## Morse Code

Samuel Morse devised a way to send messages using short and long taps on a signaller (sometimes called a key). This was connected to another signaller a distance away. At the other end, a person wearing earphones would receive these taps and write them down as dots and dashes. They would then convert them into a message.



This is an image of a *straight telegraph key.* We have several of these in our Education Loan Box collection.

It is an electrical switch used by a trained operator to send Morse code messages. When the switch is tapped it connects the electrical circuit and sends a pulse or signal. If it is held down it sends a long signal (a dash). A short tap sends a short signal (a dot). It was a very skilled job as it is easy to make mistakes.

# Activities

**A secret agent sends you this message.  Can you crack the code?**

| -- | ● | ● | - | | -●●● | -●-- | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |    |    |      |      |  |

| - | ●●●● | ● | | --- | ●-●● | -●● | |
|---|------|---|----|-----|------|-----|--|
|   |      |   |    |     |      |     |  |

| --- | ●- | -●- | | ●- | - | |
|-----|----|-----|----|----|---|--|
|     |    |     |    |    |   |  |

| -- | ●- | -●● | -● | ●● | --● | ●●●● | - |
|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|------|---|
|    |    |     |    |    |     |      |   |

**Work out the Morse code for this message or make up one of your own.**

| B | U | R | Y | | T | H | E | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |

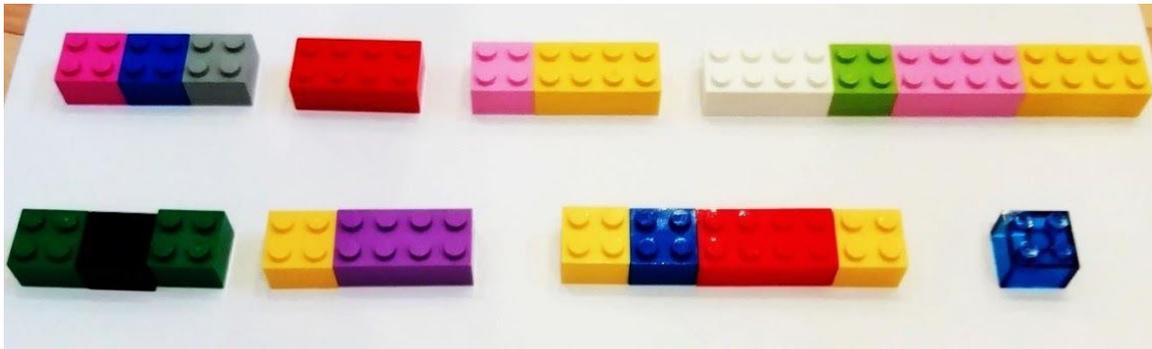| P | A | R | A | C | H | U | T | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

**Lego Morse code**

*Materials: Lego or other building bricks*

If you have some Lego bricks you could write your code in bricks and challenge someone else to decode it.  Use small bricks for dots and bigger ones for dashes.   Start each new word on a new line.

Can you work out the code in this Lego picture?  (2x2 bricks are dots and 2x4 bricks are dashes)
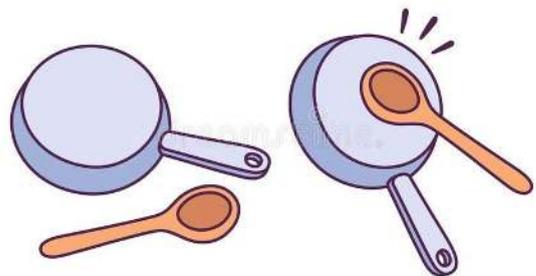


**Make some noise**

*Materials: noise makers!  Your body, a whistle, instruments, door bell, a pan and spoon*

Morse code doesn't have to be sent as an electronic signal.  You can do it by making long and short sounds (audibly).  Think about different ways that you can make noises using your body or other things you have at home.  Can you make long and short sounds making all of these different methods?  Is there another way you could use them to send codes?

Some things you could try are:

- Clapping
- Humming
- Stomping
- Blowing a whistle
- Playing a piano key
- Using a game buzzer
- Shutting a door
- Tapping a pan with a spoon



When you find a sound that works you could try and send a message to someone else.  Have fun!