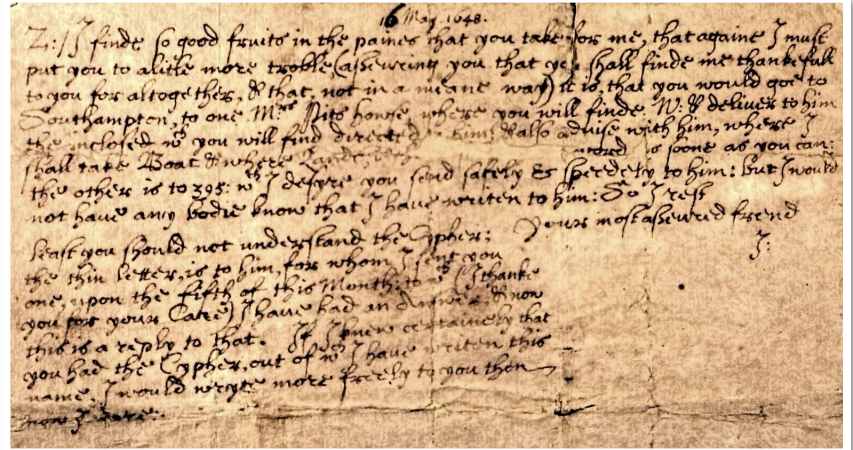


# Tell Me a Story: Coded Letter

This activity has been designed to support Arts Award Explore but can readily be adapted for other levels or used to inspire fun activities undertaken without formal Arts Award assessment.

## The inspiration for this session is a coded letter from Charles I, written in 1648

Charles twice attempted to escape his imprisonment at Carisbrooke Castle, but both efforts were unsuccessful. Charles and his ally Firebrace planned that the King would climb down a rope into the courtyard and then make his way to the outer wall. Firebrace would then lower him down to loyal friends waiting with horses outside. Unfortunately, at that time the window was much smaller than today and as Firebrace recalled: "His Majesty ... sticking fast between his breast and shoulders, and not able to get forwards or backwards ... Whilst he stuck, I heard him groane, but could not come to help him." Charles was forced to retreat to his room.



This letter was written by Charles to a Royalist accomplice Sir Edward Worsley at the end of May 1648. A cypher, or code, has been used in which numbers have been substituted for words and letters. This code has yet to be deciphered.

### Transcription

Z: / I am verrie well satisfied, with the discreete & Carefull account that  
you haue giuen me, of my Business; &, particularly, that you did 208: 343: 294:  
74: 9: 45: 86: 18: 96: 1: 40: 82: 395: 380: 2: 20: 3: 230: 388: 45: 36: 4: 11: 7: 43: 31: 62: 270: 248: now it  
will  
be 36: 19: 5: 32: 39: 12: 37: 8: 97: I desyre you to enquire whether or not 396: 213:  
355: 204: 28: 21: 363: 257: 64: 36: 46: 9: 32: 395: 42: 35: 14: 53: 38: 23: 18: 50: 88: but for this 236:  
308: 267: 356: 282: 96: 62: 86: 205: 17: 356: 66: 50: 97: 206: 231: 248: 381: 1: 20: 2: 230: 388: 46: 36:  
257: 208: 86: 25: 268: 8: 3: 50: 240: 6: 51: 248: 416: 303: 78: 9: 68: 45: in the meane tyme lett  
me know 379: 4: 28: 5: 348: 354: 13 [hole] 266: 18: So I rest

Your assured friend

I:

## Initial discussion at Carisbrooke Castle Museum

In groups of 6-10, look at the coded letter:

Talk about Charles 1 Being imprisoned at Carisbrooke and his two failed escape attempts. As a group, look at coded letter. Show an example of a very simple code to explain how codes work. Eg reverse alphabet code XSZIOVH

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

**Aim: Make up a short story/playlet about two children trapped somewhere. Use a coded message to help with the escape plans.**

**Scenario:** Collectively, choose a setting, season and a time for story to help inform choices for rest of story creation eg Carisbrooke in 21st century

Hand out questions to pairs of children. They should write very short notes/draw their answers.

1. Choose two characters who are trapped. Give them names, ages, reason for being imprisoned.
2. Choose two evil guards. Names, ages. Think of something they are scared of.
3. Choose two people who can help them escape. Names, role/ job in the castle
4. Write a short note arranging a time and method of escape. Use a very simple code to disguise key words.
5. Work out an escape route and what props will be needed.

Share all the ideas and together create a story 'Escape from....'

Use a pictorial storyboard to record the story and work out who will tell or act which snippet.

