

Name _____

Date _____



Alan Turing

Alan Turing was not your ordinary human;
Pure genius simply flowed through him.
He was born in Britain, 1912,
London, to be exact.
From an early age, he had talents in science and in math.
When he was 24, he published a paper that explored
A thing he called the “Universal Machine.”
It could read and solve any math problem at all.
That paper laid the groundwork for the modern computer we all use.
Around the same time,
Nazi Germany’s troops were gaining power in Europe due to
Enigma, a sophisticated cipher device
That used a code considered unbreakable
To hide their military’s communication,
Including their location and the very next moves they’re making.
In 1939, the day after the UK declared war on Germany,
Turing decided to report to Bletchley Park,
The wartime headquarters of the codebreakers working their minds
To design a code-breaking machine known as the Bombe.
The cryptanalysts there had smarts for armor.
The Bombe allowed the Allies to intercept and decode
Messages from the German forces and put their plans on hold.
Now they had control.
Turing’s very own team decoded as many as 84,000 messages a month.
Where others might get stumped, Alan Turing’s never ever giving up.
Historians credit the Bombe for changing the course of World War II,
Estimating Turing’s work shortened the war by two years, at least,

And saved 14 million lives.
Who knows where this world would be if he never thrived?
I don't want to even picture it.
And after the war, Turing kept researching more,
From artificial intelligence to computer design.
A few years later, his life changed quicker than you can flip a dime.
He was arrested and charged with "gross indecency"—
But his only crime was being a gay man in his time.
Homosexuality was illegal in Britain,
And with a criminal record, it meant
He could not work in the system.
No more codebreaking or innovations came from his vision.
Worse yet, they hit him with a 12-month sentence
Of "hormone therapy," a cruel, outdated treatment
That left him depressed, mind cloudy, and defeated.
Turing was found dead at age 41
With a poisoned apple by his side.
It was ruled a suicide.
Wasn't till 2009, more than 50 years later,
When the British government formally apologized.