

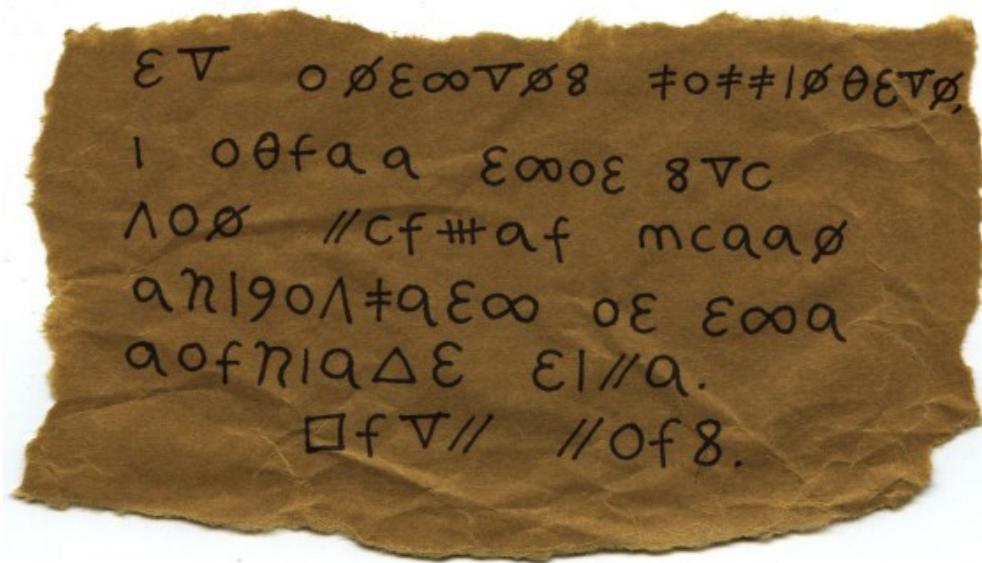
Cryptography Worksheet — The Babington Plot

The following note has been coded using the cipher actually used by Mary Queen of Scots.

Can you crack it?

Carry out an analysis of the frequency of each character

De-code the message



Teacher's Notes — The Babington Plot

The text says:

To Anthony Babington, I agree that you can murder Queen Elizabeth at the earliest time. From Mary.

Symbol	Frequency	Letter
	5	
Δ	1	
∅	6	
O	9	
8	3	
C	3	
≠	4	
∞	4	
θ	2	
∇	5	
f	6	
//	4	
m	1	
9	1	
q	11	
η	2	
∞	10	
□	1	
+++	1	
^	2	

Some hints to help with this one:

- What are the most common symbols? What are the most common letters in English?
- What 1 letter words are there?
- Who might it be to and from?

The story of the Babington plot is a good example of cryptanalysis (code breaking) in history. Babington and Mary used the cipher to communicate in secret, however Sir Francis Walsingham was able to employ Thomas Phelippes, a professional cipher breaker, who managed to work out the substitution that Mary had been using.

They then added the postscript (shown on another page) to a letter sent by Mary asking Babington to name all the conspirators.

With all the notes they intercepted, Walsingham gathered enough evidence to convict Mary and the conspirators of trying to assassinate Elizabeth I, and this led to the conspirators being Hanged, drawn and quartered, whilst Mary, Queen of Scots was beheaded.

