Baker Street *Elementary*

PRESENTS

"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"

Baker Street *Elementary*

THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON

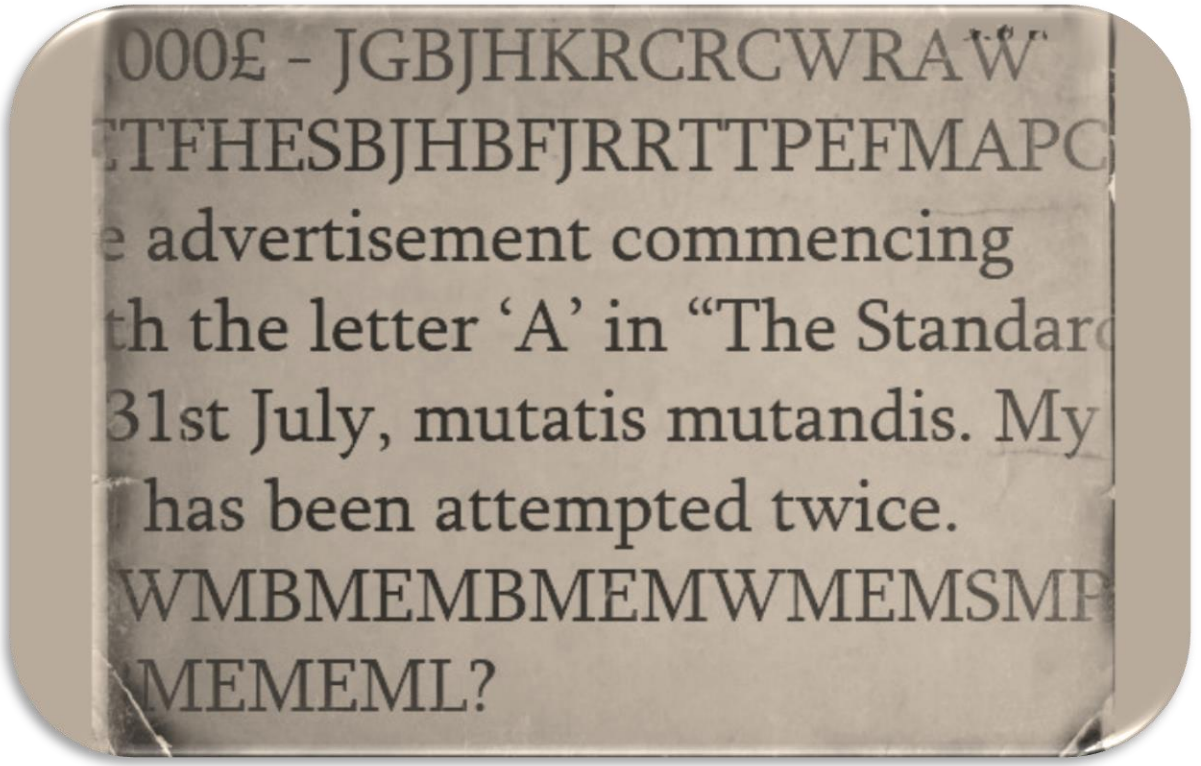
140 – SECRET MESSAGES IN THE CANON – SEPTEMBER, 2023

WELCOME TO TOPIC NUMBER # 140… TODAY WE WILL BE LOOKING AT CODES AND CIPHERS USED IN OUR STORIES.

Copyright 2023, Fay, Mason, Mason

IN THE VALLEY OF FEAR AND 'THE ADVENTURE OF THE DANCING MEN,' YOU MUST BREAK A CODE TO SOLVE A CASE.

