GCHQ

Worksheets

The History of GCHQ

The History of GCHQ - Escape Room

You are trapped in Bletchley Park. You will need to complete two missions to prove your knowledge on the history of GCHQ in order to escape. This escape room is a test of your knowledge on all things GCHQ and its history.

About the location

Bletchley Park is a country house and estate in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. It became the Headquarters of GCHQ and the principal centre of Allied codebreaking. It is now a heritage attraction centre that is open daily to visitors to learn about the history of GCHQ.



How to escape

You will need to complete the mission below to escape. Here is all you need to know:

Mission 1

You need to figure out a code to get through to the second round. To do so, you must complete a crossword to test your knowledge of GCHQ. Once you complete the crossword, you need to use the blue highlighted letters to de-scramble a certain key word, which is the overall code needed to escape. Use 'The History of GCHQ' information (on pages 2-6) to assist you with your answers.

Mission 2 (optional)

You need to form a timeline that tells the history of GCHQ over time. You need to use every code included in the crossword from Mission 1 in order to successfully escape.

Final note:

We wish you all the very best of luck for your missions! If you are stuck at any point, there are cheats in the teacher pack so please speak to your teacher.

GCHQ

The History of GCHQ

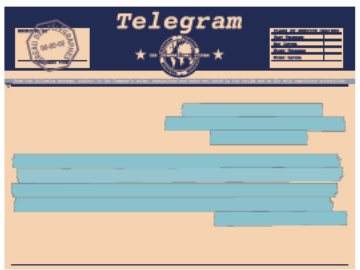
Read through all of the following information on the history of GCHQ carefully. You will then need to use this information to answer the crossword for Mission 1. The below information tells the history of GCHQ over time from its origins during the First World War to today.

GCHQ Origins and the First World War

British Signals Intelligence began in **August 1914** following the outbreak of the First World War. The UK realised that they could anticipate German plans if they worked out a way of intercepting German radio traffic. At the start of the First World War, Admiralty's Room 40 and War Office's MI1(b) were naval and military intelligence units created to intercept German radio traffic. Shortly, the UK had established a sophisticated signals intelligence capability against German radio traffic. This intelligence was used to support all aspects of the British war effort.



A **telegram** is a type of message sent by **telegraph** and then delivered in printed or written form. During the First World War, they were used for governments and war correspondents to communicate in a quick way.



1916

From 1916, the intelligence was used to help combat air raids. It also gave the UK knowledge about German naval movements ahead of the Battle of Jutland.

1917

In 1917, the UK intercepted a German diplomatic telegram to Mexico which revealed secrets. This contributed to the involvement of the US in the First World War.

1918

In 1918, signals intelligence personnell operated on the front line during the major German counter-offensive. The First World War later ended in November 1918.

1919

Within a year of the end of the war, the separate naval and military intelligence organisations had merged to become the Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS), GCHQ's original name. Its main function was to protect British Government communications, with a secret mission to decrypt messages sent by foreign countries. Under the leadership of Alastair Denniston, GC&CS's first head, the organisation was given space in Watergate House and officially came into being on 1 November 1919.

GCHQ

Bletchley Park and the Second World War

During the Second World War, GC&CS moved to **Bletchley Park** in 1939 and began to call itself **GCHQ**. During this war, it was responsible for breaking the **German Enigma codes**.

The **Enigma** was a type of cipher machine used by the German armed forces to send secret messages.



Helped by key insights from the Poles and French, and most famously **Alan Turing**, GCHQ became an industrialised intelligence agency. GCHQ sought 'Men of a professor type' through contacts at Oxford and Cambridge universities. Many of GCHQ's famous figures – Turing, Gordon Welchman, and Bill Tutte, were found this way.

Turing and other researchers found weaknesses in the Engima code which helped them break it. Turing also designed a machine called the Bombe machine, which was used to break the most challenging versions of Enigma. The first Bombe machine was installed in 1940.

Bletchley Park saw the birth of modern computing. Additionally, in January 1944, GCHQ became the National Technical Authority for information security.

Furthermore, GCHQ's partnership with the US and Commonwealth gave it a global reach, as well as producing the intelligence that saved thousands of allied lives. This partnership (the UKUSA Agreement) began in March 1946 when both countries agreed to share intelligence post-war.

1950s onwards

GCHQ left Bletchley Park in 1946 and after a short time spent in the London suburbs moved to Cheltenham in Gloucestershire in 1952. GCHQ kept its partnership with the American and Commonwealth partners, but the Axis Powers were replaced by the Warsaw Pact.

