

How to Make Invisible Ink

Background Information: Spies in the American Revolution used invisible ink to secretly pass messages. The British used two types of invisible ink: the first was made visible when exposed to heat, the second when exposed to acid. Washington had John Jay create a different kind of ink.

Main Ideas:

- During the American Revolution, invisible ink was an important method of communication for spies on both sides.
- James Jay created an invisible ink system that used two chemicals. The first was used to write the message, the second was used to reveal it.

Skills:

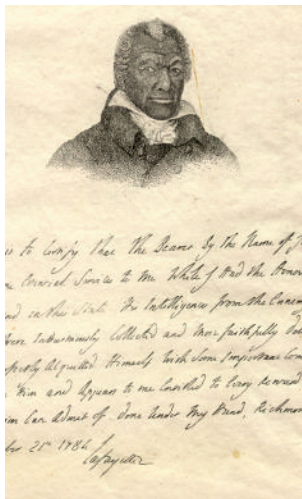
- Fine motor skills
- Primary source analysis

Questions to Consider:

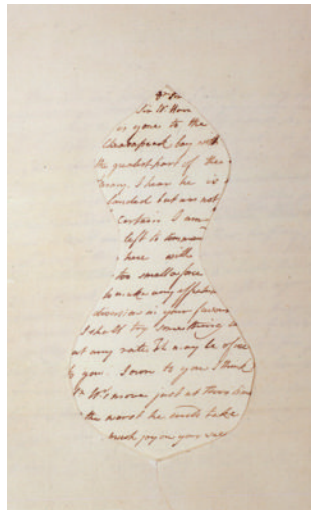
1. Why do you think Washington wanted a new invisible ink recipe?
2. Why were spies important in the American Revolution?



**Culper Spy
Code Book**



**Lafayette
Testimonial**



Mask Letter

Materials:

- 1/4 cup baking soda
- 1/4 cup water
- Grape juice
- Paper
- Something to write with

Explore more!

Read "**Spies, Dead Drops, and Invisible Ink,**" by John Nagy and "**George Washington, Spymaster**" for more information.

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Recipe courtesy of the book Invisible Ink: Spycraft of the American Revolution by John Nagy.



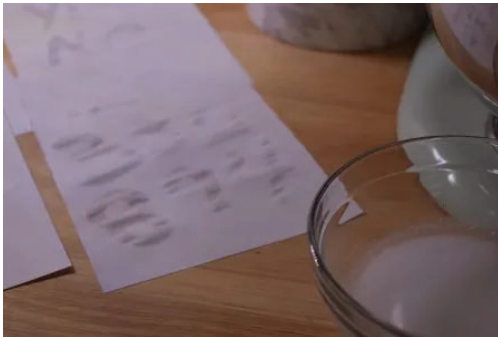
Step 2: Mix

- Mix 1/4 cup baking soda and 1/4 cup water



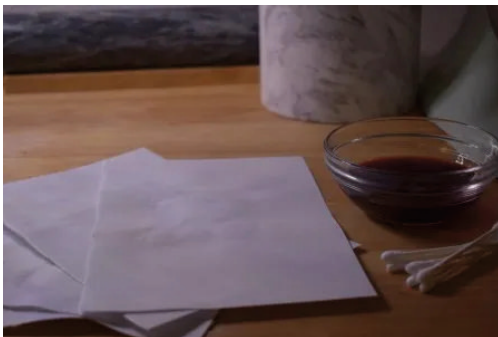
Step 2: Wet Your Brush

- Dip a cotton swab, toothpick, or paintbrush into the mixture



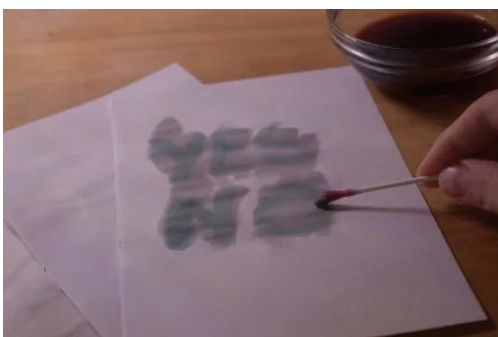
Step 3: Write Your Message

- Write a message on a white piece of paper and allow it to dry



Step 4: Apply the Decoding Stain

- Dip a cotton swab into grape juice concentrate or any dark juice and paint it over the invisible message



Step 5: Reveal the Message!

- Wait for your message to appear