



Top Secret: A Handbook of Codes, Ciphers and Secret Writing

Paul B. Janeczko (Editor) , Jenna Lareau (Illustrator)

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"The author's upbeat, positive tone is refreshing and his enthusiasm about his topic is contagious." — SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL (starred review)

Pssst! Do you know the difference between a code and a cipher? Can you tell a St. Cyr slide from a Cardano grille? Did you know that the discovery of a substitution cipher caused Mary Queen of Scots to lose her head? Don't look now, but packed into this practical field guide is everything a young person needs to know about the art of concealment - making and breaking codes, mastering cipher systems, and experimenting with secret writing. Offering plenty of hands-on practice sessions, tips for creating a code-making kit, sidebars on secret codes in history, and an amusing pair of spies to illustrate techniques, Paul B. Janeczko's tantalizing TOP SECRET won't stay a secret for long.

Top Secret: A Handbook of Codes, Ciphers and Secret Writing Details

Date : Published April 11th 2006 by Candlewick Press (first published April 12th 2004)

ISBN : 9780763629724

Author : Paul B. Janeczko (Editor) , Jenna Lareau (Illustrator)

Format : Paperback 144 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, How To, Childrens, Middle Grade, Science, Mathematics

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From Reader Review Top Secret: A Handbook of Codes, Ciphers and Secret Writing for online ebook

Josie Arrowsmith says

Written for kids, and very easy to understand different codes and ciphers. A really fun book to read with my kids, and fun to have moments to practice making and breaking codes.

Tnb says

It contained a good amount of information but it was quite unclear at times. It did contain good examples and explanations so I hope that kids would walk away from reading it both entertained, intrigued and curious about human ingenuity and strategic thinking throughout history.

Michelle Moses says

I'm glad my son brought this book home from the school library for me. It was thoughtful of him and I had an interesting, easy read.

Linda says

What a fun read! The basics of coding and ciphering are clearly presented, and the bit of history thrown in is most appreciated.

Mayrocks says

I found this book very fascinating. it gave me tons of information on codes, ciphers, and stories of how this secret writing helped during times of war. im totally going to use one of those codes with my friends!!

Goose says

Sure, it's a book for little kids. It has 14-point font, cartoon illustrations, and easy language, but it also has little bits of history (the interesting kind) and a lot of ciphers to practice with friends. Which is exactly my plan. (I'm coming for you, Jean!)

Terry Huffman says

this is a good book and so cool to learn all of the cool new ciphers

Stacie Alexander says

Janeczko, P. B. (2004). *Top secret: A handbook of codes, ciphers, and secret writing*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Citation by: Stacie Alexander

Type of reference: Handbook

Call Number: Ref 652

Content/Scope: This handbook provides instruction on how to use codes, ciphers, and secret writing. It also includes history of the various codes, recipes for secret inks, and puzzles with answers. The book includes a bibliographical reference list and an index. The book covers a wide range of codes from Pig Latin to Zigzag ciphers.

Accuracy/Authority/Bias: The author provides references to sources and the book shows his in-depth research on the topic. Information is accurate.

Arrangement/Presentation: Information is arranged in a student-friendly format that includes history of the code or cipher along with example puzzles with answers. The book features black and white illustrations to add humor to the text. The author presents facts in an interesting manner to engage the reader.

Relation to other works: The library does not have other books about coding right now that specifically show how to use the codes. This book provides information as well as practice puzzles.

Accessibility/Diversity: This book is written for elementary readers but contains interesting facts and fun activities that students of all levels will enjoy. The book contains many different codes and ciphers for students explore and will appeal to students of all backgrounds.

Cost: \$14.50

Professional review of the item: Suite, C., & Mandell, P. L. (2004). *Top secret: A handbook of codes, ciphers, and secret writing*. *School Library Journal*, 50(5), 170.

Kate says

An easy and fun introduction to codes and ciphers. Plus, I learned the difference between a code and a cipher, so I'd call that a definite win.

Donna Zigmont says

I really liked this book. I'm currently playing a murder mystery game and it involves the use of codes and ciphers to solve some of the clues. It helped a lot. found it very interesting.

Nancy Meservier says

Top Secret is a fascinating book about secret codes for kids. The book is divided into three sections. The first focuses on making many different kinds of codes and ciphers. The second section then focuses on the breaking of those codes. The third section focuses on different ways to conceal codes. Paul Janeczko writes in a way that is very inviting to children. It's obvious that he shares a great love for codes and cipher and that enthusiasm can be infectious. Every section that introduces a new type of code and cipher includes clear directions and examples for children to try on their own. The solutions can be found in the back. The book is scattered with various illustrations by Jeanna LaReau that feature a male and female spy making and breaking codes. They are attractive and do a good job of emphasizing the feeling of teamwork that Janeczko is trying to emphasize in this book. There is also a history element to this book as the author gives background information on some of the codes, as well as highlights famous spies from history. The historical aspect, although not the focus of the book, does a good job on grounding the activities in real life. Top Secret is a well put together book and an appropriate choice for clever children that want to learn more about codes, ciphers, and secret writing.

Note: This review was written for a class

Christian says

If I was an English teacher I would share this book with some students because some students might have imaginary minds so they might think they are spies.

RumBelle says

I read this to get ideas for a program I am doing at the library. It was a wonderful guide to not only the history of codes, but a wide variety of different types of codes and ciphers. Many of them would make excellent additions to my program. Some of the ones I enjoyed learning about were the Rosicrucian and the Playing Card codes. As a book to read itself it was fascinating, I learned a lot about cryptography.

Kym says

A fun very interesting book, only need about an hour with it and you can encipher and decipher codes with your friends.

My daughter and I had fun using the book cipher method for coded messages.

There are short stories of instances in history where codes and ciphers were used.

glcw dyb

(keyboard cipher used. For every letter I typed, the key stroke to the left was used. To decipher, look at your keyboard and look to the right of each letter. For letters on the far right of the keyboard, wrap to the first letter on the front of the line)

good luck!

Kim says

great rainy day book! full of all sorts of secret codes and fun things to do
