



CLASSIFIED FILE 7

WINDING PATH CODE

This code is a handy way to scramble a short message. If it's intercepted by the wrong person it won't make any sense, but when it gets to the right person it can be easily unscrambled.

ENCODING

1. First of all, write your message. The winding path code works when there are 25 letters or less. For example:

Being followed please help (23 letters)

2. Divide your sentence into groups of five letters, leaving out the spaces:

being/follo/wedpl/easeh/elp

3. Draw a table with 5 rows and 5 columns. Starting with the top row and working left to right, insert each letter, in order, into the cells. Continue in this way with the other four rows. If there are leftover spaces, fill them in with an 'x':

B	E	I	N	G
F	O	L	L	O
W	E	D	P	L
E	A	S	E	H
E	L	P	X	X



4. Next, wind a path that passes through each cell of the table:

Finish	B	E	I	N	G	
	F	O	L	L	O	
	W	E	D	P	L	
	E	A	S	E	H	
	E	L	P	X	X	Start

5. Write out the letters in the order the path travels through each cell:

XHLOGNLPEXPSDLIEOEALEEWFB

Your message now won't make sense to anyone unless they know how to put it back into the table!

DECODING

When you get a message in the winding path code, you need to put the letters back into the table using the same winding path that the person writing the code used.

To decode the message we encoded above, start at the bottom-right, and put the first letter of the coded message (X) in the first box, then keep going up that column, down the one to the left, and so on:

XHLOGNLPEXPSDLIEOEALEEWFB

Finish				N	G	
				L	O	
					L	
					H	
					X	Start





Once the box is full, write out the letters on each row, starting from the top-left:

beingfollowedpleasehelp

EXTRA

It's up to you how you wind the path through the table. You might start in the middle and go around in circles. Or you could start in the bottom-right corner and go up and down each column. It's up to you. Just make sure the person decoding the message knows which path you're using. If you have a longer message to share, try a 6x6 or even a 7x7 box.