



SHINTEKI

Rookie Handbook

This handbook contains information that players who are new to Shinteki may find useful. It is a good first step, but is not a complete list of all coding methods or activities that could appear in Shinteki.

Any specific rules or details received with event registration should be read closely. If there is a conflict between this general handbook and the information for that particular event, follow the event instructions.

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Section 1: Before Shinteki

What is Shinteki?

Shinteki is a Japanese word that translates into English as mental, physical, or psychological depending on the specific usage. In our case, Shinteki represents all three. The idea behind Shinteki is to challenge people to break away from the ordinary, using their minds and bodies to gain a new appreciation for the world around them. During Shinteki, teams work together closely for several hours, solving clues and meeting challenges in order to find each location along a secret course. Players must be smart, quick and creative to play.

Team dynamics

It is the Captain's responsibility to assemble and organize the best team possible. The most important thing to consider when putting a team together is this: Can we all get along during intense situations? Chances are that you will be in close proximity and working together for many hours, and a positive attitude will help prevent arguments that can slow a team down.

It is important to have many perspectives when trying to solve clues. Therefore, you should look for variety and balance when choosing your teammates. Men and women approach problem solving differently, so co-ed teams may have an advantage. Look at the special skills and knowledge for each potential player and try to cover a lot of topics. Have you each studied different subjects in school? Do some of you have knowledge about sports or entertainment trivia? Is one of your friends a crossword puzzle fanatic? Are some members of your team familiar with the neighborhoods where Shinteki will take place? All of these things can help a team play better.

When forming a team, the captain must make sure that each player is available for the entire time of the event. No one can show up late or leave early- this is a race. If you have never played before, your team may want to have a meeting several days before the race to make sure everyone is familiar with the rules, and to assemble any gear that may be necessary.

Preparation

Although a team could play Shinteki with nothing but a vehicle, a cell phone and some pocket money, most teams choose to do a little advance preparation. This can involve gathering special gear, practicing solving some sample clues, or making costumes or team uniforms.

Gear

Shinteki will have several unique puzzles and challenges, and a well-prepared team will carry some basic gear or tools that will help them in many situations. The gear mentioned here is a basic start, but you can choose to add other things that you think could come in handy. Any type of gear is allowed, although a good guideline is that your team should probably be able to carry all their gear. If you really want to bring a lot, know how to quickly sort out and carry all the really essential gear- it sometimes pays to be portable. Any special gear that is absolutely required for your specific event will be included in the event details you receive.

Standard items when leaving the house for the day, like a jacket, water and snacks are a good start. Simple adventuring tools like maps, a first aid kit, flashlight, pocketknife, small towel and so forth are also recommended. Basic office supplies like notepads, pencils, tape and scissors are way up there on the list, too. Many teams choose to elaborate on gear in all these categories, which is both allowed and encouraged. One never knows what gear might come in handy during Shinteki. Will you need a cigarette lighter? Maybe. Will you need a welding torch? Probably not, but if you really want to bring it, you can.

Technical gear is one of the cooler aspects of Shinteki, but also one of the more expensive, so it is mainly optional. A cell phone is the only required piece of technical gear, but many teams opt to use two-way radios in addition, to keep in touch with each other. Another common tool is a laptop computer, but a list of nearby Kinko's locations is almost as good in many cases. There are lots of other gizmos, like

Section 1: Before Shinteki

handheld GPS and remote web access, which can be fun to use if you desire, but are generally not mandatory.

Reference resources are another category of gear that many teams stock up on. For example, books like almanacs or dictionaries can come in handy. It never hurts to bring things like a bartender guide or foreign language dictionary if you've got it, although you can also use the internet for such information. As for textbooks, you are more likely to need basic geometry knowledge than advanced calculus, so just use your judgment. It is always a good idea to bring the phone numbers of people who may be able to help you answer questions or solve clues. Remember, you can call anyone for help at any time, but it's probably fastest to have a strong team of players in your vehicle- your best resource is each other.

Team meeting

If you decide to hold a team meeting before the race to strategize, this is a great time to figure out who is bringing what gear, drinks and so forth. You can choose to bring food or buy your own meals during the race if needed, but keep in mind that teams are often too engrossed in the race to stop during regular mealtimes. Once food and gear are figured out, have a little fun talking about your team's identity. Choose a team name or color and figure out ways to show it off on your team uniforms or vehicle. Some Shinteki events have team uniform guidelines that you will need to take into consideration. For more information, see the specific requirements for the event in which you will participate.

You can also talk about each person's preferred role on the team. You may want to designate who will be the drivers (take turns so you don't get too tired), navigators, and other roles you think may be useful. Everyone on your team who is new to Shinteki should take a quick look at this handbook and be ready to dive into a few challenges. Check out how the various encoding systems work and try to become familiar with them. As a final note during your team meeting, make sure that everyone knows exactly when Shinteki starts, and when and where your team will meet up, probably shortly before the race begins.

