**Extract from “The Secret Life of Bletchley Park” by Sinclair McKay**

“There was an awful lot of nonsense involving code breakers having to join the Home Guard” says one veteran, recalling that it was the only time in the war that he was required to put on a military uniform.

For some of the more cerebral\*, bespectacled young men, the very notion of taking part in all night exercises-with cork blackened faces, or hooting like owls, or shimmying over security fences, or simply running around with rifles and attempting to hit targets-was a cause for irritation, especially when such exercises got in the way of valuable thinking time.

Others, however-including Alan Turing-found such duties and manoeuvres amusing and diverting. But the notion that it was compulsory goes to the heart of one of Bletchley Park’s most beguiling\*, ambiguous\* and disorientating\* qualities.

As we have seen the establishment was neither wholly military nor wholly civilian. The recruitment drive, moreover, was angled towards civilians of a certain type.

\*intellectual

\*charming

\*unclear

\*confusing

To find out more about Bletchley Park, you can watch a documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnr4pM-ntdc>

**Use these guiding questions to talk about this extract with someone at home or a friend:**

1. Have you heard of Bletchley Park and the important work carried out. In your own

Words, describe what work did they did during World War 2.

2 The people who worked at Bletchley firstly intended to be teachers, scientists and doctors: they had to adapt to their new role and move into the park. Would this have been easy?

3. Why do you think Alan Turing enjoyed the all night exercises?

4. What events do you think made very clever people want to help during these times?

5. To go from school or college to a place of work is a big step. How can you prepare yourself for the big change?