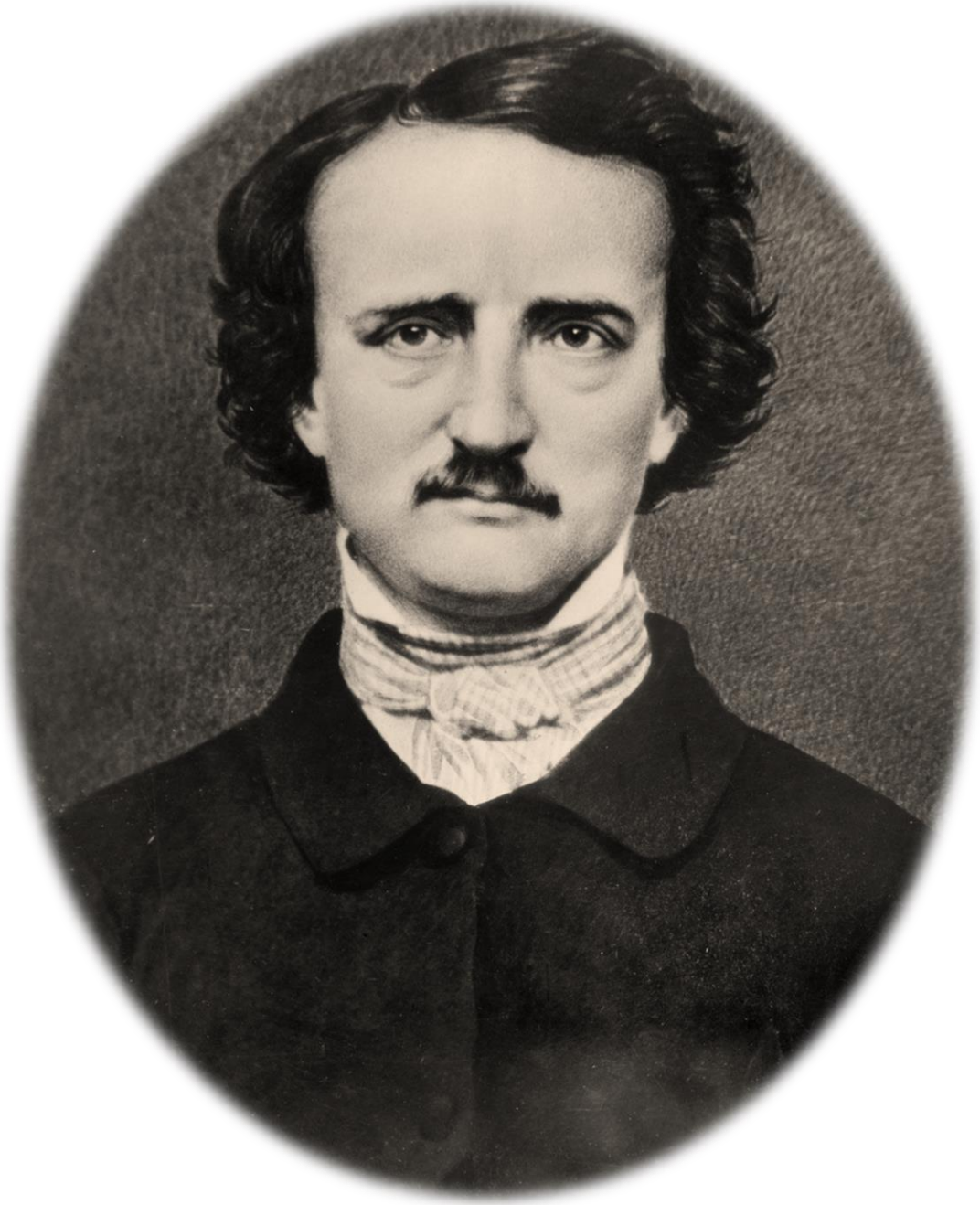
YOU TELL ME YOU PRACTICED YOUR DECODING SKILLS BY READING SIMILAR MESSAGES IN THE NEWSPAPER WHERE PEOPLE WOULD SEND SECRET NOTES IN PRIVATE ADS.



SENDING AND READING CODED MESSAGES IN THE NEWSPAPERS WAS A POPULAR PASTIME IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND… PUBLIC INTEREST GREW, IN PART, FROM EAGER ALLAN POE'S OWN STUDY AND USE OF CIPHERS, OR SECRET WRITING.

CEM. – I e g c n e h d n h a o a s s
b i s e r c g d h l i h u s a c c b k
h e i e .

