Cipher Puzzle Quality Checklist

Generated puzzles are fast. Publishing them unchecked is how one-star reviews happen. Run every book through this checklist before it goes near KDP.

Step 1 — Solve It Yourself

- Pick 3 puzzles from each generator you used. Solve them like a buyer, with a pencil.
- Check each answer against the auto-generated key. A wrong key is the fastest route to a refund request you cannot honor.
- Time yourself. Recruit puzzles should fall in minutes, not half an hour.

Step 2 — Check the Print File

- Confirm the trim size matches your KDP book setup exactly (7×10, 8×10, 8.5×11 or 8.25×8.25).
- Export JPGs at 300 DPI and zoom to 100%. Cipher grids must stay crisp, never fuzzy.
- Run the file through KDP's own previewer and read its warnings line by line.

Step 3 — Check Variety

- Skim the whole book for repeated phrases, mission briefings and word lists.
- Mix cipher methods through the book. Nine methods exist — a book of pure Caesar shifts feels thin.
- Vary difficulty inside each tier. Easy, medium, hard beats fifty identical puzzles.

Step 4 — The Buyer Test

- Hand one printed page to someone in the target age band. Watch silently.
- If they cannot start within a minute, the instructions page needs work, not the puzzle.
- Fix, re-export, and only then upload. With a no-refund product, your quality bar protects your whole catalog.

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