



Substitution Cipher

A substitution technique is one in which the letters of plaintext are replaced by other letters or by numbers or symbols. If the plaintext is viewed as a sequence of bits, then substitution involves replacing plaintext bit patterns with ciphertext bit patterns.

Then the algorithm can be expressed as follows. For each plaintext letter p , substitute the ciphertext letter C .

$$C = E(3, p) = (p + 3) \bmod 26$$

A shift may be of any amount, so that the general Caesar algorithm is

$$C = E(k, p) = (p + k) \bmod 26$$

where k takes on a value in the range 1 to 25. The decryption algorithm is simply

$$p = D(k, C) = (C - k) \bmod 26$$

The earliest known, and the simplest, use of a substitution cipher was by Julius Caesar. The Caesar cipher involves replacing each letter of the alphabet with the letter standing three places further down the alphabet. For example,

plain: meet me after the toga party
cipher: P H W P H D I W H U W K H W R J D S D U W B

Note that the alphabet is wrapped around, so that the letter following Z is A . We can define the transformation by listing all possibilities, as follows:

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

Let us assign a numerical equivalent to each letter:

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25

If it is known that a given ciphertext is derived using a Caesar cipher, then a brute-force cryptanalysis is easily performed: simply try all the 25 possible keys. The map below shows the results of applying this strategy to the example ciphertext. In this case, the plaintext leaps out as occupying the third line.

Three important characteristics of this problem enabled us to use a brute-force cryptanalysis:

- The encryption and decryption algorithms are known.
- There are only 25 keys to try.
- The language of the plaintext is known and easily recognizable.

2. Playfair Cipher

The Playfair algorithm is based on the use of a 5 * 5 matrix of letters constructed using a keyword.

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

In this case, the keyword is Monarchy. The matrix is constructed by filling in the letters of the keyword (minus duplicates) from left to right and from top to bottom, and then filling in the remainder of the matrix with the remaining letters in alphabetic order. The letters I and J count as one letter. Plaintext is encrypted two letters at a time, according to the following rules:

- Repeating plaintext letters that are in the same pair are separated with a filler letter, such as x, so that 'balloon' would be treated as ba lx lo on.
- Two plaintext letters that fall in the same row of the matrix are each replaced by the letter to the right, with the first element of the row circularly following the last. For example, ar is encrypted as RM.
- Two plaintext letters that fall in the same column are each replaced by the letter beneath, with the top element of the column circularly following the last. For example, mi is encrypted as CW.
- Otherwise, each plaintext letter in a pair is replaced by the letter that lies in its own row and the column occupied by the other plaintext letter. Thus, ls becomes BP and ca becomes JW (or JM, as the encipherer wishes).

Example

Plaintext: Instruments
Key: Monarchy

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

Step 1: Make Pairs of the Plaintext Characters
IN ST RU ME NT SX

Step 2: Follow algo. steps 1 to 4 to convert the plaintext pairs into ciphertext pairs.

For eg IN → GA, ST → TL
RU → MZ, ME → CL
NT → RQ, SX → XA

Step 3: Write Down the Final Ciphertext
CT → GA TLMZ CLRQXA

Some Exercises on Caesar Cipher

Decrypt the following using Standard Caesar Cipher (Key - 3)

- Vxevnlwvnlrq Flskhu
- Fubswrjzskdb lv lawnhvnlvqj
- Zh pdnh d vklei ri wkuhnh la wklv flskhu

Decrypt the following (Key not given, Brute Force)

- Jpapglo
- Wlkerskvotke
- Pvkapenkva

Some Exercises on Playfair Cipher

0. Encrypt the following using Playfair Cipher

- Plaintext → Cryptography
keyword → Nation
- Plaintext → Universal College
keyword → Engineering
- Plaintext → This is Playfair Cipher
keyword → Networks