

DECEMBER

It is said that Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting, spent months learning about butterflies so he could go on a secret army mission disguised as a butterfly collector! He sketched details of enemy weapons into the patterns of the butterfly wings he was sketching!

The Beavers can learn how to be a secret agent - pass on important messages, make up disguises and fantastic 21st Century spy gadgets!

Secret writing

Invisible Ink

Equipment: citrus fruit juice (lemon, orange or grapefruit), small container, pointed stick (blunted BBQ skewer), paper and access to oven

- Squeeze the juice from the fruit into a small container about the size of an egg cup.
- The Beavers can dip the wooden stick into the juice and then write a secret message onto the paper. When the juice dries the writing will have vanished!
- To make the message re-appear the paper needs to be heated. A Leader places the paper on the top shelf of a cool oven (150°F/300°C/Gas Mark 2) and check every few minutes until the message appears! Be careful the paper doesn't get too hot and burn!
- The message can be held gently over a lighted candle but great care must be taken!!

Magic Pencil

Equipment: pencils, pad of paper

- The Beavers write a message on a pad of paper - they need to press hard so an imprint of the message is left on the page beneath,
- The top page of writing should be destroyed so no spies can see it!
- To read the message a soft pencil lead should be gently scribbled over the page - the writing should appear as if by magic!

Mystery Message

Equipment: felt pens, paper, coloured plastic folders

- Pre-prepare some mystery messages for the Beavers to try and decipher. Do this by writing a message similar to the one below in felt pens on paper.
Beans are very scrummy, goodness gracious I eat them all the time!
Write the letters underlined in black or dark blue or green ink and the rest of the letters in yellow!
- The message can be read through a coloured see-through plastic folder (cheap ones are available in most supermarkets or Pound shops), red or yellow work best. The yellow letters disappear leaving the dark coloured ones - the Beavers need to put these together to make out the mystery message. The one above should read - Beavers r great!
- The Colony could try to make up their own very simple messages for each other to read but it could be tricky. Perhaps a task for the older Beavers!

Secret agents send signals to each other when they are watching an enemy spy!

Simple body language can mean a secret message, for example:

- Scratching an ear - *I'll phone you later*
- Rubbing an eye - *we're being watched*
- Scratching head - *have no information at the moment*
- Hands behind back - *can't pass message on now*
- One hand in pocket - *yes*/Two hands in pockets - *no*

Make up some body language messages and play a game using these different actions!

I Spy

Equipment: none

- *The Colony sits in a circle on the floor, choose one Beaver to be the 'spy' and they leave the room*
- *Choose one of the remaining Beavers to be the 'secret agent' who passes on the message to the others by doing an action (rubbing eye) and then a few seconds later changes it to another action (scratching head) and so on*
- *When the 'spy' re-enters they have to guess which Beaver is the 'secret agent' and changing the action!*

Secret agents also have lots of special gadgets - 007 had an amazing range of fantastic equipment! What about 'Inspector Gadget' - a radio transmitter in a fountain pen, a video recorder in a briefcase, night vision goggles in a pair of glasses, a hidden microphone in the button of a trench coat! The Beavers could design their own futuristic spy gadget!

Baden-Powell used the disguise of a butterfly collector. Other spies have used disguises - an 18th Century French spy went on a mission to the Russian court dressed as a woman - his disguise was so good that the Empress made him her maid of honour! In 500BC a Greek spy had to deliver an important message - it was tattooed on his head and could only be read when his hair was shaved off!

The Beavers might like to make their own disguises! Use the template to make glasses, false nose and a variety of outlandish lips or false hair! Use selotape to allow the lips to be suspended 'invisibly' below the nose! Scraps of wool could be used to make a moustache or beard!

Could the Beavers eat some chocolate in disguise?

Choc Chop

Equipment: bar(s) of chocolate, knife and fork, paper plate, disguise items (hat, sunglasses, gloves, scarf, etc.), dice (large size, if possible), table & chair

- Set out the equipment on a table at one end of room.
- Beavers sit in a circle and take turns to throw the dice, when a six is thrown that Beaver runs to the table, puts on the disguise and starts to cut and eat the chocolate.
- The remaining Beavers continue throwing and if a six is thrown the thrower runs to change places with the 'choc chop' Beaver!

Secret agent disguises

