Run the room. Keep the answers.

Host copy. Give teams the separate three-page participant PDF before starting.

ABOUT 20 MINUTES TOTAL

1 / Prepare the room

Allow about 20 minutes: 3 minutes to brief, 12 minutes to solve, and 5 minutes to reveal and discuss. Use pairs or small teams; a solo organiser can also play. Print all 3 participant pages for each team, single-sided at actual size on A4. Keep the host PDF separate. Bring pencils and a timer; a projector and phones are optional.

2 / Brief the crew

Say: "Six signals. Twelve minutes. One point for each correct message. Use the keys, solve in any order, and write your answers. No phones or web searches during this paper round. Stop when I call time." Explain that messages are answers only: nobody needs to follow them around campus. Let teams finish reading the keys before you start.

3 / Start and help

Start one shared 12-minute timer. Announce 2 minutes remaining. If a team is stuck, use the hints in this host guide; offer the same hint to everyone at once. Hints have no score penalty. If large print or read-aloud support is needed, agree any timing adjustment before starting and apply it consistently. Read dots and dashes explicitly, and binary digits one at a time.

4 / Stop and score

Call "Time. Pencils down." Collect the sheets before revealing answers. Award 1 point per fully correct decoded message, 0 otherwise; no partial credit. Ignore letter case and spacing, but require every decoded letter in order. Maximum: 6 points. Tied scores share the win; do not add a surprise speed tie-break.

5 / Reveal and plan the next round

Read the six answers and show the steps below. Ask which cipher the crew enjoyed and whether the reference keys were clear. Keep the browser next step separate from this paper pack: try the solo signal, then save free game preparation.

Next / Try it in the browser

Try a solo signal, no signup:
festforge.brainer.one/try/decode

Save free Decode preparation: Create an organiser account, then rehearse four rounds with up to five participants total, across all teams.
festforge.brainer.one/signup?next=%2Fhost%2Fdecodes

Use this pack on paper; browser preparation is a separate next step. Use and adapt this original FestForge pack for your college event. Help: festforge@brainer.one.

Reveal / Signals 01-03

Collect participant sheets first. One point per exact decoded message; case and spacing do not matter.

01 / Signal lab

Answer: BUILD A SIGNAL

```
EXLOG D VLJQDO
```

Method: E -> B, X -> U, L -> I, O -> L, G -> D. The first word is BUILD. D -> A; VLJQDO -> SIGNAL.

Host hint: Start with E: three steps back lands on B.

02 / Stage-map check

Answer: CHECK THE STAGE MAP

```
JOLJR AOL ZAHNL THW
```

Method: JOLJR -> CHECK; AOL -> THE; ZAHNL -> STAGE; THW -> MAP. The A in AOL wraps back to T.

Host hint: A moved back seven places becomes T. Spaces do not move.

03 / Lighting desk

Answer: COUNT THE LIGHTS

```
-.-. --- ..- -. - / - .... . / .-.. .. --. .... - ...
```

Method: -.-. --- ..- -. - -> COUNT; - .... . -> THE; .-.. .. --. .... - ... -> LIGHTS.

Host hint: The first group, -.-., is C. Decode one group at a time.

Reveal / Signals 04-06

Collect participant sheets first. One point per exact decoded message; case and spacing do not matter.

04 / Crew call

Answer: BRING THE CREW

```
-... .-. .. -. --. / - .... . / -.-. .-. . .--
```

Method: -... .-. .. -. --. -> BRING; - .... . -> THE; -.-. .-. . .-- -> CREW.

Host hint: -... is one letter, B, not four separate letters.

05 / Sound check

Answer: TEST THE MIC

```
01010100 01000101 01010011 01010100 /
01010100 01001000 01000101 /
01001101 01001001 01000011
```

Method: Byte values: 84 69 83 84 / 84 72 69 / 77 73 67. Map those ASCII values to TEST / THE / MIC.

Host hint: 01010100 adds up to 64 + 16 + 4 = 84. ASCII 84 is T.

06 / Contest cue

Answer: READY TO DECODE

```
01010010 01000101 01000001 01000100 01011001 /
01010100 01001111 /
01000100 01000101 01000011 01001111 01000100 01000101
```

Method: Byte values: 82 69 65 68 89 / 84 79 / 68 69 67 79 68 69. Map those ASCII values to READY / TO / DECODE.

Host hint: 01010010 adds up to 64 + 16 + 2 = 82. ASCII 82 is R.