



[Curiosity] Corner

Treasures from the FCS Archives

Welcome to **Treasures from the FCS Archives**, a repository of resources for teachers and history enthusiasts! Every month, we are sharing photos, artifacts, documents and other treasures for you to review, discuss and discover. We encourage you to click the links, scan the photos and dig deeper into these treasures, all of which can be found in the Fulton County Schools Archives. Enjoy!

THE TELEGRAPH AND THE COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION



[Signal Electric Manufacturing Company Ltd. Wireless Practice Set R-68, c. 1940](#)
Fulton County Schools Teaching Museum, Technology collection

Sometimes an invention comes along that changes the world forever. It combines scientific discovery with ingenuity to impact humankind in ways that are unexpected and everlasting. So it is with the [introduction of the electric telegraph](#) in the middle of the 19th Century.

This edition of *Curiosity Corner* features a [telegraph key](#) from the Teaching Museum technology collection to examine how this one invention started a communications revolution and set us on the path toward the age of the cellphone—when information can be exchanged both instantaneously and universally.

[Before the electric telegraph](#), communicating over long distances posed many challenges. Whether a message was sent using smoke signals or by men on horseback, it could take hours or even days to reach its final destination. Important news could very well be obsolete by the time it was received. For centuries, people attempted to overcome these challenges, but it was not until the beginning of the 1800s—when the properties of electricity and magnetism were explained—did the foundation for our modern communications technology networks become realized.

But the story of the telegraph is more than just about the origins of the communications revolution. It is also about a language created solely for the purpose of using it: [Morse Code](#)—a way of communicating still in use today.

Curiosity in the Classroom: *A Closer Look*

What was it like to receive a message through a telegraph? Have students explore the various forms of receiving a message in Morse Code. Can they decipher the message?

- [Audio Message](#)
- [Light Message](#)
- [Dot & Dash Message](#)

A	•—	N	—•	1	•—•—	?	•—•—•—
B	•—•—	O	•—•—	2	•—•—•—	!	•—•—•—•—
C	•—•—•—	P	•—•—•—	3	•—•—•—•—	,	•—•—•—•—•—
D	•—•—•—	Q	•—•—•—	4	•—•—•—•—	;	•—•—•—•—•—•—
E	•—	R	•—•—	5	•—•—•—	:	•—•—•—•—•—•—
F	•—•—•—	S	•—•—	6	•—•—•—•—	+	•—•—•—•—•—•—
G	•—•—•—	T	•—•—	7	•—•—•—•—	=	•—•—•—•—•—•—
H	•—•—•—	U	•—•—	8	•—•—•—•—		
I	•—•—	V	•—•—	9	•—•—•—•—	/	•—•—•—•—•—•—
J	•—•—•—	W	•—•—	0	•—•—•—•—		
K	•—•—•—	X	•—•—				
L	•—•—•—	Y	•—•—				
M	•—•—•—	Z	•—•—				

Click on the image above for a larger JPEG. (Note for the dot & dash message, “/” separates each word.) Click [here](#) for the Scout Life website’s [Morse Code Translator](#). Students can decode messages and create their own coded messages.

Answer: Imagine what life was like before electronic communication, before the smartphone, the internet, the radio. How could someone send a message to a family member in another city or state?

Lesson Ideas & Links:

[Elementary School Connections](#)

[Related Primary Sources](#)

[Middle School Connections](#)

[Ask the Teaching Museum](#)

[High School Connections](#)

[Additional Online Resources](#)



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