

# BLETCHLEY RIDDLE OF THE WEEK

## Attacking Caesar's Shift

Welcome code-breakers. Try your hand at this one:

J LXVYDCNA FXDUM MNBNAEN CX KN  
LJUUNM RWCNUURPNWC RO RC LXDUM  
MNLNREN J QDVJW RWCX KNURNERWP  
CQJC RC RB QDVJW

-JUJW CDARWP

Need a tad more information? Very well.

This is an example of a 2,000-year-old cipher known as the Caesar Shift. To encipher a message with the Caesar Shift, you simply shift each letter of your message down the alphabet some set number of places. For a Caesar Shift of one, A becomes B, B becomes C, and so on. For a shift of two, A becomes C, B becomes D.

Say we're using a Caesar Shift of 4. You might find it quite useful to create a table with both your plain and cipher alphabets:

Caesar Shift=4				plain alphabet																					
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D

CIPHER ALPHABET

Turn these words from cipher to plain text:

CIPHER TEXT	plain text
XLI	_____
PSRHSR	_____
WIGVIX	_____

Got it? Well done.

Now, to decipher a Caesar Shift message, you must figure out the number of places the letters have been shifted. One strategy is to check every possible solution. There are only twenty-five Caesar shifts, since a shift of twenty-six gets you back where you began.

A better idea: use clues in the message. Look at the first J in the cipher. How many one-letter words are there in English? How many places would you need to shift from each of those words to get to J? Which of these solutions turns other enciphered words into plain English? As you figure out the cipher alphabet, fill it in here:

Caesar Shift =				plain alphabet																					
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z

CIPHER ALPHABET

And now you're ready to crack the cipher:

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