara's does not. Clara claims the library at half past seven, but the bureau's verified note places them in the refectory at that very moment. Both cannot hold.
6. Every other line of Clara's statement checks out — the one false sentence is the proof, and the warrant names Clara.

## THE WARRANT: Clara Voss — portrait painter

Confronted with the false sentence, Clara Voss confessed, and the Founders Medal was back in its place before midnight.

# Answer key

## THE KEY

| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J |

| N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W |

A Caesar shift of 3: every true letter moved 3 places along the alphabet.

## THE STATEMENTS IN CLEAR

### Felix Norwood — concert violinist

- I was in the green room at nine.

**FALSE: You will find I kept to the foyer at half past nine.**

- I was in the green room at ten.

### Quentin Ash — stage magician

- Directly after half past nine I moved from the green room to the stage.
- I remember standing in the stage at ten.

### Winifred Page — librarian

- I went by way of the pit steps from the stage to the orchestra pit at half past nine.
- The velvet cloak was in the stage when I looked in at half past ten.

### Leopold Frank — clockmaker

- The velvet cloak was in the stage when I looked in at nine.
- Quentin was with me in the green room at half past nine.
- I walked from the green room to the foyer at half past nine, without stopping.

## HOW THE CASE READS

1. The statements decode with a Caesar shift of 3: each true letter was moved 3 places along the alphabet.
2. Quentin's account threads cleanly: every line agrees with the verified notes and the map allows every move.
3. Winifred's account threads cleanly: every line agrees with the verified notes and the map allows every move.
4. Leopold's account threads cleanly: every line agrees with the verified notes and the map allows every move.
5. Felix's does not. Felix claims the foyer at half past nine, but the bureau's verified note places them in the dressing room at that very moment. Both cannot hold.
6. Every other line of Felix's statement checks out — the one false sentence is the proof, and the warrant names Felix.

## THE WARRANT: Felix Norwood — concert violinist

Confronted with the false sentence, Felix Norwood confessed, and the Opal Tiara was back in its place before midnight.

# Answer key

## THE KEY

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

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

## THE STATEMENTS IN CLEAR

### Mabel Thorne — costumier

- I saw Bertram in the terrace at half past seven.
- Directly after half past eight I moved from the terrace to the ballroom.
- The sealed envelope was still in the ballroom at half past nine.

### Bertram Hale — bookseller

- I left the terrace at half past seven and went straight to the ballroom.
- I saw Nathaniel in the ballroom at eight.
- At half past nine I noticed Mabel in the ballroom.

### Theodora Bliss — headmistress

- At eight I was in the dining room.
- At half past eight I was in the dining room.
- I left the dining room at nine and went straight to the ballroom.

### Iris Chandler — botanist

- Theodora and I were both in the lobby at half past seven.
- I took the brass door from the smoking room to the lobby at eight.
- I was in the lobby at nine.

### Nathaniel Byrd — astronomer

**FALSE: I was in the smoking room at half past seven.**

- I was in the ballroom at nine.
- I remember standing in the lobby at half past nine.

## HOW THE CASE READS

1. The statements share one substitution alphabet; the recovered key on the decoding desk reads them all.
2. Mabel's account threads cleanly: every line agrees with the verified notes and the map allows every move.
3. Bertram's account threads cleanly: every line agrees with the verified notes and the map allows every move.
4. Theodora's account threads cleanly: every line agrees with the verified notes and the map allows every move.
5. Iris's account threads cleanly: every line agrees with the verified notes and the map allows every move.
6. Nathaniel's does not. Nathaniel claims the smoking room at half past seven, but the bureau's verified note places them in the dining room at that very moment. Both cannot hold.
7. Every other line of Nathaniel's statement checks out — the one false sentence is the proof, and the warrant names Nathaniel.

## THE WARRANT: Nathaniel Byrd — astronomer

Confronted with the false sentence, Nathaniel Byrd confessed, and the Crystal Decanter was back in its place before midnight.