Every player has different skills, interests, and needs, so a game designer needs to make sure they build games with different kinds of puzzles. You want your game to feel like a challenge but not feel impossible. Here are some core principles to remember when designing puzzles:

- Make the goal clear and easy to understand
- Give the player a clear starting point for the game
- Help players know when they are making progress
- Make early puzzles easier and later puzzles more difficult
- Have other things for players to do if they get stuck on something
- Build small puzzles that lead up to a bigger one
- Give hints to keep players interested
- Consider the role of emotions at different points

The next pages have templates for three different types of puzzles. Choose one to make another puzzle for your escape game.

- Masonic Cipher
- Word Search
- Secret Decoder

Games Have Puzzles

Masonic Cipher

A Masonic (or pigpen) cipher is a type of substitution puzzle where you replace letters with symbols made out of lines and dots.

To encode a message:
1. Write a word or phrase on a separate sheet of paper
2. Use the key below to find the symbol for each letter. For example, A is ⌐ and V is ⋀
3. Give your message to a friend to see if they can decode it!

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
```

My Message:

Secret Decoder

This secret decoder is another type of substitution cipher. Cut out the circles on the next page, line them up, then connect them with a fastener.

TO DECODE A MESSAGE

1. Find the secret key symbol
2. Line up the letter **A** with the key
3. Find each symbol in the message on the outer circle and write down the matching letter from the inner circle

TO ENCODE A MESSAGE

1. Choose a symbol to be the key
2. Line up the letter **A** with the key
3. To write the message, find the letter you want on the inner circle and write down the matching symbol from the outer circle
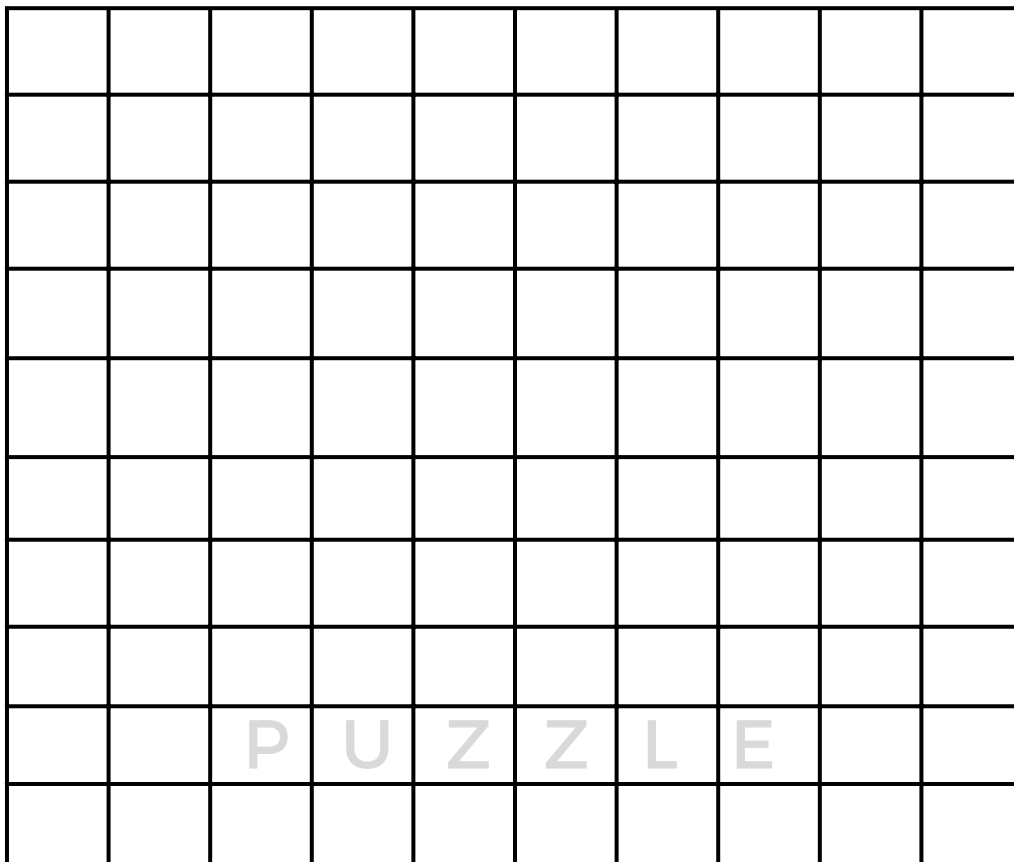
Conundrum Escapes

ESCAPE ROOM CAMP
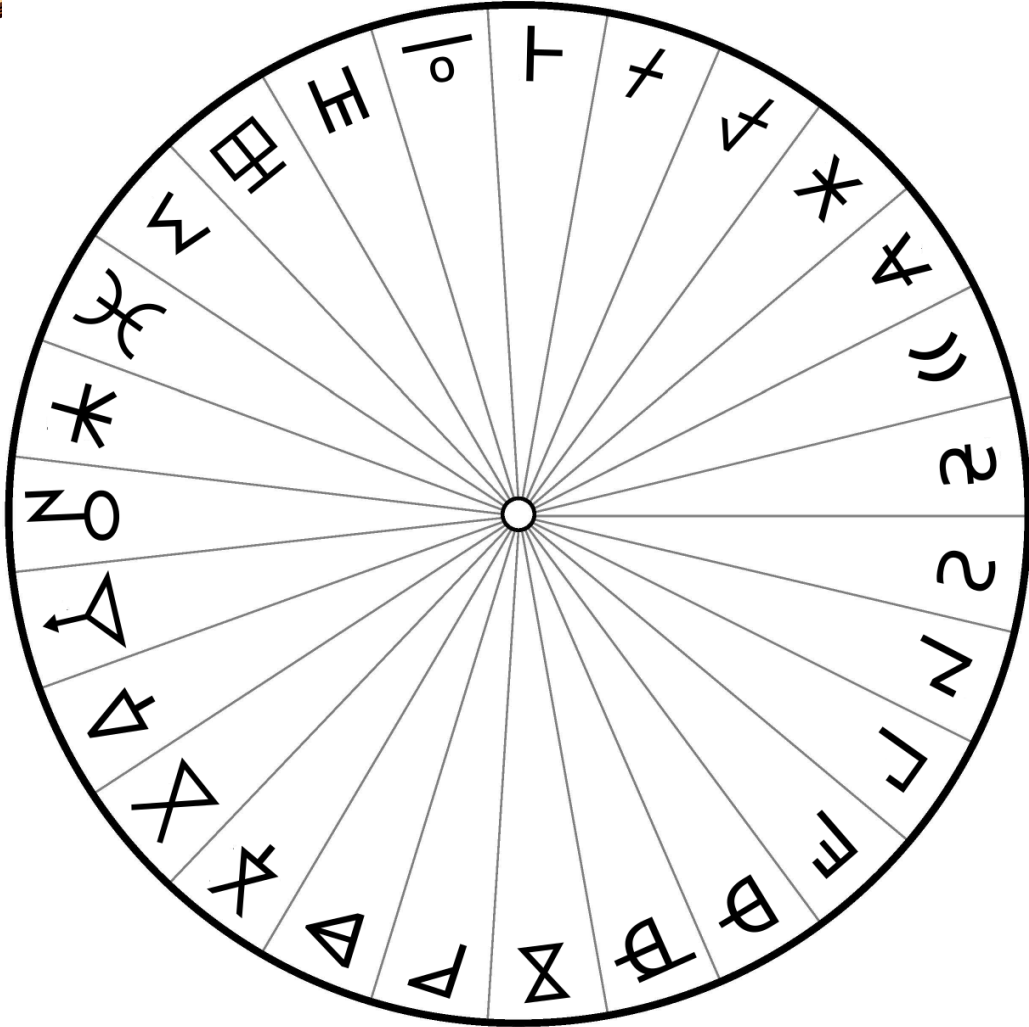
Word Search

A word search is a kind of masking puzzle, where the codes (key words) are hidden (masked) by letters.

1. Choose 5 key words that are related to your game's theme. Each one needs to be shorter than 10 letters. Write the key words at the bottom of the page.
2. Write a key word in the grid, vertically, horizontally, or diagonally, one letter per space. Repeat for each word.
3. Fill in random letters in the empty spaces.

P U Z Z L E

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6. PUZZLE