Making a Cipher Disk - Handout

Make a Cipher Disk:

• Cut out the cipher disks.

• Place small disk on top of the larger disk; attach with a metal fastener.

Encrypt a message:

Choose a letter from the small disk—this will be used as the KEY. Line up the KEY with the letter A on the large disk. You are now ready to encrypt a message.
Note: Do not move the wheel as you write your message.

Example: If the KEY letter is N, then the letter A (on the big disk) would equal the letter N. A=N, B=M, C=L, etc. In this example the name BILL would be written as: MFCC.

Using your cipher disk, practice by writing your name in code. Then write a message using the cipher disk. Share the KEY letter with a friend (ex: letter N) who also has a cipher disk. They can decipher the message and you can communicate secretly to each other!

What happens if you. . .

• Change your KEY letter with every new word?

• Write your message in a different language?

• Make your own cipher wheel and code?

Try online encoding activities:

• www.314th.org/The-Colorado-Code-Encode.html
• www.cryptoclub.org

www.ext.vt.edu/topics/4h-youth/makers

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