

# VOYAGING VIKINGS: VIKING WRITING AND RUNES

The Vikings told stories to each other as a form of entertainment, but stories were not usually written down. If the Vikings did want to write things down, they used a system called **runes**.

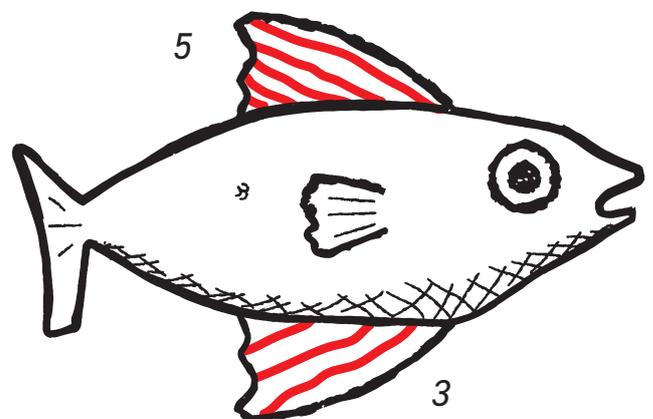
Runes were made up of simple lines and shapes, with one rune to represent each sound in a word. The Vikings didn't use paper to write things down, so the shapes of the runes were designed so they could easily be carved into wood or stone.

## Writing in Viking Code!

The Vikings had another form of letters made of simple carved lines in rows, which archaeologists think were used for writing codes and puzzles. Each letter in the code is made up of two rows of lines- the number of lines matches the position of the letter in a secret table, like the one below.

The lines can be drawn in a row, but sometimes were added to pictures of men with beards or fish- if pictures are used, each beard or fish represents one letter.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	F	U	TH	A	R	C/K
2	G	W	H	N	I	J
3	V	P	X/Z	S	<b>T</b>	B
4	E	M	I	Y	O	D



This fish has been decorated with lines on its fins that represent the letter 't'.

The letter 't' is in column 5 and row 3, so the fish has 5 lines on its top fin and 3 lines on its bottom fin. You would add more fish to the picture to spell out every letter in your message.

To read a code written in this way, you would need to use the table- or have a very good memory!

**Try writing your own message in this runic code- draw one fish for each letter in your message and add lines to the fins to show which letter each fish represents.**