

Break the Code

Many spies of the American Revolution used secret codes when writing messages. Some spies wrote in foreign languages, others left out letters, and some even used invisible ink. Below is a familiar message about the Revolution that is written in a code actually used by an American spy for the British. Write the message on the lines provided.

Hint: A=Z, B=Y, etc.

“Orhgvm, nb xsrowivm, zmw blf hszoo svzi
 Lu gsv nrwmrtsg irwv lu Kzfo Iveviv,
 Lm gsv vrtsgvvmgs lu Zkiro, rm Hvevmgb-urev;
 Sziwob z nzm rh mld zorev
 Dsl ivnvnyvih gszg uznlfh wzb zmw bvzi.”
 –yb Svmb Dzwhdligs Olmtuvoold



Now it's your turn. Use letters, numbers, or symbols to create your own code on another piece of paper. Write a secret message on the lines below. Pass your message to a friend and see whether he or she can break it.

Bonus Box: Some spies just left out letters in a word to make it difficult to read. Write a secret message on another piece of paper using this method. Give it to a friend to try to decode.

Answer Key

Page 56

The coded message is this:

"Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year."
—by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow