

Carving with runes

1. Take a piece of Plasticine and make it into a thin flat sheet.
2. Pick up a pencil or cocktail stick and write the following letters in the Plasticine.

R C G P S B O

3. Now find the runes for these letters and write them in the Plasticine too.
4. Is it easier to carve the letters in the ordinary alphabet or in runes?



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5. Devise a test to find out if it is quicker to carve a message in runes than in the ordinary alphabet.



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6. Check your test with your teacher.

7. If your teacher approves your test, try it. What does your test show?



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Age range

- Years 3/4 (SP4/5).
- Years 5/6 (SP6/7).

Resources

Copies of the worksheet. Copies of worksheet **3A**, lumps of Plasticine, pencils or cocktail sticks (depending on the behaviour of the students), stopclock (optional).

Using the worksheet

It has been suggested that runes are easier to carve than ordinary letters of the alphabet. For example, it is thought to be more difficult to carve curves such as in C and O than it is to carve straight lines as seen in the runes. Runes were carved in hard substances such as stone or wood. In this activity Plasticine is substituted for the hard material. When the students come to think up their tests you may find that some write out a sentence in the ordinary alphabet and in runes, and then wish two people to write them at the same time, or they may wish the same person to write both sentences and be timed with a stopwatch. You may allow either approach and talk about its advantages and disadvantages in the plenary session.

Younger students

Some students may need help in matching the runes to letters of the alphabet. In addition to speed, the students also need to consider whether the letters are clear and easy to read.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Carve letters and runes in Plasticine and make comparisons.
- Translate an English message into runes.
- Devise an experiment, perform it and draw conclusions.

Older students

The students can work on their own, but may work in pairs in the experiment if they wish. If many students have selected to use a stopclock you could gather their data on the board and see if it supports the statement that "messages can be carved more quickly and clearly with runes".

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The students can:

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- Translate an English message into runes.
- Devise an experiment, perform it and draw conclusions.