

Symbol substitution

A common game mechanic used in escape rooms is the symbol substitution. It means that the game designer will use symbols to represent letters or words.

Material required

- A cipher disk or grid
- Paper and pencil

Possible uses

- You could ask students to find a clue using a symbol-based code. This can be done with a cipher disk or grid, in which they will need to match a symbol with a letter in order to find the translation of a symbol code.
- You could also use an existing code such as morse or braille, especially if it fits your scenario. Some codes can use other signals than writing (light, color, sound, etc.).

Possible restrictions

- Some students might have more difficulties with symbol substitution.
- It is important to keep your pedagogical objectives in mind and we advise to use a code that fits in your scenario (e.g., if you are lost at sea in a boat, use morse code)

Is it inclusive for SLD?

Symbol substitution can add a challenge for students with SLDs, especially those who have reading and writing difficulties. When designing a symbol substitution activity, provide readable symbols in the right order and size, and avoid scattering pieces of the sentence all over the room. In general, try to use this only for short sentences so they don't spend too much time on this task. Using a code which doesn't involve reading might also be a good option.