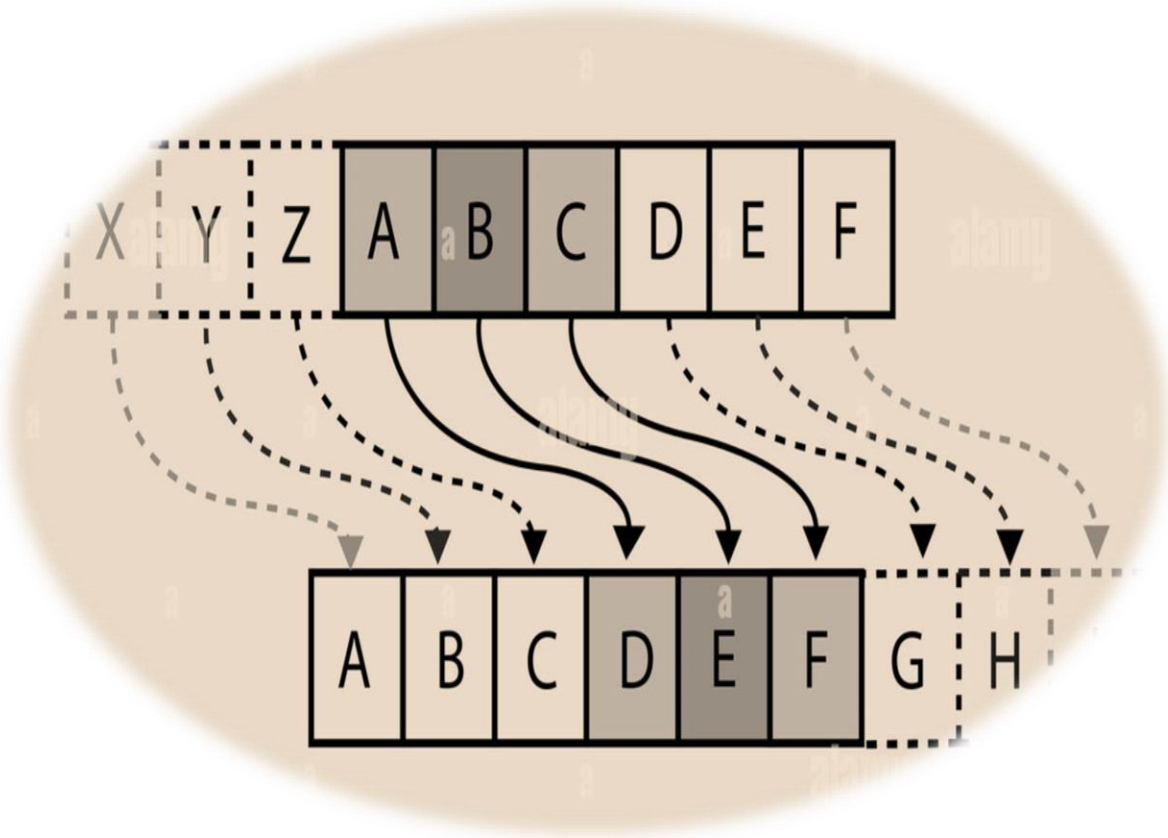
CEM. – Key 11. – L k e o i s v s
t e s o e e m l d y o d b v e n s e
d t p l i a a n a e g l m s l y h b r
m n e b e m r s e a o u t f W e y
r w o i h o a e u v n l e y e.



IN HIS ESSAY SERIES 'A FEW WORDS ON SECRET WRITING,' POE DISCUSSED THE USE OF SUBSTITUTION CODES, WHICH HE USED IN HIS SHORT STORY 'THE GOLD BUG' AND CHALLENGED READERS TO SUBMIT MESSAGES FOR HIM TO DECIPHER.

