



Boat Activity – Gallops Island Secret Codes

During the Second World War, Gallops Island was home to the U. S. Navy Radio School. At this school young men learned to maintain radios and send and receive Morse code.

Samuel Morse invented the Morse system of telegraphy in the 1840's. Morse code is a simple way to represent the letters of the alphabet using patterns of long and short pulses. Each letter of the alphabet has a unique pattern assigned to it.

International Morse Code



British Post Office Morse Code Key & a railroad telegraph machine

Letter	Morse
A	.-
B	-...
C	-.-.
D	-..
E	.
F	..-.
G	-.-.
H
I	..
J	.-.-
K	-.-
L	.-..
M	--

Letter	Morse
N	-.
O	---
P	.-.-
Q	-.-.-
R	.-.
S	...
T	-
U	..-
V	...-
W	.-.-
X	-.-.-
Y	-.--
Z	--..

Digit	Morse
0	-----
1	.-----
2	..---
3	...--
4-
5
6	-....
7	--...
8	---..
9	----.

Punctuation Mark	Morse
Full-stop (period)	.-.-.-
Comma	--.-.-
Colon	---...
Question mark (query)	..-.-

"Gallops Island" in Morse code looks like this

-. .- .-. .-. --- .-. ... /-. .- .- ..

G A L L O P S / I I S L A N D

It would sound like this:

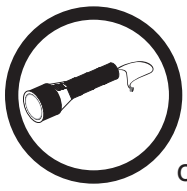
Dah-dah-dit, dit-dah, dit-dah-dit-dit, dit-dah-dit-dit, dah-dah-dah, dit-dah-dah-dit, dit-dit-dit / Dit-dit, Dit-dit-dit, dit-dah-dit-dit, dit-dah, dah-dit, dah-dit-dit

Test your skills! Could you be a radio programmer on Gallops Island? **Use the Morse code chart (on the opposite page) and try to decode these mystery messages.**

1) -. .. -.- ... / -- .- - .
 _____ / _____

2) -... .- -.-- -... . .-. .-. -.-

3) .-. .- -. .. --- / ... -.-. --- --- .-..
 _____ / _____



Explore on Your Own

Morse code can be sent by sound or by light. Ships at sea would use a giant searchlight to send Morse code messages to other nearby ships. You can try this with a friend and flashlights at night-time. Send light messages to each other by using 2 flashlights and the Morse code below. Turn your flashlight on and off quickly for each dot and leave it on a little longer for each dash.

What does it sound like? Each dash sounds like “dah” and each dot sounds like “dit.” When a radio operator sends Morse code for the letters “CQ,” it sounds like the following: **"Dah-Dit-Dah-Dit, Dah-Dah-Dit-Dah"**.

A **dash** (*Dah*) time is equal to three times the length of the **dot** (*Dit*).

You can make your own code to write secret messages with your friends. Use different symbols to represent the letters or mix up the alphabet and use a different letter for you code.