GCHQ onwards

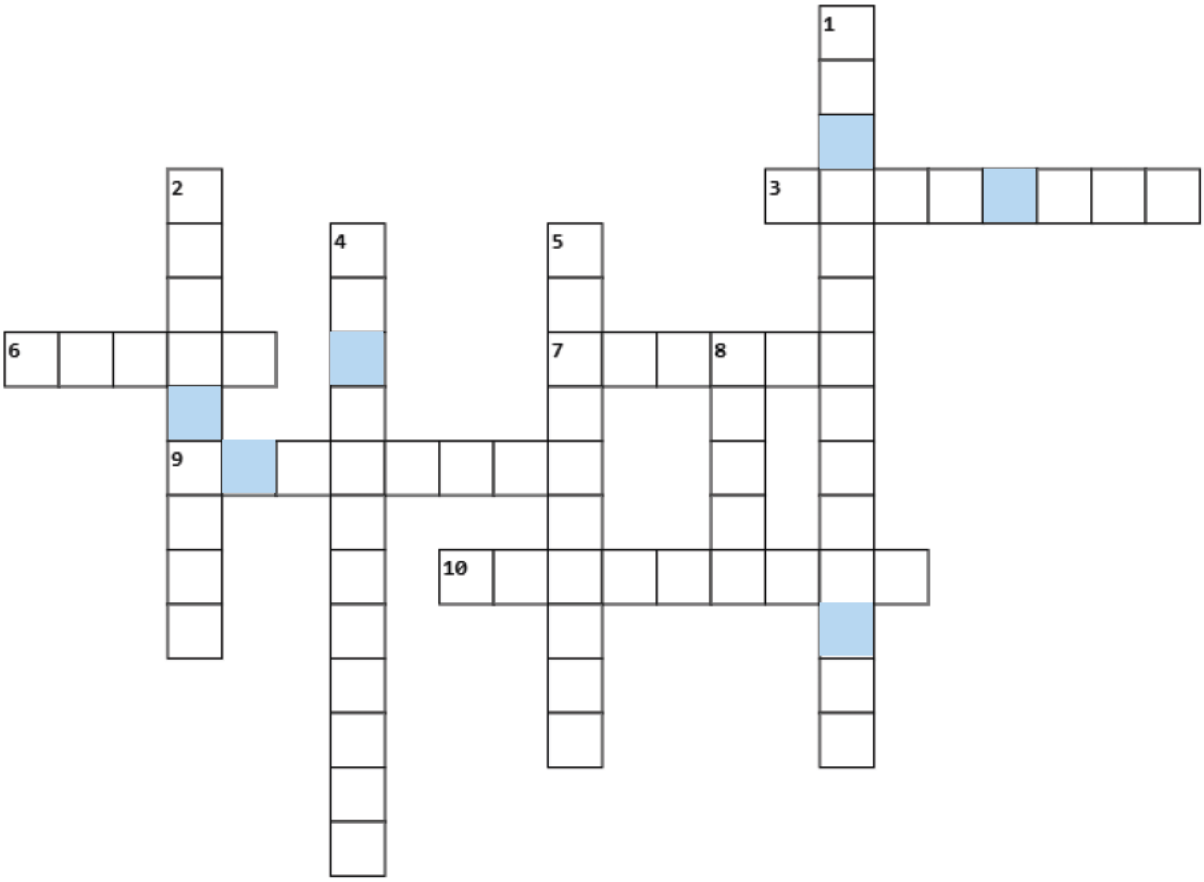
GCHQ kept its technological focus, but adapted to a more complicated telecommunications environment. The end of the Cold War and then the growth of the internet saw huge new requirements for intelligence and security.

These changes have certainly created a GCHQ that is fit for the new challenges of today and tomorrow.

GCHQ

Mission 1

Complete the code word crossword below based on the history of GCHQ. You can use and revisit all of the information on the history of GCHQ to help you. Feeling stuck on any of the answers? Ask your teacher for help as there are clues in the teacher guide alongside the answers.



Once you complete the code words on this crossword, you need to form an **overall code word** from the **blue highlighted letters** in the crossword. You will need to **descramble these letters** into a **word that is to do with GCHQ**. If you are stuck, please speak to your teacher who can provide you with clues. In order to progress to Mission 2, you need to check with your teacher that your code is correct.

Across

3. In 1917, the UK intercepted a message from Germany to Mexico. What format was it in? (8)
6. The name of the machine invented to crack the Enigma code (5)
7. The type of code that GCHQ was responsible for breaking during the Second World War when it moved to Bletchley Park (6)
9. As well as The Cold War, what other advancement has created new challenges for intelligence and security? (8)
10. The surname of GC&CS's first head (9)

Down

1. The location where GCHQ was given space in 1919 (14)
2. When GCHQ moved to Bletchley Park, they looked for men from universities in Oxford and _____ (9)
4. What country did GCHQ form a partnership with that allowed it to have global reach? (12)
5. The location where GCHQ eventually moved to during the 1950s (10)
8. The acronym for GCHQ's original name (5)

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Mission 2

For Mission 2, you need to you need to form a timeline that tells the history of GCHQ. Please write a description in the lines and draw an image to accompany it. You need to use certain codes (from the crossword in Mission 1) within some of your descriptions (see the blue boxes). Please turn this sheet landscape.

