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noun jump to other results a person, thing or situation that is mysterious and difficult to understand synonym mystery, puzzleEven after years he still remains an enigma to me.Extra ExamplesMadeleine was still very much an enigma to him.Nobody really knows the answer. It's something of an enigma.The enigma of the giant stones draws visitors from around the world.The tower presents an enigma. How old is it? Who built it?Word Originmid 16th cent.; via Latin from Greek ainigma 'riddle', from ainissesthai 'speak allusively', from ainos 'fable'. See enigma in the Oxford Advanced American Dictionary The machine was given the brand name Enigma by German engineer Arthur Scherblus, who developed it for commercial use, minus the plugboard, after World War One. In 1926 the German Navy adopted it, followed two years later by the Army, then by the Air Force in 1935. It was the military who added the all-important plugboard as an added security device.The machine used by the Army and Air Force had a set of five wheels, each with a different scrambling pattern, of which three would be used each day. The Navy had eight wheels, and only they used these three extra wheels. The wheels could be removed and changed. The daily settings were contained in a monthly 'key sheet' provided to the individual networks of the German armed forces, and there were hundreds of these networks throughout the war, although only about 50 were operational at any time. When two or more machines were correctly set up on a network they were reciprocal - a message could be encrypted and decrypted without changing the settings. The wheels had individual internal wiring together of the 26 letters of the alphabet and were stamped on the back with Roman numerals. They were listed in the key sheet from left to right, e.g., IV III V - left, middle and right-hand wheels. Each wheel had the letters of the alphabet (Navy) or numbers 1-26 (Army and Air Force) round a 'tyre' on the wheel, which could be moved relative to the core of the wheel when a clip was pulled out.This tyre had a notch in it which engaged with the turnover mechanism. Naval wheels VI, VII and VIII had two notches.The clip would be put back into the ring-setting (ringstellung) for the day on each wheel, e.g., L V X, which determined where the notch which turned over the wheel to the left of it would be activated. At every depression of a letter on the keyboard, the wheel wiring position changed. A turnover changed it again. There was a keyboard to encipher/decipher the message and a lampboard behind it which lit up the enciphered or deciphered letter. The plugboard (stecker) also contained the letters of the alphabet and two-way jacks were used to plug up 20 out of the 26 letters in pairs - e.g., D plugged to V, J plugged to Z, etc. This left six letters unplugged or 'self-steckered'. The wheel order, ringstellung and stecker comprised the day's 'key'. It was this 'key of the day' which Bletchley Park was seeking to find using the Bombe. To the left of the wheels was a reflector (Umkehrwalze) and to their right an entry wheel (eintrittswalze) - both fixed. When a key on the keyboard was pressed, current from that key passed through its plugboard pairing to the entry wheel, the scrambler wheels, the reflector, back again through the scrambling wheels, through another plugboard pairing and to a lamp. a puzzling or inexplicable occurrence or situation.His disappearance is an enigma that has given rise to much speculation.a person of puzzling or contradictory character.To me he has always been an enigma, one minute completely insensitive, the next moved to tears.a saying, question, picture, etc., containing a hidden meaning: riddle.(initial capital letter) a German-built enciphering machine developed for commercial use in the early 1920s and later adapted and appropriated by German and other Axis powers for military use through World War II.a person, thing, or situation that is mysterious, puzzling, or ambiguous"Collins English Dictionary — Complete & Unabridged" 2012 Digital Edition © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1979, 1986 © HarperCollins Publishers 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2012enigmatic adjective,enig'matically adverbOrigin of enigma1First recorded in 1530–40; from Latin aenigma, from Greek ainigma, equivalent to ainik- (stem of ainissesthai "to speak in riddles," derivative of ainos fable) + -ma noun suffix of resultOrigin of enigma1C16: from Latin aenigma, from Greek ainigma, from ainissesthai to speak in riddles, from ainos fable, storyExamples have not been reviewed.It unfolds along the same lines as "The Perfect Couple" and "Nine Perfect Strangers," both of which feature Nicole Kidman playing patrician enigmas — a trend that began with her turn in "Big Little Lies."Now, a group of palaeontologists have come to Pipestone Creek - appropriately nicknamed the "River of Death" - to help solve a 72-million-year-old enigma: how did they die?He watched in awe as the top collegiate pitcher in the nation, an enigma on the mound, hurled seemingly unhittable 101-mph fastballs past his opponents.Since Watson is a sucker for enigmas, he surrounds himself with a team of young experts, each of whom is defined by one of their own.But Jesus has still remained an enigma to one of the country's preeminent authorities in gospel scholarship in many ways.What does enigma mean?An enigma is someone or something that's puzzling, mysterious, or difficult to make sense of.The word enigma can also mean a riddle, but it's more often used to refer to something that's so perplexing that it seems like a riddle (and perhaps was intended to seem like one), as in That book is an enigma—I have no idea what it's really about. If you call a person an enigma, you mean that they're hard to figure out—the reasons behind what they say and do are not easily understood. Some people try to be enigmas to be mysterious.The adjective enigmatic can be used to describe someone or something that's puzzling or mysterious.Example: I've known him for years, but he's still a total enigma to me—I have no idea what his interests are or what he's really like.

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