

Overview of the lesson:

This lesson makes pupils aware of how some messages were sent by Morse code during the First World War.

Pupils use Morse code to send a message like soldiers did in the First World War.

Before undertaking this activity, pupils are likely to have:

- ◆ Made Morse code transmitters (see page 6)
- ◆ Understood that Morse code transmitters use simple electrical circuits
- ◆ Identified and named basic parts e.g. wires, bulbs, switches and buzzers
- ◆ Found out that before the electronic age people invented different methods of sending a message e.g. flashing mirrors, smoke signals etc
- ◆ Discovered that modern telecommunications can send messages very quickly over vast distances
- ◆ Explored archival images of General Post Office engineers setting up systems to transmit messages

Extension activities could include:

- ◆ **English, ICT:** Making up secret codes
- ◆ **English:** Developing drama and role play by reading stories based on the idea of sending secret messages in the First World War
- ◆ **History:** Researching the British Postal Museum & Archive online collections to find out more about secret messages in the First World War
- ◆ **Science, D&T:** Exploring other ways of sending signals e.g. light houses
- ◆ **Music:** Investigating messages in music e.g. Inspector Morse theme, drums patterns and durations
- ◆ **Maths:** Looking at mathematical patterns in codes; investigating distances to see how far messages could be transmitted

**To do:**

- ◆ Assemble Morse code transmitters
- ◆ Make a second room available for transmitting messages

Success criteria**By the end of the project**

- ◆ All will have increased knowledge of how some messages were transmitted in the First World War
- ◆ All will be familiar with the Morse code
- ◆ Most will have developed their understanding of electricity further
- ◆ Some will want to find out how other ways messages were transmitted

Key terms

Morse code
Transmitter

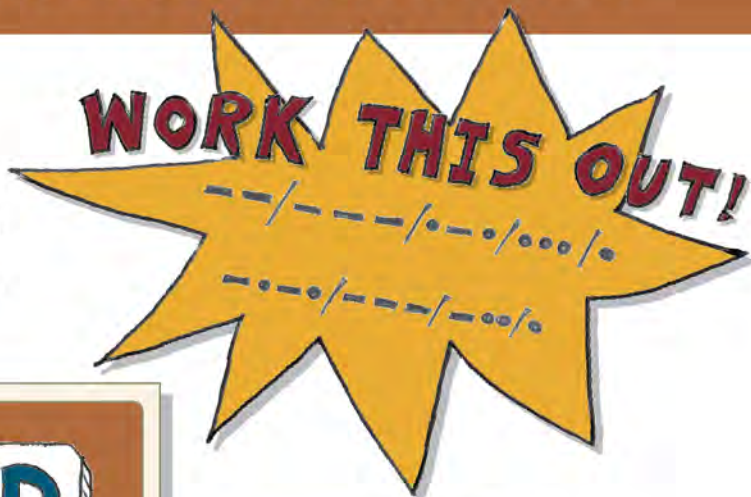
ACTIVITY

1

MAKE A MORSE CODE TRANSMITTER

Morse code

Morse code was used to deliver important messages during the First World War. It uses electrical signals to send messages based on short and long sounds or flashes of light that represent all the letters of the alphabet.



Did you know?
Samuel Morse, an American, invented the Morse code in 1838.



©Courtesy of BT heritage and archives

◀ A Morse key transmitter

A • —	B — •••	C — • — •	D — •• •
E •	F ••• — •	G — ••• — •	H •••• •
I ••	J • — •• — ••	K — • — • — •	L • — ••••
M — •• — ••	N — • — •	O — •• — •• — ••	P • — • — •• •
Q — • — • — • — •	R • — •••	S ••••	T — •••
U ••• — ••	V •••• — ••	W • — •• — ••	X — ••• — ••
Y — •• — •• — ••	Z — •• — •• •••		

ACTIVITY

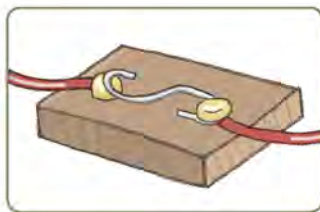
1

MAKE A MORSE CODE TRANSMITTER

Make this Morse code transmitter and send secret messages from one room to another!

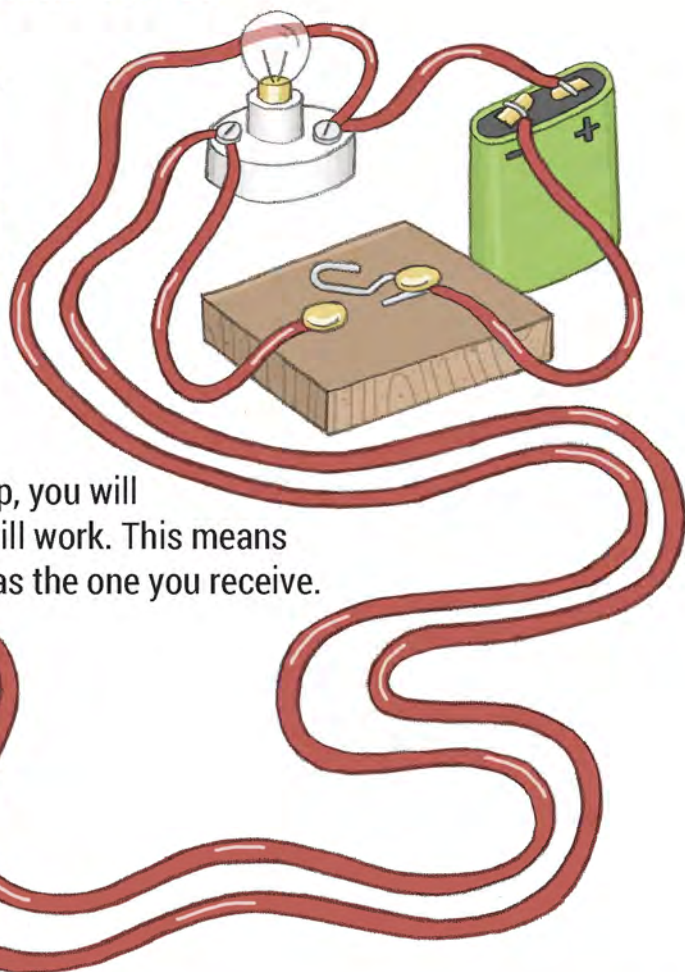
Step 1

Make 2 switches (see diagram) but bend the paper clips up in the air above the drawing pins.



Step 2

Connect the batteries and bulbs at the ends of the 2 long wires (see diagram).

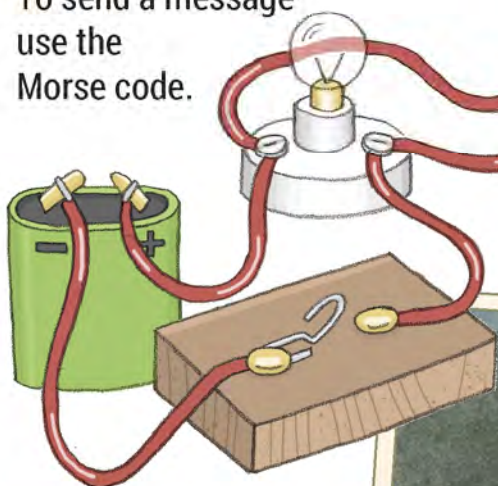


Step 3

When you touch the drawing pin with the paper clip, you will complete the circuit and both bulbs and buzzers will work. This means you can see the message you are sending as well as the one you receive.

Step 4

To send a message use the Morse code.



► British and French soldiers sending messages by Morse code

Bet I could have done that just as quick!



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