Decoding the “Zimmermann Note”

Directions: In this activity you will decode the “Zimmermann Note” using a simple substitution code, In this code system each letter in the alphabet each of the numbers from 1 to 9 appears in the matrix of the grid (see GRID). Each letter in the grid is replaced by two letters in the coded message. The first letter in the message is from the vertical axis and the second letter is from the horizontal axis.

For Example: If “DG” were the first two letters of the code, you would find the letter “D” on the vertical axis and the letter “G” on the horizontal axis. Trace them across the grid to their intersection which will end at the letter “A”.

To decode the “Zimmermann Note”, begin by grouping each set of two letters and continue this through the entire message. As you locate each letter on the grid, you should write the letter above the pair of code letters to which it corresponds. NOTE the code letters are arbitrarily arranged in groups of five letters. Some letter pairs will carry over from word to word. Also, there are no punctuation marks.

GRID

A D F G V X

A B 2 E 5 R L

D I 9 N A 1 C

F 3 D 4 F 6 G

G 7 H 8 J 0 K

V M O P Q S T

X U V W X Y Z