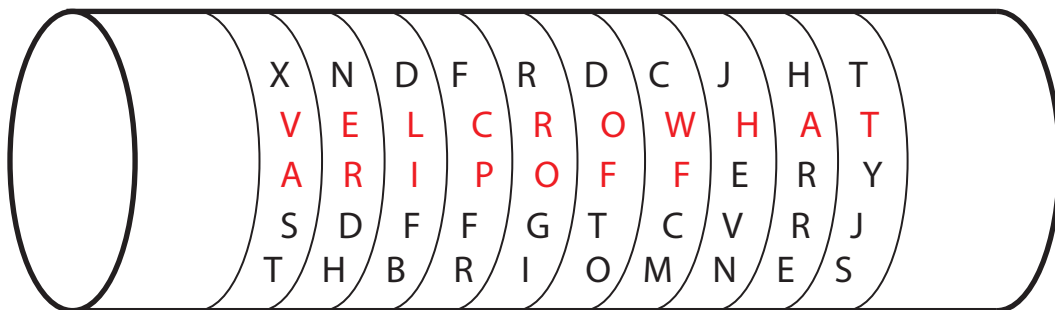


Scytale Cipher

A Scytale cipher is a simple transposition cipher (that is, the letters of the original message are rearranged according to a secret system). It is made by wrapping a strip of paper around a cylinder and writing a message across it. One letter is written on each portion of the paper with decoy letters to fill any empty spaces.

The scytale can be traced back to as early as the 7th century BC in Ancient Greece. The word “scytale” is from the Greek word σκυτάλη. It can be transliterated into “skytale” which translates to baton or staff. It was a tool used for military communications between government leaders and commanders in the field of battle.

Using a scytale cipher, the following message: “Velcro. What a rip off.” would look like this with decoy letters filling in the empty spaces:



1. W O F Y I W P S N S E C D V
2. A M A F G Y R N Y B T B M E
3. A Y S R N M E P O O T B A N O
4. G N E R R D F T O B M A U E
5. A R S Y C O M N A T R D R E
6. N I T V O N W E T G A D H I
7. I L U Y T M E F C B S E R
8. T I S Y E C D T N L R F T E

Scytale Cipher

Your turn! Cut out the next page on the dotted line. You should have 8 strips of paper. Wrap each one around a 1/2 inch piece of PVC pipe to find the answers to the following questions:

1. What invention allows us to see through walls?

2. What do you call a bear with no teeth?

3. What do you call a moose with no name?

4. What do you call a cow with no legs?

5. What's orange and sounds like a parrot?

6. What did the ocean say to the beach?

7. Why did the cookie go to the doctor?

8. How many tickles does it take to make an octopus laugh?