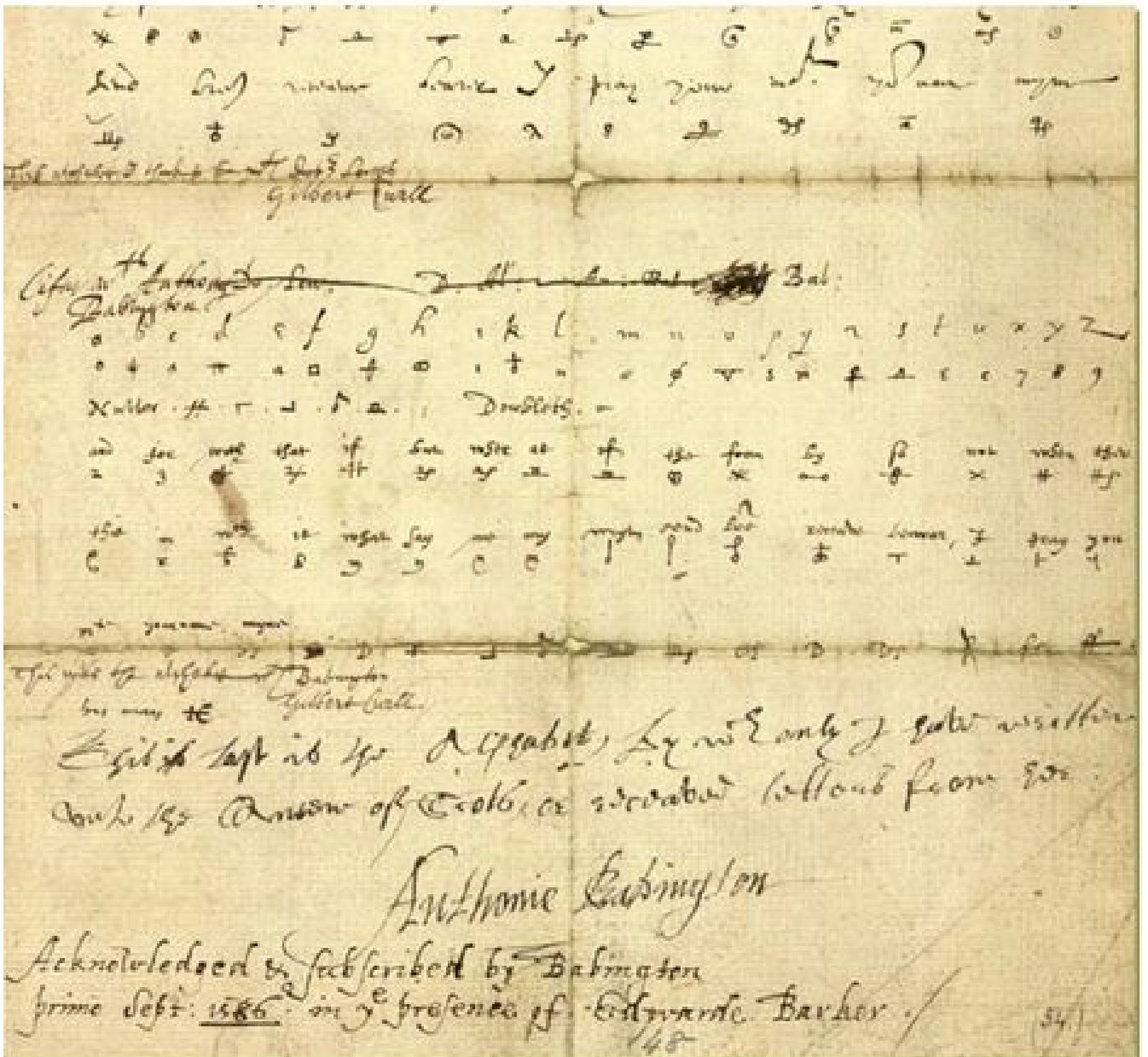
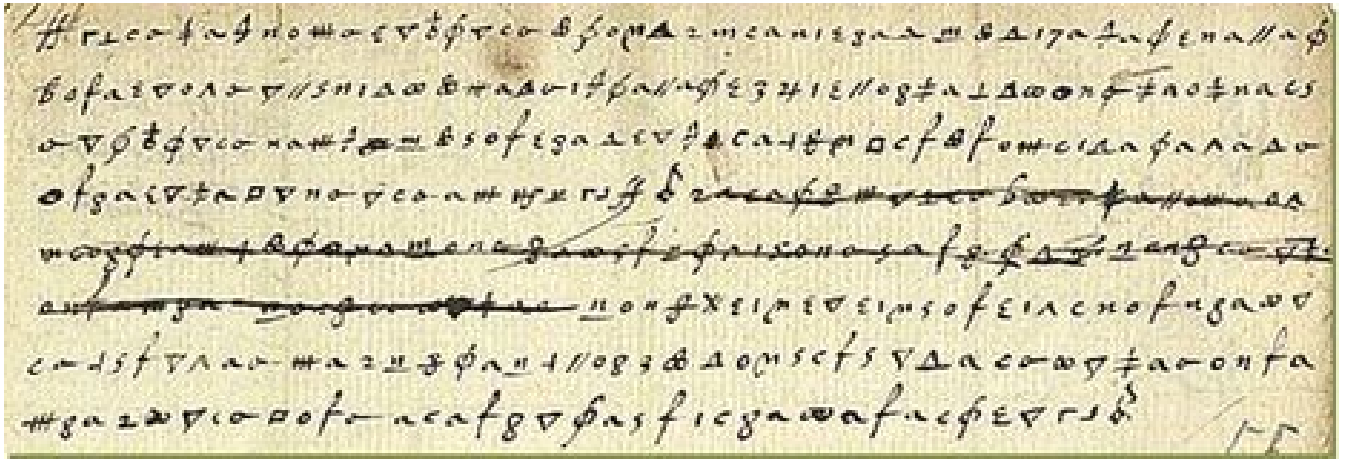
The Babington Plot Frequency tables

Symbol	Tally	Frequency	Letter
Δ			
∅			
O			
8			
C			
≠			
∞			
θ			
∇			
f			
//			
m			
9			
q			
η			
∞			
□			
+++			
^			

Symbol	Tally	Frequency	Letter
Δ			
∅			
O			
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C			
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θ			
∇			
f			
//			
m			
9			
q			
η			
∞			
□			
+++			
^			

The Babington Plot

To capture the conspirators, this post script was added to the bottom of an encrypted letter from Mary to Babington asking for the names of all those trying to help her.



~~Life of Anthony Babington~~ ~~3rd~~ ~~Vol:~~

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Words: -

an	for	not	use	if	an	use	at	of	the	for	by	p	not	when	use
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

the

e	e	f	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

of the letter by Babington
his name is Gilbert Ball.

Gilbert Ball is the author of the letter, by which only I have written
you the answer of the letter, or secreted without from you.

Anthony Babington

Acknowledged & subscribed by Babington
Prime Sept: 1586. in the presence of Edwarde Barber.

54