Practise telling your story. If time allows, share with the other groups at the museum - record on iPad/ phone.

## After your visit

Revisit story, refine and practise. Tell your story in assembly. Record and make stories available at listening station/ put on school website.

As a group make a graphic novel of your story, sharing out the events. Look at Manga books for inspiration. Maybe you could do your book backwards like anime books.

Find out about Enigma code: [tiny.cc/enigma-code](http://tiny.cc/enigma-code)

*If you're doing Arts Award, don't forget to record this and check the recording of the dialogue for audibility for assessment and re record if necessary. Ideally, ask the children to say their first names on the recording to ensure the recording can be matched with other assessment data.*

## Remote Learning

### Suggestion

Read about the failed escape attempt when Charles is stuck.

Summarise the main facts:

- ◆ Who was involved?
- ◆ Where did it happen?
- ◆ When did it happen?
- ◆ What happened?
- ◆ Why was he trying to escape?
- ◆ The consequences

Imagine you are a news reporter who has interviewed castle staff and is now giving a live report. On your phone, record your report.

### Art activities

- ◆ Create a newspaper frontpage telling of the failed escape
- ◆ Use string printing to make a picture of the castle, of Charles 1 or a window shape: [tiny.cc/string-print](http://tiny.cc/string-print)

### Artists

Find out about:

- ◆ Anthony van Dyck (painted portrait of Charles I): [tiny.cc/van-dyck](http://tiny.cc/van-dyck)
- ◆ Anne Frank (author whose book talks about her life hidden away): [tiny.cc/anne-frank](http://tiny.cc/anne-frank)

### Art institutions

Find out about:

- ◆ Carisbrooke Castle Museum: [carisbrookecastlemuseum.org.uk](http://carisbrookecastlemuseum.org.uk)
- ◆ The Postal Museum, London: [www.postalmuseum.org](http://www.postalmuseum.org)
- ◆ National Portrait Gallery: [tiny.cc/npg-charles](http://tiny.cc/npg-charles)

### Presentation

To fulfil the final part of the Explore level Arts Award, each student must share with others what they have enjoyed and/or achieved through completing their Arts Award. This could be done in an assembly or on a one to one basis with a child from another class. Each child would explain what they have created /learned about other artists and art organisations and how they felt about the process. NB. A photograph of this taking place is a useful piece of evidence.

## Other suggestions to help achieve

### Arts Award

Don't forget that the creation of this story and the telling of it, is one of the 'range of activities' required to achieve Art Award 'Explore level'. The evidence for this would be the recording of the story (or commentary) in a digital format (eg. memory stick or upload) to be submitted with the rest of the portfolio and accompanying photographs of participation in the activities/assemblies.

Children also need to give a personal response to their participation eg. "I enjoyed doing this because..."

## Other Treasures from Carisbrooke Castle Museum

### Victorian gatehouse museum key

*This silver-plated key was designed by Percy Stone and presented to Princess Beatrice to commemorate the opening of the newly-restored castle gatehouse in 1898. This gatehouse was the first home of the Carisbrooke Castle Museum. Percy Stone (1856-1934) lived and worked on the Island for over 50 years. He was responsible for repair and restoration works at Carisbrooke Castle and many churches and historic buildings across the Island.*



#### Activities

- ◆ Imagine this is the key to a treasure chest, lost for 200 years. Create a story about two children finding the key and their search for the treasure chest.
- ◆ Keys can be gateways into other worlds. Open the door to a new world and describe what you can see

### Norman gaming piece

*This is a very finely carved counter, or tableman, for a game of tables, made from ivory. It was found down a well on the Isle of Wight in 1732. The carving shows a Norman knight standing on a drawbridge outside a castle. He is wearing a mail coat and conical helmet. Tables is similar to backgammon, each 'table' gaming board had six points along its opposite edges. Players rolled dice to determine the movement of pieces, moving men along the board according to throws of the dice.*



#### Activities

- ◆ Imagine you were a guard, off duty, on the day of invasion, playing tables. Make up a diary entry for that day.
- ◆ Isabella de Fortibus lived at Carisbrooke Castle. Create a letter from her requesting a new set of tablemen.

## Arts Award

To achieve an Arts Award -Explore Level, children and young people have to collect evidence in an individual arts log of their experiences of:

- ◆ taking part in a range of arts activities, including a personal response about what has inspired them about taking part
- ◆ the work of artists or craftspeople and arts organisations
- ◆ creating a piece of artwork
- ◆ sharing with others what they have enjoyed and/or achieved through completing their Arts Award

Refer to the Arts Award website for detailed guidelines: [www.artsaward.org.uk](http://www.artsaward.org.uk)

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