**What is meant by encoding and decoding?**

Encoding is like applying some algorithm or computations. It can be performed for compressing data, or hiding information for cryptographic purpose or to represent it in a specific format.    
  
Decoding is the inverse procedure of encoding. It produces back the original data. 

* If encoding has been done for compressing data, decoding will produce same data (in case of lossless compression) and similar data (in case of lossy compression).
* If encoding has been done for hiding information for cryptographic purpose, decoding will return back the original data.
* When we have encoded data to represent it in a specific format, decoding will make it readable for the software that will then represent it in its actual format.

In layman terms, encoding is like wrapping up an object and decoding is like removing the cover so that actual object is visible.

Vocabulary:

**Cryptographic**

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**Lossless compression:** is a class of [data compression](bword://!!ARV6FUJ2JP,data%20compression/) algorithms that allows the original data to be perfectly reconstructed from the compressed data.