



CODE BREAKING ACTIVITIES

Context

- **History** The role of code breakers in D-Day
- **Literacy** Discussion, Comprehension and Writing
- **Maths** An introduction to codes
- **ICT** The development of the Computer

Objectives

- Learn about the role of Code Breakers, at Bletchley Park and the importance of their role and contribution to D-Day;
- Understand how Alan Turing's invention of computers at Bletchley Park, to crack German codes, was the beginning of the modern computer and how such inventions during WW2, sped up the process of innovation we enjoy today;
- Gain an insight into the complexity of codes and what was involved in breaking them;
- Track the development of early computers and compare their workings with our uses today;
- Analyse and present information, understand and develop ideas drawing on research and reading, understand conventions of different types of writing, perform compositions;
- Use contemporary vocabulary to write in a historical context

I. THE STORY OF BLETCHLEY PARK

Objective: To explore the role of computers in our lives today and their development since WW2.

Introduction

Read *The Story of Bletchley Park* and *Cracking the Codes at Bletchley Park*

ACTIVITY

- In small groups, use the following as starting points for discussion.
- Ask students to write notes on their findings.
- Groups should report back on their thoughts and findings.





Discussion Points

- Computers – discuss the ways in which computers are used today and list as many uses as possible;
- Think about uses of the computer before the internet – note the discovery of the world wide web was credited to Tim Berners-Lee 30 years ago;
- Think about their use in everyday life such as the sharing of information, keeping data and records as well as in important scientific and mathematical discoveries such as space exploration.
- Imagine what life must have been like without a computer – especially for code breakers in WW2.

Plenary

Make the links to how the work building computers and breaking codes in WW2 has contributed to the technology we know today.

2. GWEN WATKINS COMPREHENSION

Objective: To retrieve factual information, articulate and justify answers about Code Breaker Gwen Watkins' time at Bletchley Park.

Introduction

Having read and discussed *The Story of Bletchley Park* and *Cracking the Codes at Bletchley Park*, read *Gwen's Story*.

ACTIVITY

This activity can be done as a group discussion or set as a written or listening Comprehension activity (see Worksheet).





Comprehension Questions

1. What did Gwen find different when she first arrived?
2. What does RAF stand for?
3. Name 3 things which made the conditions harsh.
4. Where did people live while they worked at Bletchley Park?
5. What were the two things you must NOT do?
6. How long was a working day?
7. What might happen to you if you told people what you were doing?
8. What social activities were available?
9. Name four groups of people Gwen thought should be thanked?
10. Can you think of any more people you might want to thank?

3. GWEN WATKINS – WRITING A LETTER HOME

Objective: To produce a piece of creative writing based on factual research, and to understand the conventions of letter writing.

Introduction

Having read Gwen's story, think about what you have learnt about her and think about what her life might have been like before the country went to war and what the reality of life was like at Bletchley Park. You can invent information about her family and friends. Remember that she couldn't tell people what she was really doing, and that she didn't know what the outcome of the work, or the war was while she was there. Think about the level of secrecy there - how good are you at keeping secrets? Can you imagine not telling your family what you're doing? How might you hide things in a letter?

Think about what life must have been really like – how did war affect everything such as family life, friendships, comfort, food - all the things we take for granted today. What kind of sacrifices did everyone make?





ACTIVITY

Write a letter from Gwen either to her family at home or to a friend. Read and think about all the following pointers, before you begin.

1. Think about the specific language and colloquial terms of the war and times from the vocabulary list and try and use them where appropriate so the letter sounds like someone living through WW2.

2. Who are you writing to? Is it someone you know well? Do you want to find out about how life is for them or are you focusing on telling them about your situation?

3. Think about:
 - a. How long have you been there?
 - b. Are you describing a particular event or experience?
 - c. How much information can you really share?
 - d. How do you feel about what you're doing, what is going on around you in the war?
 - e. Are you writing to someone fighting in the war?

Plenary

Read the letters aloud to each other and discuss the different approaches students took.