Section 2: During Shinteki

Rules of play & safety

For the exact rules specific to the event you will play, check the information that you were given after registration. Here are a few basic guidelines for all Shinteki events.

Use common sense

If something seems dangerous, illegal or impossible, don't do it. You will not need to break any laws in order to play or win Shinteki, so don't speed, trespass, drink alcohol while driving, or park illegally. In public places, it is important to be respectful and discreet; avoid unnecessary running, shouting or other disruptive activities. Double check your clue instructions if you have any doubts about whether you are in the right place or doing the right thing. If you're still not sure, call the Shinteki emergency number before proceeding. You will receive the emergency number at the start of the event.

Exercise sportsmanship

Keep your entire team together while playing, and give everyone a chance to participate. Don't interfere with another team's clues, vehicle or belongings. Don't ruin the experience for others by giving away information about how to solve clues, whether it is true or misleading. Solve your own clues and navigate to the next location on your own, without following other teams. Shinteki is designed as a personal challenge, so don't cheat yourself by cheating.

Navigation

Your team will be provided with race boundaries before the event starts. Make sure that anywhere you plan to go looking for your next clue is within the boundaries.

If you choose to use a GPS navigation system, remember that they are not always right. Double check any directions using a map, don't just follow your device blindly. Not every clue location can be found using GPS software, internet searches or maps, so remember to ask locals if you're having trouble finding a certain landmark or location.

It is important to have at least one navigator on your team who is familiar with the maps you have brought. Having one person make the navigation decisions will usually speed up your team and avoid arguments about which way to go. Many teams choose to rotate both the driving and navigating roles every few hours if needed to cut down on fatigue. The same person should never be the navigator and driver at the same time- the driver should watch the road, not the map.

At each new location, the navigator should help the driver look for legal parking, or your team may decide that only a few team members should get dropped off to look for the clue while the driver and navigator wait with the vehicle. Either way, do not just abandon your driver- that's no fun!

How to find clues

Once your team arrives at a clue site, your goal is to find the next clue quickly. Sometimes this will mean splitting up to search an area, but it could also require sticking together. Every clue site will be different, so use common sense and creative thinking when looking for clues.

Clues will either be tucked away somewhere in a small container, or will be held by a person. You should look for both possibilities and keep an open mind. If you must meet a person, think about whether you will need to perform a task, say a password or give them something in order to get the clue. Instructions from your previous clue should have made this clear, so review that information if you are stuck.

If the clue is hidden at a site, there are a few good guidelines about where to look first. Usually, the clue is somewhere that makes sense, so give it some thought. Look for the extremes: highest, lowest, brightest or most central point, or behind the sign, statue or bridge that is a focal point of the location. Remember to be discrete about searching while in public places.

Section 2: During Shinteki

How to approach solving clues

When you get a new clue, the first step is make sure that all your teammates get a chance to look at it. It is best to have as many perspectives as possible working on solving each challenge or puzzle. Once you've all had a look, you can work as a big group, split into smaller groups or work individually. It is also a good idea to write down any important information about the clue's original state, like what order things are in, before making any changes.

Once you begin working, try to follow each approach until it either works or is definitely proven wrong. It can be frustrating to try the right thing early but give up before you've exhausted the idea.

If you and your teammates are out of ideas for solving, remember to take a look at the reference section of this handbook for ideas about coding methods. It may also help to review any hints you've received, talk about what each of you has tried so far, or just take a short break to stretch, have a snack and clear your head. You'd be surprised how often this helps.

Section 3: References

Codes

The codes in this section are all letter substitution codes, which means that symbols in a clue will represent individual letters. Crack the code and then substitute the correct letter for each symbol to read the answer. There are many types of codes; this is just a sampling of the code types most often found in Shinteki.

Alphanumeric substitution

This is the simplest of letter substitution codes. Also called A=1, the coding method can be figured out quickly even without this handbook. Each letter in the alphabet is represented by its position in alphabetical order.

Alphanumeric Encoding

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Try this sample puzzle:

14 9 3 5 23 15 18 11 3 15 4 5 2 18 5 1 11 5 18 !

Morse code

This famous code uses only dots, dashes and spaces to give information. It is easily disguised in clues, so try to look for Morse code that uses other shapes, objects or sounds in place of dots and dashes. For example, a clue might be a series of circles and rectangles, quarters and dollar bills or a recording of short and long music notes.