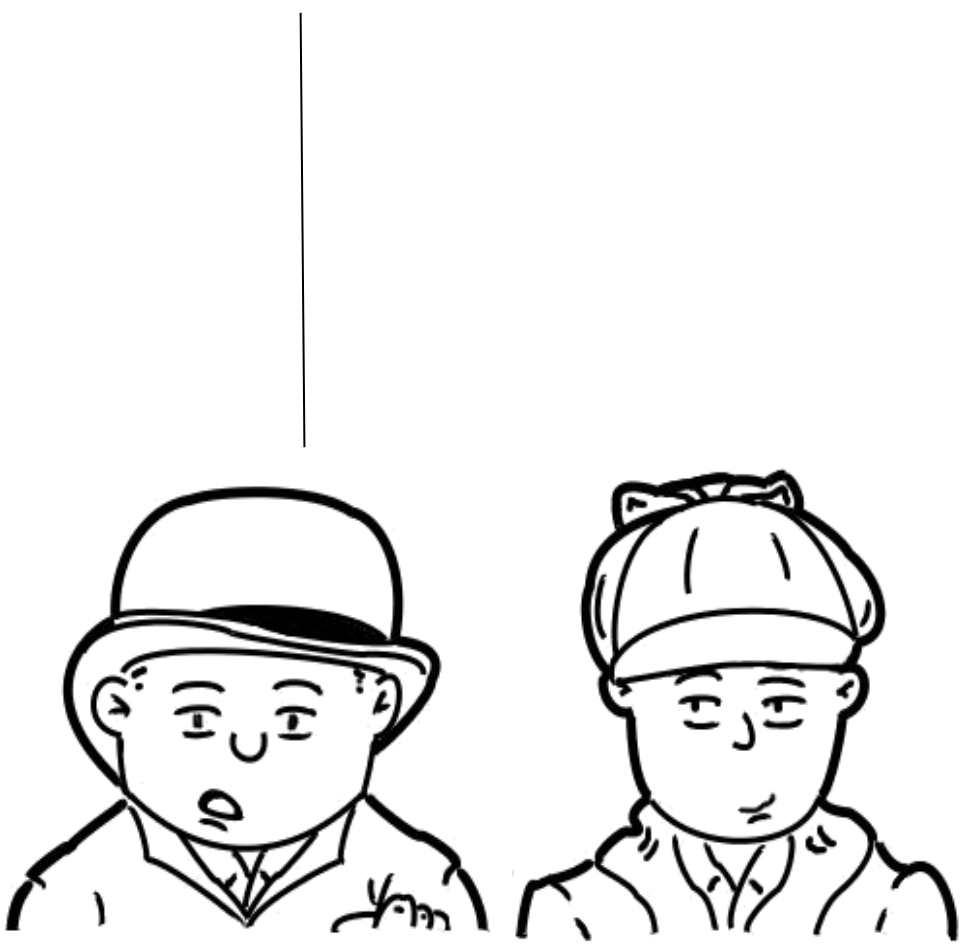
SUBSTITUTION CODES INVOLVE USING A LINE OF 26 LETTERS OR SYMBOLS, LIKE IN 'THE ADVENTURE OF THE DANCING MEN' WHERE THE ALPHABET IS WRITTEN UNDERNEATH, AND THE MESSAGE IS THEN REWRITTEN USING THE NEW LETTERS OR SYMBOLS.

FOR EXAMPLE, USING THE LATIN PHRASE 'SAUVITER IN MODO, FORTITER IN RE' ('GENTLE IN MANNER, FIRM IN DEED'), THE NEW, CODED, ALPHABET (OR 'KEY') WOULD BE:



