

SUPER SPIES

Interactive Cipher Activity

Elizabeth Van Lew was an abolitionist who lived during the Civil War, and acted as a Union spy. As a member of the Virginia elite, Van Lew was able to volunteer at the Confederate Libby Prison bring food, books, and medicine to Union prisoners. One of the ways she would record and pass information from prisoners and the Union Army was through ciphers or coded messages. Van Lew would write coded messages in a clear liquid that turned black with milk.

In order to crack the numerical codes in this activity, use the cipher to find the corresponding letter and find out what secret messages are being sent!

Cipher Key

1 = I	! = 1
2 = E	? = 2
3 = L	# = 3
4 = Z	\$ = 4
5 = B	% = 5
6 = Q	^ = 6
7 = H	& = 7
8 = V	= 8
9 = D	= 9
10 = K	; = 0
11 = P	/ = space
12 = T	or a break
13 = C	between
14 = X	words
15 = G	
16 = W	
17 = R	
18 = J	
19 = U	
20 = A	
21 = O	
22 = N	
23 = Y	
24 = F	
25 = M	
26 = S	

26 20 8 20 22 22 20 7, 15 20., 9 2 13 2 25 5 2 17 ??, !*^\$

7 1 26 / 2 14 13 2 3 3 2 22 13 23 / 11 17 2 26 1 9 2 22 12 / 3 1 22 13 3 21 3 22,

1 / 5 2 15 / 12 21 / 11 17 2 26 2 22 12 / 23 21 19, / 20 26 / 20 / 13 7 17 1 26
12 25 1 26 / 15 1 24 12, / 12 7 2 / 13 1 12 23 / 21 24 / 26 20 8 20 22 22 20
7, 16 1 12 7 / ! % : / 7 2 20 8 23 / 15 19 22 26 / 20 22 9 / 11 3 2 22 12 23 /
21 24 / 20 25 25 19 22 1 12 1 21 22, / 20 22 9 / 20 3 26 21 / 20 5 20 19 12 /
@ %, ; ; ; / 5 20 3 2 26 / 21 24 / 13 21 12 12 21 22.

16.12. / 26 7 2 17 25 20 22

Message 1

3 12 13. / 18 20 25 2 26 / 15 1 8 1 22

1 17 2 6 19 2 26 12 / 12 7 2 / ! @ & 12 7 / 19 26 13 12 / 12 21 / 20 9 8 20 22 13
2 / 12 21 / 12 7 2 / 20 11 11 21 25 20 12 12 21 14 / 13 21 19 17 12 / 7 21 19 26 2
/ 5 23 / 22 1 15 7 12 24 20 3 3 / 21 22 / 20 11 17 1 3 / & 12 7, / ! * ^ %.

19. 26. / 15 17 20 22 12, 3 12. / 15 2 22 2 17 20 3 13 21 25 25 20 22 9

Answer Key

Message One

Line 1

SAVANNAH, GA., December 22, 1864

Line 2

His Excellency President LINCOLN:

Line 3

I beg to present you, as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah, with 150 heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, and also about 25,000 bales of cotton.

Line 4

W.T. Sherman

Message Two

Line 1

Ltc. James Givin

Line 2

I request the 127th USCT to advance to the Appomattox Court House by nightfall on April 7th, 1865

Line 3

U.S. Grant, Lt. General Command.