Morse Code Key

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
•■	■■■■	■■■■•	■■■	•	■■■■	■■■	■■■■	••	■■■■■	■■■	■■■■•	■■■

N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
••	■■■■■	■■■■•	■■■■■	■■■	■■■	■	■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
■■■■■■	•■■■■■	•■■■■■	•■■■■■	•■■■■■	•■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■

Try this sample puzzle:



























gEt tO Sfo by CAR

Braille

This code, developed for the visually impaired, is usually written with a series of raised bumps. Each letter is made up of 6 set positions (also called bits) in a 2 x 3 grid, with each bit either on or off for a particular letter. Encoded puzzles may use raised bumps, but can also use dots, squares on a grid, or anything else in a 2 x 3 pattern.

Section 3: References



























Braille Key

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

Semaphore

Semaphore is a long-distance visual signaling code originally used by sailors. Each letter is represented by a person holding 2 red and yellow flags at specific positions. Puzzles using semaphore may be simplified by showing 2 lines at the correct "arm" angles, similar to the hands on a clock.

Semaphore Key

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
												
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
												

Try this sample puzzle:

Movie times

Theater One- 3:10, 6:08, 7:05, 8:10

Theater Two- 9:15, 6:10, 7:30, 12:30

Binary

Binary is a number code that uses only 1s and 0s to represent any number. If you are familiar with different numeric bases (our standard numbers are in base 10), then binary is best explained as base 2. Where base 10 has a digit between 0 and 9 in the 1s place, 10s place, 100s place and 1000s place, binary has a digit between 0 and 1 in the 1s place, 2s place, 4s place, 8s place, 16s place and so on. Below is a chart of binary numbers 1 through 26, combined with the basic alphanumeric substitution chart. Of course, you can also represent much larger numbers with longer strings of binary. Like Morse code, binary can easily be disguised as other shapes, sounds or symbols that represent the 1s and 0s.

Binary Encoding

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
00001	00010	00011	00100	00101	00110	00111	01000	01001	01010	01011	01100	01101
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
01110	01111	10000	10001	10010	10011	10100	10101	10110	10111	11000	11001	11010

Section 3: References

ASCII

The American Standard Code for Information Interchange, or ASCII, is a standardized computer code used for representing letters, numbers and other keyboard characters. Rather than starting with A=1, several control codes come first, then symbols, numbers and finally capital letters starting at A=65, followed by lowercase letters. There are 128 symbols represented; a partial list follows.

ASCII Encoding

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109
n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122

Word puzzles

There are a wide variety of word puzzles, or ways to get information from a set of letters or words. Some of them are explained below, but remember that these are just a few examples. Think creatively to solve this type of puzzle.

Anagrams

Anagrams are letters or words that can be re-arranged or unscrambled to form other words. Puzzles that are anagrams already have all the correct letters of the solution, but not in the correct order. For example, you may get the letters “aaacee ff ilno prst,” which you will have to unscramble to spell Palace of Fine Arts. Your clue may have each word anagrammed separately, such as “Shirtyo Emusum,” which unscrambles to History Museum. If you are stuck on an anagram, sometimes it is helpful to write out the anagram letters in a circle in order to look at them in a new way.

Try this sample puzzle:

HTSI UPZLEZ SI SYAE

Cryptograms

In this type of word puzzle, every letter has been replaced with another letter. Cryptograms are usually pretty long, at least a paragraph, and look like total garbage, with unusual letters like J, Q, or X appearing regularly. Cryptograms can be solved by looking at the frequency of each letter (try substituting an E for the most frequent letter for example) or by looking for common patterns that could be words like “the” or “that.” It also helps to look at single letters, which can usually only be “A” or “I,” or double letters within a word, which are usually only “oo, ee, ll, tt” or other common double letters. Once you’ve got a few letters figured out, you can fill in those letters in the remaining words and then deduce what those words are.

Try this sample puzzle:

Kvwe krqm pn svttggmham we t gwkklgm mtewmy phsm rpd’zm lphm t
nmc syrqpkytxe. Gwom xpek cpyl qdiigme, kvm omr we kp qytskws. Xthr
hmceqtqmye vtzm t syrqpkytx qdiigpm ph kvm sypeecpyl qtam. W vpqm kvtk rpd
npdhl kvwe vmqndg.

Section 3: References

Caesar shifts

Caesar shifts are basically cryptograms, but are easier to solve once you know the key. Instead of substituting each letter with a random letter, the alphabet is shifted by a certain number of letters. For example, if the shift is just 1 letter, then A=B, B=C, C=D and so on. If the shift is 23 letters, then A=X, B=Y, C=Z, D=A E=B and so on. When you reach Z, simply wrap around by starting at A again if you need more letters. Another common shift key is using the alphabet backwards, where A=Z, B=Y, C=X and so on.

Try this sample puzzle:

Hw wx, euxwh?