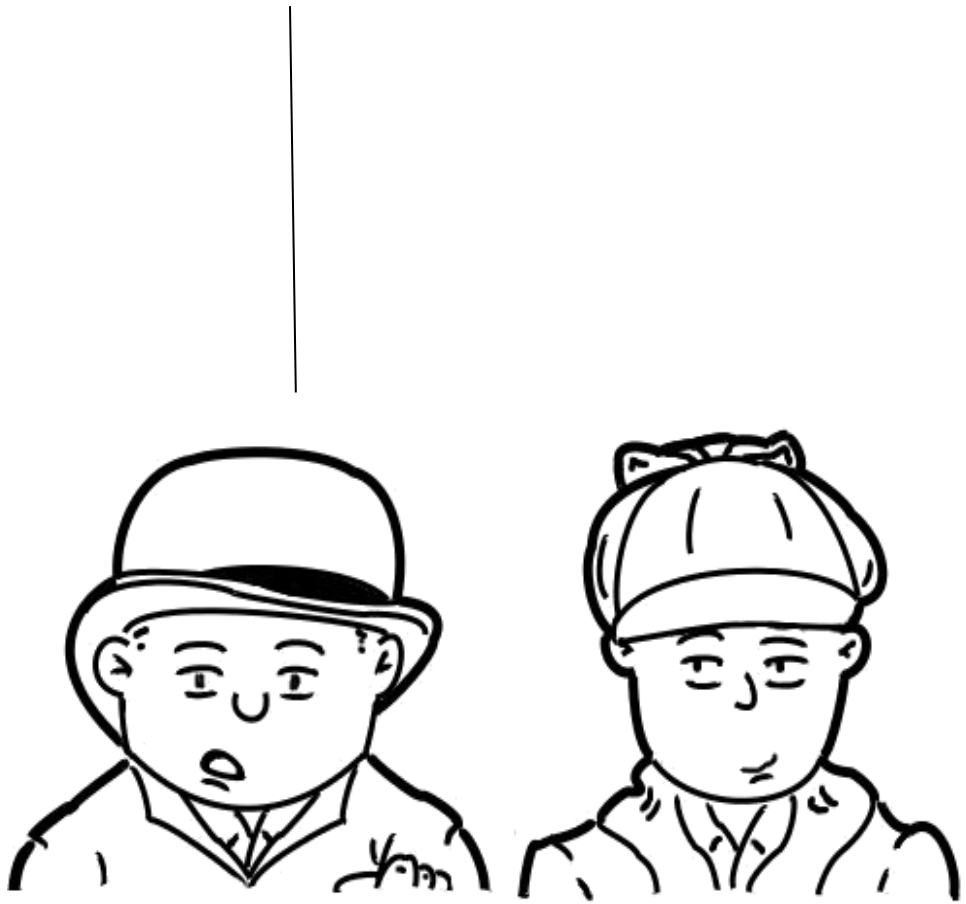
SAUVITERINMODOFORTITERINRE

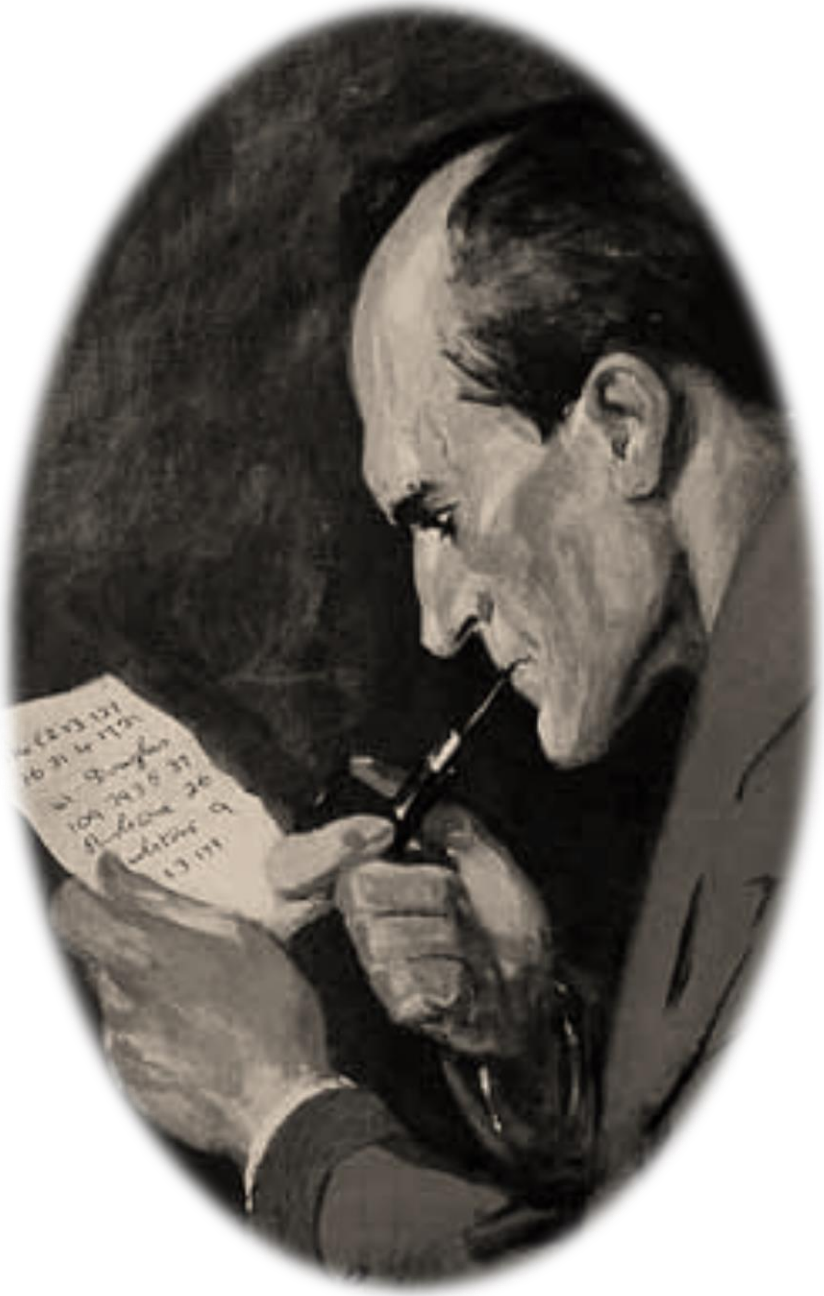
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ



