

# Invisible writing

Invisible writing is a clever way to send secret messages. So called “invisible ink” is a substance used for writing that is either invisible on application or soon after, and that later on can be made visible by some means. Invisible ink is one form of steganography (the skill of writing hidden messages in such a way that no one, apart from the sender and recipient, suspects the existence of the message). It has been used in espionage, but more common uses include anti-counterfeiting marks, property marking, hand stamping for re-admission to venues, children’s games and marking for the purpose of identification in manufacturing.

You can write with invisible “inks” using everyday things. Of course, the person who receives your message has to be able to make it visible.



## Fruity messages

### You will need:

a lemon and lemon squeezer  
a cotton bud  
paper (plain and pale)

### Method

Squeeze half a lemon.

Dip the cotton bud in the juice.

Write your message on the paper and allow it to dry.

If a lemon is not available, you can try white vinegar or the juice from a grated potato.

Instead of the cotton bud you can use a toothpick or matchstick, but you have to dip it in the solution for each letter. Even your finger would work!

### Revealing the message

Heat an oven to about 120°C. Place the paper on the top shelf. After about five minutes the juice will turn brown, and BINGO! There’s the message.

## Wax messages

### You will need:

a long white candle  
pale plain paper

### Method

Remove the wick from the candle.

Use your candle like a pencil to write on the paper.

Brush loose wax from the paper.

### Revealing the message

Sprinkle the paper with a dark-coloured chalk dust or fine dust.

Shake the excess powder or dust from the paper. The particles will stick only to the waxed parts of the paper. The message is revealed.

