

Ancient Mediterranean Cryptography

History Of Cryptography · Answer Key · 15 Questions

1. Which Spartan device used a strip of parchment wrapped around a cylinder to hide a message?

- A) Scytale**
- B) Tabula Recta
- C) Atbash
- D) Polybius Square

2. The Polybius Square, developed by a Greek historian, represents letters as coordinates of what?

- A) Geometric shapes
- B) Numerical grid positions**
- C) Musical notes
- D) Constellation patterns

3. Which ancient scholar is credited with creating the Polybius Square, a precursor to modern telegraphy?

- A) Herodotus
- B) Aristotle
- C) Polybius**
- D) Plato

4. The Atbash cipher, used by Hebrew scribes, is a monoalphabetic substitution cipher based on what method?

- A) Caesar shifts
- B) Alphabet reversal**
- C) Vowel removal
- D) Word rearrangement

5. In a Caesar cipher, what is the standard shift value traditionally associated with Julius Caesar?

- A) 1
- B) 3**
- C) 5
- D) 7

6. The 'Aeneas Tacticus' is one of the earliest known Greek treatises primarily focused on what topic?

- A) Poetry
- B) Naval warfare
- C) Military communication and codes**
- D) Agricultural taxation

7. What physical material was the Scytale parchment typically wrapped around to ensure the correct diameter?

- A) A wooden rod**
- B) A marble pillar
- C) A bronze sword
- D) A ceramic vase

8. Which method of steganography involved shaving a slave's head, tattooing a message, and waiting for hair to regrow?

- A) The Spartan Scytale
- B) Histiaeus's message**
- C) The Atbash method
- D) The Clandestine Tablet

9. The Caesar cipher is categorized as which type of cryptographic system?

- A) Transposition cipher
- B) Substitution cipher**
- C) Polyalphabetic cipher
- D) Null cipher

10. Before the widespread use of paper, how were messages often concealed using wax tablets?

- A) Writing in invisible ink
- B) Carving beneath the wax**
- C) Using colored sand
- D) Embedding microchips

11. Which ancient leader utilized the Caesar cipher to protect sensitive military correspondence?

- A) Alexander the Great
- B) Julius Caesar**
- C) Augustus
- D) Pericles

12. What is the primary vulnerability of a monoalphabetic substitution cipher like the Caesar cipher?

- A) Frequency analysis**
- B) Lack of keys
- C) Complexity of encryption
- D) Requirement for hardware

13. During the Peloponnesian War, the Spartan Scytale was primarily used to communicate between whom?

- A) Soldiers and citizens
- B) Ephors and generals**
- C) The Oracle and priests
- D) Merchants and sailors

14. Which term describes the practice of hiding the existence of a message, rather than scrambling its content?

- A) Cryptography
- B) Steganography**
- C) Cryptanalysis
- D) Decoding

15. The Greek historian Herodotus recorded the use of 'wax-covered tablets' to hide what kind of information?

- A) Secret political instructions**
- B) Temple tax records
- C) Personal letters
- D) Philosophical theories