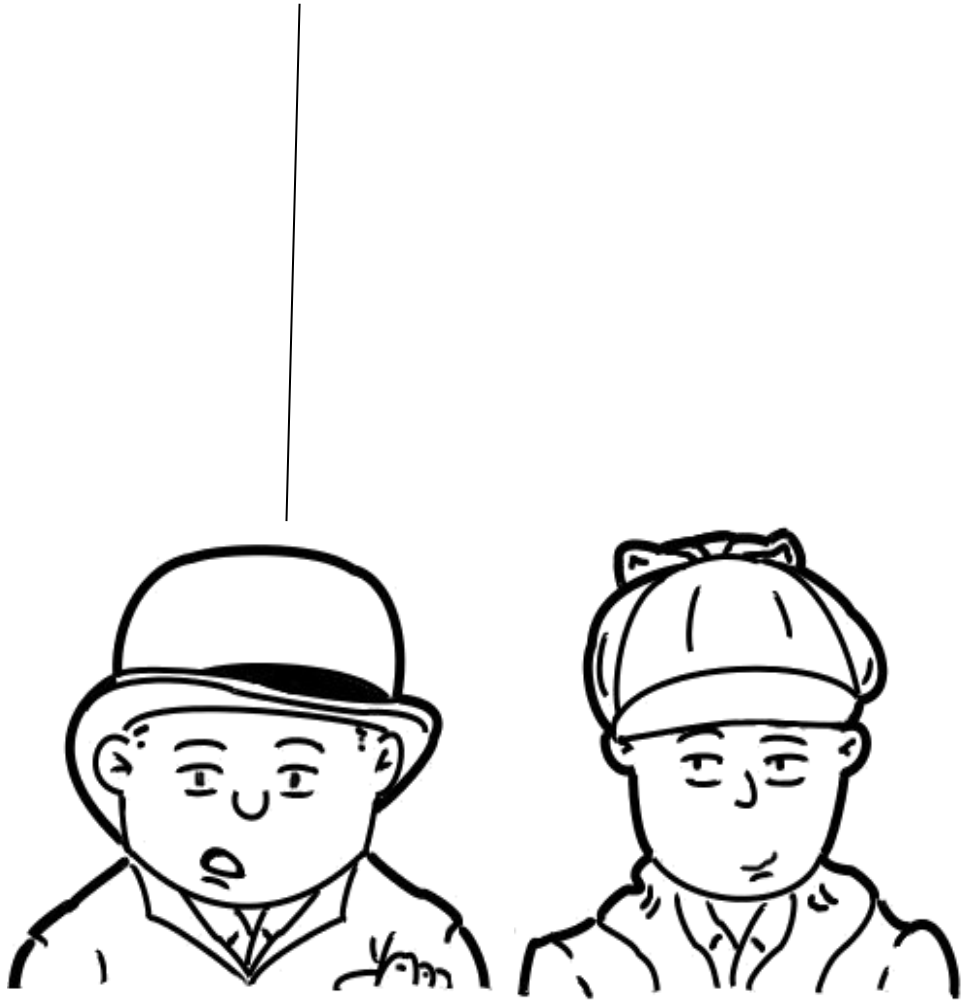
'MY NAME IS SHERLOCK HOLMES' WOULD BECOME 'DR OSDI II IRITOFUM RFODII.' BECAUSE SOME LETTERS HAVE THE SAME CODED SYMBOL, THE MESSAGE IS HARDER TO DECIPHER, BUT EASY WITH THE KEY.

WITHOUT THE KEY, DECODING A MESSAGE REQUIRES IDENTIFYING THE MOST FREQUENTLY USED LETTERS OR SYMBOLS IN THE MESSAGE AND USING THEM TO GUESS WHICH REPRESENT THE MOST FREQUENT LETTERS IN ENGLISH (SUCH AS THE LETTER E).