Hidden text

There are a lot of ways to hide information in text. If some text you receive seems forced or unusual, there is probably something hidden in it. A common way to hide a message is in the first letter of every sentence, or even the first letter of every word. Sometimes the capitalization or font used will hide a message. It may also be hidden along the letters touching the left or right margin.

There are two messages in this sample puzzle:

Together we asked Henry to stop it. Ironically, Rudy had started the whole mess. Driving rain covered the smell of French perfume coming out of the trunk. Rudy was beside himself, now quietly eating Oscar Mayer quick lunch meats. Lost on the old highway, we turned East, toward a Fatburger billboard. This was going to end right now.

Visual puzzles

These types of puzzles communicate the answer all at once visually, instead of letter by letter. Visual puzzles may be a series of photos that guide you on your next route, flags or markers that lead you down a trail to the next clue, or a connect-the-dots puzzle that reveals a drawing of your next location. If you end up with a picture of a location that you and your team don't recognize, try asking locals for help. More complicated visual puzzles are described below.

Rebus puzzles

These picture puzzles are a classic. Drawings of easily identifiable objects, people or actions are laid out in a series, with addition and subtraction symbols and a few letters. Your job is to identify each picture and then add or subtract the appropriate sounds to form new words that are the answer to the puzzle.

X-Y coordinate graphing

Sometimes you will be required to draw or write out the answer to a clue yourself. While there are many ways for clues to give drawing instructions, one of the most simple (but confusing looking) is x-y coordinate notation. You are probably familiar with this from geometry class, but here is a refresher, just in case. In graphing notation, the x-coordinate is always listed first, and corresponds to the horizontal axis. The y-coordinate is listed second and refers to the vertical axis. So if you had the coordinates (5,2) you would draw lines to represent the x- and y-axis (works best on graph paper), then count 5 spaces to the right and 2 spaces up and place a dot there. Essentially, you will be making your own connect-the-dots puzzle from scratch. Once you plot the points, connect them in the order they were listed and your picture or letters will appear.

Section 3: References

Scramble sequences

The Scramble sequence is a type of clue unique to Shinteki. Teams receive a variety of fairly easy clues at once, and may choose to solve them in any order they wish. Each clue leads the team to a different nearby location, where they pick up a small piece of their next clue. This next clue can't be solved until all the pieces from the scramble clues have been found. Some teams choose to stay in one location and solve all the scramble clues before plotting a course to all the locations, while others start driving or walking as soon as one scramble clue is solved, then finish the other clues while in transit.

Skill challenges

Skill challenges are another way to earn your next clue or learn your next location. They can involve simple skills like hitting a target with a football, bowling a combined team score, or running through an obstacle course. They can also require special skills, like speaking or reading a foreign language, orienteering or knowing certain trivia facts. For many of these skills, you may need to get help from an outside source, so keep the phone numbers of your bilingual, boy scout and trivia nut friends handy!

Trivia puzzles

This type of skill challenge usually has two steps. First, you will need to answer questions or identify items. This can range from celebrity photos to song titles to history questions to jelly bean flavors. You will end up with a list of answers. Then you will need to get the clue solution out of this information. The solution could use each entire word. For example, when asked "Who was the first president?" and "For what place is the bronze medal awarded?" you might need to go the intersection of Washington & 3rd for your next clue. In many cases, the puzzle answer will be spelled out by the first (or last) letter of each trivia answer. For example, you receive the following candy bars: York peppermint patty, Almond joy, Chunky, Hershey bar, Tootsie roll, Charleston chew, Lifesavers, Uno bar, Butterfinger. This would send you to the Yacht Club.

Try this sample puzzle:

Best Picture Oscar winners: 1997, 1977, 1989, 1956, 1948

Meta puzzles

Metas are usually solved by putting several pieces of independent, often previously used information together to get a new answer. Traditionally a meta will appear at the end of a series of puzzles, and you'll need to use the solution words from each of the puzzles as data to solve the meta. Or perhaps you'll need to trace out your game route on a map, or list locations that you've visited. Some metas span the length of an event, while others may be a single packet of mini-puzzles that can be solved quickly and plugged into a final puzzle. Of course, there are many variations, but what they all have in common is that you must revisit your experiences in the event so far in order to solve the meta.

Additional reading references

If you would like to learn more about cryptic encoding and the history of codes, check out [The Code Book](#) by Simon Singh.

For some really interesting puzzles, subscribe to [Games](#) magazine. It goes way beyond crosswords and cryptograms.

If you want some additional handy references in your team's gear, try [The Pocket Ref](#) by Thomas Glover, [The Official Boy Scout Handbook](#) or a current Almanac. While none of these books are essential for playing, they may increase your team's ability to find certain trivia facts or understand a coding system.