

## Code Breakers

If you see a picture of Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire, England, you might think it looks like a regular British estate. What you might not realize is that it was the site of operations that potentially shortened World War II by two to four years. Bletchley Park was the home of the main code breaking team in the United Kingdom during the war. It also housed Station X, a secret radio interception site.

Bletchley Park was chosen as the site of the code breakers due in part to its location. It was close to several railway lines but not close enough to any major cities to be a bombing target. Bletchley mansion, for which the estate is named, was used for the operation. The British military built a number of other buildings on the site to house all the people working there. The buildings were built quickly and were known as huts.

One of the main goals of the work at Bletchley Park was to figure out the Enigma and Lorenz codes, or ciphers, used by Nazi Germany. The world's first programmable computer, called the Colossus, was designed at Bletchley by Max Newman. It worked on breaking the Lorenz cipher.

There were over 10,000 people working at Bletchley Park during the war. They were recruited due to their abilities at things like chess, crossword puzzles, languages, or mathematics. One of the most famous mathematicians



was Alan Turing. He built a machine called the Bombe, which played a key role in cracking the Enigma code.

The important work done at Bletchley part was not revealed to the public until the 1970s. The site now houses the National Codes Centre and the National Museum of Computing. It is known as the birthplace of modern information technology.



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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Where was Station X located?
  - a. At Bletchley Park
  - b. At the National Codes Centre
  - c. At Lorenz
  - d. In Nazi Germany
  
2. Which code did the Colossus work on cracking?
  - a. Enigma
  - b. Bombe
  - c. Lorenz
  - d. Bletchley
  
3. Why do you think they recruited people who played chess and crosswords to work at Bletchley Park?
  - a. Because playing games helps build computers
  - b. Because solving puzzles is like cracking codes
  - c. Because they were ready to fight in the war
  - d. Because they didn't mind living in huts
  
4. How do you think the work at Bletchley Park might have shortened the war?
  - a. By choosing the Bletchley Park site they avoided bombings
  - b. By cracking the codes they could tell what the enemy was planning.
  - c. By building computers they made money to help the war efforts
  - d. By recruiting intelligent people they had more soldiers to fight in the war

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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