

Coding a Message

Name _____

One way to code and decode a message uses a cipher or secret code. The cipher consists of a grid of letters and a **key word**, such as ARTICHOKES—which was one of the words used by Thomas Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis. This key word is to be written over and over on the first line of a chart with no spaces between the words (see example).

Next the message to be coded is written out:

At the head of the Missouri. All well.

Then all punctuation and spaces between words are eliminated, like this:

ATTHEHEADOFTHEMISSOURIALLWELLATTHEHEAD OF THE

These **letters of the message** are written in the spaces in the second row of the chart.

Next, the cipher grid is used (see page 26). Locate the first letter in line #1 of the chart “A” by reading row “A” across the top of the cipher grid. Then find the first letter in line #2 of the chart “A” in the letters down the left side of the cipher grid. Then follow the column down and the row across to where these letters intercept on the grid; the letter at that place “B” is placed in the first space in line #3. The same process is followed for all the letters in the message.

When complete, the **“coded”** message can only be decoded by the person with the correct key word and grid.

EXAMPLE

A	R	T	I	C	H	O	K	E	S	A	R	T	I	C	H	O	K	E	S	A	R	T	I	C	H	O	K	E	S
A	T	T	H	E	H	E	A	D	O	F	T	H	E	M	I	S	S	O	U	R	I	A	L	L	W	E	L	L	A
b	k	m	q	h	p	t	l	i	g	g	k	a	n	p	q	g	c	v	m	s	&	u	u	o	d	t	w	q	

Now code your name using the **key word** “ARTICHOKES” and the cipher grid (Save this as it will be used later in another exercise).