1914-1915

There are no crossword codes to include for this date.

1916-1917

Crossword codes to include: 3 across

1919

Crossword codes to include: 1 down, 8 down, and 10 across

1939-1940

Crossword codes to include: 7 across, 2 down, and 6 across

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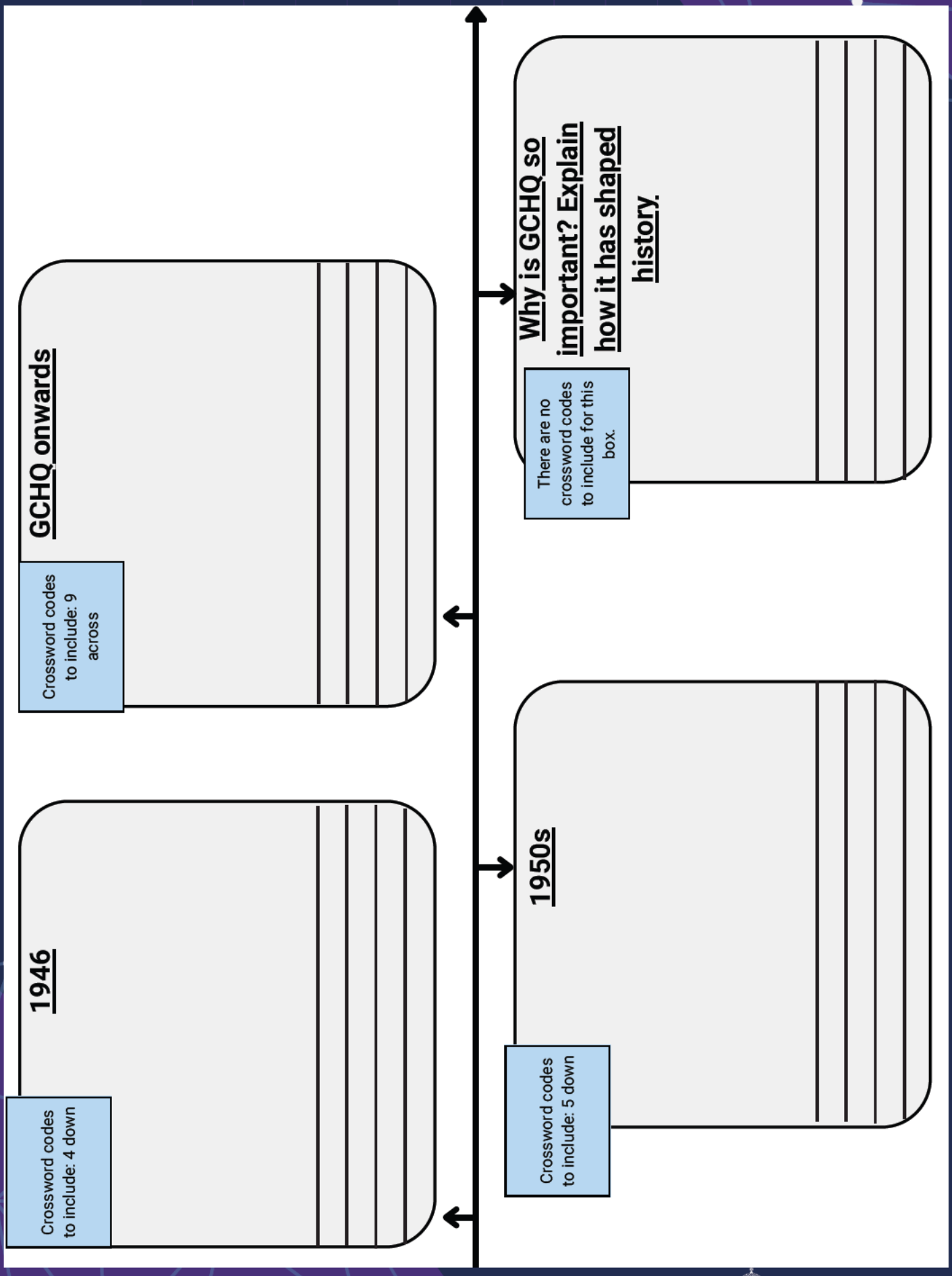
Mission 2



Once you have completed your timeline, please circle all of the code words you have used. There should be 10 in total. Please check with your teacher to approve that you are successful.

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