

# The history OF COMPUTERS

205BCE

## The Antikythera Mechanism

In 1900, a group of people diving near the Greek island of Antikythera found this machine on the sea floor. For many years, no one understood what it was or how it worked. Scientists now say it was used to find out the positions of the sun, moon and stars. Many people call it the world's earliest 'computer'.

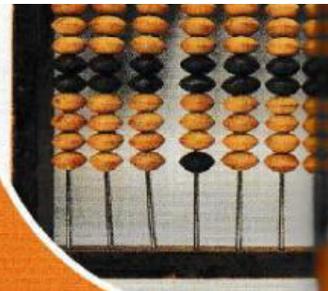
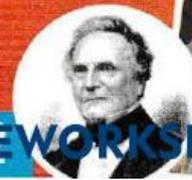
around 2,700 BCE to today

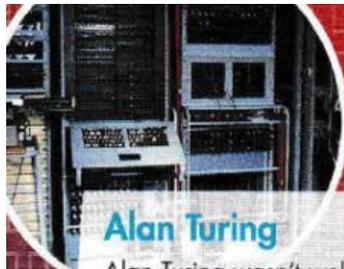
## The abacus

People still use abacuses today in many parts of the world, especially to teach maths to children. Of course, they are very different from modern computers, but the idea is the same – to answer difficult maths questions much more quickly than a human can.

1791–1871  
and 1815

LIVEWORKSHEETS





**1940s**

### Alan Turing

Alan Turing wasn't well known when he was alive, but he's now one of the most famous scientists of the 20th century. His ideas on computer science changed the world. He worked on the first digital computer – it was called Colossus, weighed 30 tonnes, and was as big as a large living room.

**From the 1950s**

### Modern computers

From the 1950s, computers got smaller, faster and cheaper. Today, the smallest mobile phones have more memory than the biggest early computers. And computers are getting better all the time. However, they are not perfect. One of the worst problems is computer viruses. You can lose a lot of information when one gets on your machine. Be careful about what you download from the internet.

### Charles Babbage and Ada Lovelace

The modern computer was Charles Babbage's idea. The machine he wanted to build, called a 'difference engine', was special because it had all the parts that a modern computer has. It could save information and was also a kind of printer. Ada Lovelace was the first computer programmer. She had the idea for 'software' – a way of telling a computer to do different things.



90

### READING

- 1 Do you know the names of any early computers? Read the article once and check your ideas.
- 2 Complete the sentences with one or two words from the article.
  - 1 Some children use an abacus to learn how to do \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 2 Charles Babbage's computer had several different \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 3 The first person to program a computer was \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 4 Colossus was as big as a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 5 Modern \_\_\_\_\_ are small but can do more than the biggest computers of the past.

## VOCABULARY

### Computers and the internet

**1** Look at the article again and find the words in the box. Match them to the definitions.

EP

digital    download    machine    memory  
save    software    virus

- 1 This has moving parts and helps humans to do work.
- 2 This is a part of a computer – it holds information.
- 3 This is a dangerous computer program.
- 4 You do this to make sure the computer keeps your work.
- 5 This describes cameras, computers and clocks that record information as 0s or 1s.
- 6 This means to copy information from the internet onto your computer.
- 7 This is all the programs that make a computer do different things.

**2** Match the verbs to the nouns. Then make sentences.

EP

buy	friends
chat	clothes
download	games
go	the internet
play	music
surf	online
visit	videos
watch	websites

*I often chat online with my cousins.*

- 3 Read the survey. Choose three or four questions and write two more of your own. Walk around the class asking your questions.



### COMPUTER SURVEY

- What sort of things do you download from the internet?
- Do you know how to stop a virus from getting onto your computer?
- How much memory has your phone got? Is it enough?
- Do you ever forget to save your work?
- How often do you chat to friends online?

## LISTENING

-  **1** Listen to and read the first part of the conversation and look at Question 0. Which is the correct answer: A, B or C? Why are the other two answers wrong?

**Ella:** Nice new laptop Andy! When did you get it?

**Andy:** Yesterday. My old one broke a month ago, and last week Dad agreed to buy me this.

- 0 When did Andy get his new computer?  
A yesterday    B last week    C a month ago

-  **2** Listen to the whole conversation. For each question, choose the correct answer.

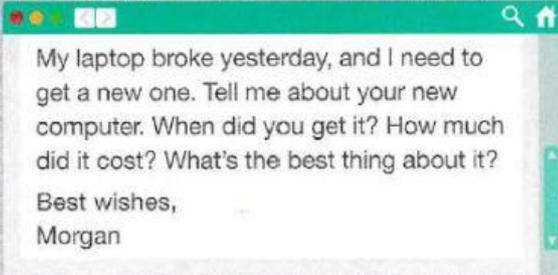
- 1 Andy's dad bought the computer from  
A a website.    B a shop.    C a friend.
- 2 How much did it cost?  
A £150    B £250    C £2,000
- 3 What does Andy want to buy for the computer?  
A a camera    B a mouse    C a printer
- 4 Andy doesn't use his computer to  
A do homework.    B chat to friends.  
C play games.
- 5 What does Andy like most about the computer?  
A the keyboard    B the screen    C the speakers



## PREPARE TO WRITE

### An email

**GET READY** Read the email from your friend Morgan. Why did Morgan write the email?



**PLAN** Think of an answer to each of Morgan's questions.

**WRITE** Write an email to Morgan with answers to all his questions. Begin your email with *Hi Morgan*, or *Dear Morgan*, and end it with *See you soon*, or *Best wishes*, and your name. Write 25 words or more.

**IMPROVE** In pairs, read your email and your partner's. Check that all three questions have an answer. Give your partner two ideas to make their email better. Use your partner's advice and rewrite your email.