

CRYPTOGRAM CRACKING: ONE-PAGE REFERENCE (ARISTOCRAT / SIMPLE SUBSTITUTION)

Best for: puzzles where spaces and punctuation are preserved (and each symbol = 1 letter).

QUICK START

- Confirm it is a simple substitution: spaces/punctuation stay, symbols repeat like letters.
- Write the ciphertext with clear word breaks; circle repeated words/patterns.
- Start with 1-letter, then common 2-letter and 3-letter words.
- Pencil in guesses; keep the key one-to-one (no letter reused).

STEP 1 - IDENTIFY CIPHER TYPE

What you see	Likely type
Numbers only	Binary / A1Z26 / number code
Letters shifted	Caesar / ROT
Letters + keyword feel	Vigenere / polyalphabetic
Symbols/glyphs with spaces kept	Aristocrat (use steps below)

Warning: if the message is under ~28 characters, multiple solutions can fit. Gather more text using the same key if possible.

STEP 2 - WORD PATTERNS

Pattern	What to try first
1-letter	A, I
2-letter	OF, TO, IN, IT, IS, AS, AT, ON BY, WE, US, HE, ME, MY
3-letter	THE, AND, FOR, ARE, BUT, NOT, YOU, WHO, WAS, HAS, OUT, HER, HIS, OUR

Common prefixes	Common endings
T-, A-, I-, S-, RE-, UN-, IN- DIS-, PRE-, CON-/COM-	-E, -S, -D, -T, -ED, -LY, -ING -TION, -MENT, -NESS

APOSTROPHES:

- **'S** IT'S, HE'S, SHE'S, LET'S, WHO'S, THAT'S
WHAT'S, HERE'S, HERE'S, THERE'S, WORLD'S
- **'N'T** DON'T, CAN'T, ISN'T, WON'T, AIN'T, DIDN'T, WASN'T
AREN'T, HASN'T, HADN'T, DOESN'T, HAVEN'T, WEREN'T
MUSTN'T, NEEDN'T, COULDN'T, WOULDN'T, SHOULDN'T
- **'D** I'D, HE'D, WE'D, IT'D, YOU'D, SHE'D, WHO'D, THEY'D, THAT'D
- **'M** I'M
- **'RE** WE'RE, YOU'RE, THEY'RE, THERE'RE
- **'VE** I'VE, WE'VE, YOU'VE, WHO'VE, THEY'VE
MUST'VE, COULD'VE, WOULD'VE, SHOULD'VE
- **'LL** I'LL, WE'LL, HE'LL, IT'LL, YOU'LL, SHE'LL
WHO'LL, THEY'LL, THAT'LL, THERE'LL
- **'O'** O'CLOCK

STEP 3 - FREQUENCY

Letter frequency (rough): ETAOINSHRDLCLUMWFGYPBVKJXQZ

Common bigrams: TH HE IN ER AN RE ON AT EN ND ST ES

Common trigrams: THE AND ING ENT ION TIO HER HAT

Double letters: LL EE SS OO TT FF RR NN

Tool tip: use GlyphGrid Analysis to count symbols fast.

Let the computer count; you do the guessing!

STEP 4 - PUZZLE-SOLVING SPRINT

- Every word needs vowels (A E I O U, sometimes Y).
If a word is all consonants, your mapping is probably wrong.
- H often follows T, S, W, or C. Q is almost always followed by U.
- Solve the most-constrained word next (the one with the most known letters). Propagate those letters everywhere.
- Use prefixes/suffixes to guess whole chunks,
then verify across the message.
- If the plaintext looks impossible, backtrack one assumption at a time.

STARTER COMBOS:

- **TH-** THE, THAT, THIS, THEM, THEN, THERE, THESE, THEIR, THING
- **WH-** WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHICH, WHO
- **IN-** IN, INTO, INSIDE

PROBABLY WRONG IF EXIST:

- impossible letter combos (QQ, JJ, VV)
- too many rare letters
- words with no vowels

IF YOU'RE STUCK

- Find the shortest repeated word (often THE/AND/TO/OF).
- Pick one guess to test (like THE), then check every place it appears.
- List unused letters; try them in the few remaining blanks.

STEP 5 - FINAL VERIFICATION

- Read the full decrypted text as normal English. Does it flow like a quote/sentence?
- One-to-one key: no symbol maps to 2 letters, and no letter is assigned to 2 symbols.
- No leftover symbols; punctuation and apostrophes make sense.
- If the message is long and coherent (>28 chars), it is almost certainly correct!

KEY TEMPLATE IN ALPHABETIC ORDER (FILL IN AS YOU GO)

[illegible]

KEY TEMPLATE IN LETTER-FREQUENCY ORDER (FILL IN AS YOU GO)

[illegible]