



History from Home

SEMAPHORE FLAG COMMUNICATION



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Semaphore Flags

During the French Revolution, Claude Chappe invented the first mechanical optical telegraph or semaphore relay stations using a series of visual signals and rotating paddles. The message was encoded by the fixed position of paddles.

The Navy uses a form of semaphore signaling very similar to the one developed by Chappe. Visual signals are conveyed with hand-held flags or colored paddles. The signalman uses semaphore flags to convey a series of letters to another by extending his arms in various positions; the signal pattern resembles a clock face divided into 8 positions: up, down, out, high, low, for each of the left and right hands. Using the standard 26 letter alphabet, the sender spells out each word of the message or sends code letter groups.

Directions:

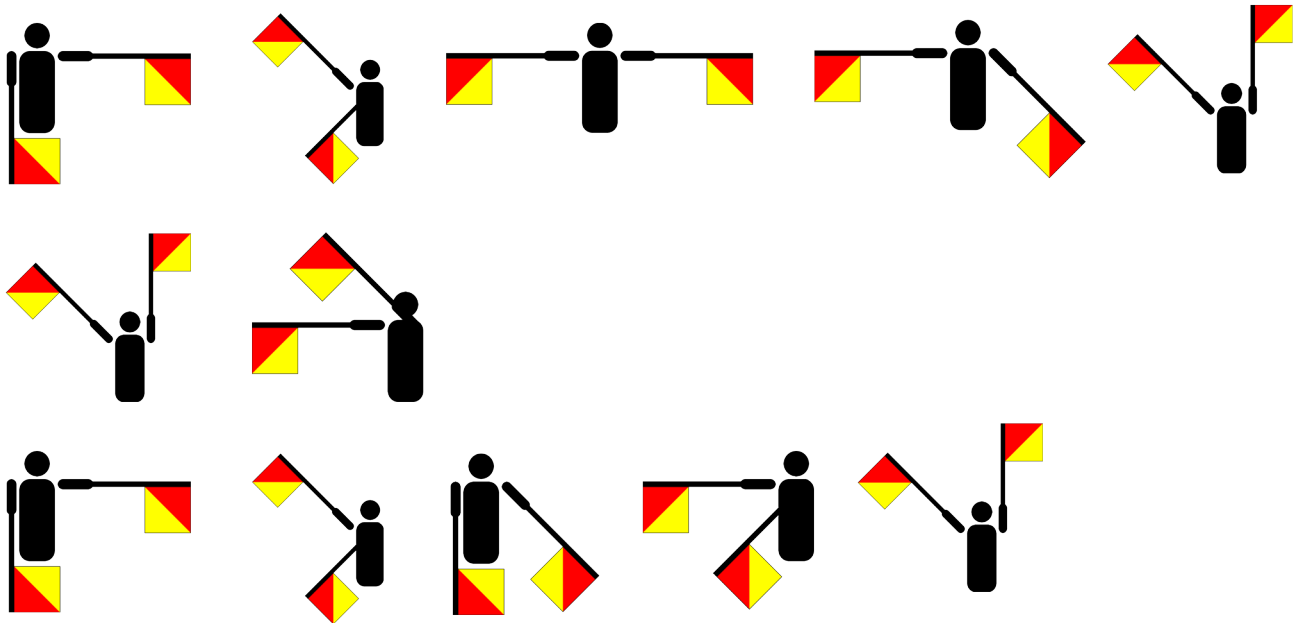
1. Use the Semaphore flag alphabet on the next page to help decode the message below. Use your own paper to write out a message to your friends and family!

Materials:

- Signal flag instruction and answer sheet
- Signal flag alphabet



Semaphore Flag Message:



Semaphore Flag Message Answer:

Semaphore Flag Alphabet