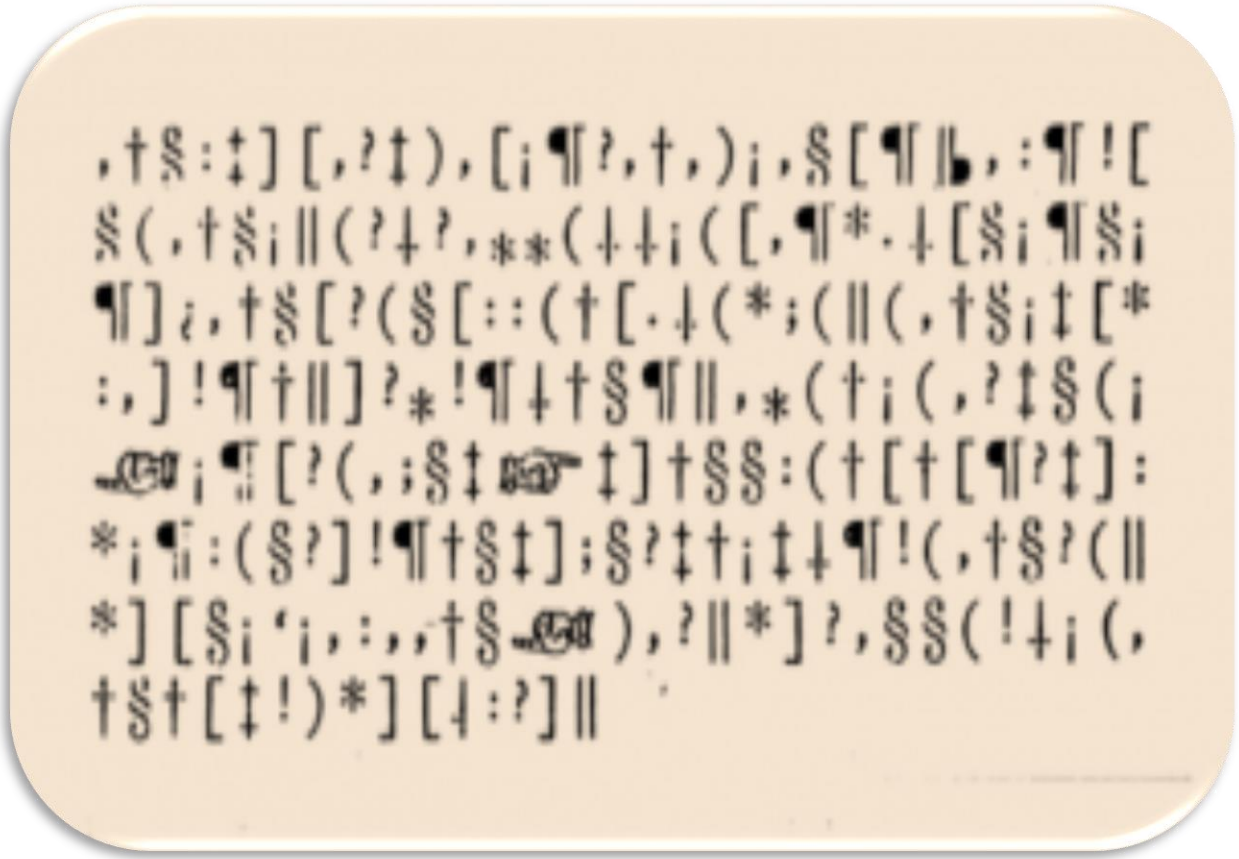




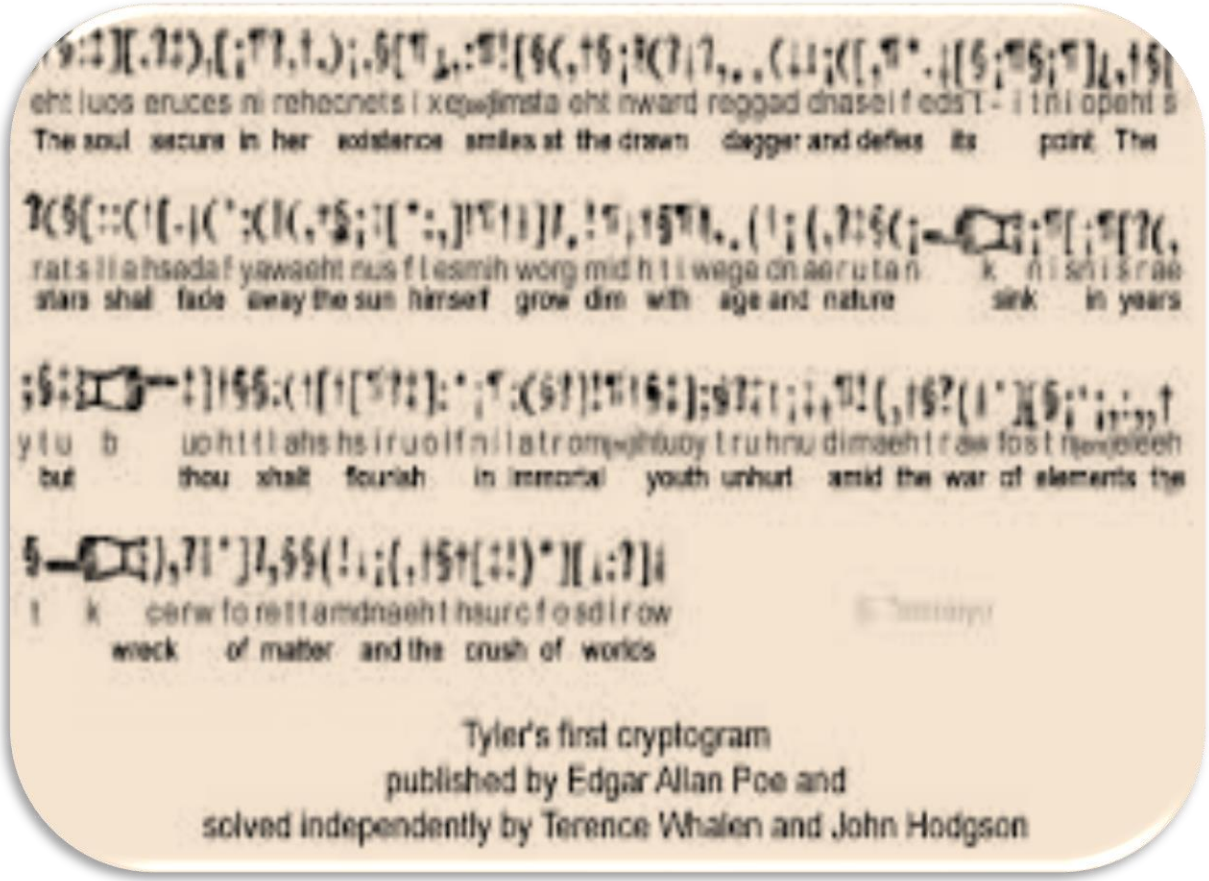
USING TRIAL AND ERROR, THE DECODER GUESSES AT THE LETTERS AND MESSAGE UNTIL IT MAKES SENSE.



IN 1841, POE ANNOUNCED HE HAD MANAGED TO CRACK ALL THE MESSAGES RECEIVED OVER A TWO-YEAR PERIOD EXCEPT TWO SUBMITTED BY W.B. TYLER.



ONE OF THESE WAS NOT SOLVED UNTIL 2000 (ALMOST 160 YEARS LATER) BY A CANADIAN COMPUTER EXPERT.



Tyler's first cryptogram
published by Edgar Allan Poe and
solved independently by Terence Whalen and John Hodgson

COMPUTERS AND OTHER MACHINES MADE CODES MUCH MORE COMPLEX AND MORE DIFFICULT TO DECIPHER.

ode	Char	Code	Char	Code	Char	Code	Char	Code	Char	Code	Char
32	(space)	48	0	64	@	80	P	96	`	112	p
33	!	49	1	65	A	81	Q	97	a	113	q
34	"	50	2	66	B	82	R	98	b	114	r
35	#	51	3	67	C	83	S	99	c	115	s
36	$	52	4	68	D	84	T	100	d	116	t
37	%	53	5	69	E	85	U	101	e	117	u
38	&	54	6	70	F	86	V	102	f	118	v
39	'	55	7	71	G	87	W	103	g	119	w
40	(	56	8	72	H	88	X	104	h	120	x
41	)	57	9	73	I	89	Y	105	i	121	y
42	*	58	:	74	J	90	Z	106	j	122	z
43	+	59	;	75	K	91	[	107	k	123	{
44	,	60	<	76	L	92	\	108	l	124	|
45	-	61	=	77	M	93	]	109	m	125	}
46	.	62	>	78	N	94	^	110	n	126	~
7	/	63	?	79	O	95	_	111	o	127	(backsp

PERHAPS THE MOST FAMOUS WAS THE ENIGMA MACHINE DEVELOPED BY GERMANY DURING WORLD WAR II… TODAY, MESSAGES CAN EVEN BE HIDDEN IN COMPUTER PICTURES.

USING THE SUBSTITUTION CODE ABOVE, CAN YOU DECIPHER THIS FAMOUS SHERLOCK HOLMES QUOTE?

RFE MOFI DR DITRFVI, ISTIFO

IT WORKS OUT TO…

YOU KNOW MY METHODS, WATSON.

SO, WE HAVE COMPLETED TOPIC # 140 IN OUR SERIES…

IN TOPIC # 140, WE WILL BE LOOKING AT BEEKEEPING, ONE OF MY PASSIONS IN OUR STORIES.

Baker Street *Elementary*

"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:
JOE FAY
LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE
RUSTY MASON &
STEVE MASON