

Ruta Sepetys Curriculum Guide and Classroom Resources

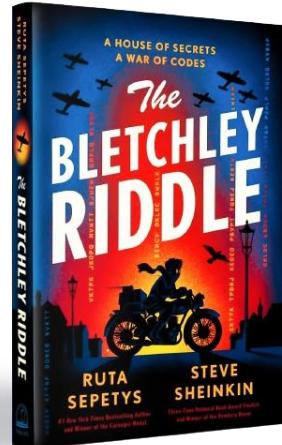
Winner of the 2026 Anne V. Zarrow Award for Young Readers' Literature –

Ruta Sepetys

Lesson ideas for selected reading: *The Bletchley Riddle* by Ruta Sepetys and Steve Sheinkin

Prepared by Laura Raphael, MA, MLIS, Children's Services Coordinator, Tulsa City-County Library

<https://rutasepetys.com/>



"Ruta Sepetys writes graceful, often wrenching, historical fiction. Rich in both historical detail and complex humanity, her stories tend to highlight darker, lesser-known parts of history. She often focuses her intricately plotted novels on strong young women facing difficult, perhaps insurmountable, circumstances. Her characters are well developed and her prose is always elegant and unsparing. At the heart of her writing is the theme of survival -- it drives her stories and her characters to their often heartbreakingly ends." (NoveList description)

"I am a seeker of lost stories and a hunter of hidden history."
– Ruta Sepetys

Getting To Know Ruta Sepetys

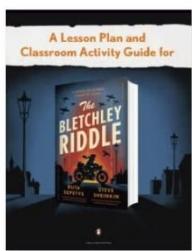


Ruta Sepetys is an internationally acclaimed, #1 New York Times bestselling author of historical fiction published in over sixty countries and forty languages. Considered a “crossover” novelist, her books are read by both students and adults worldwide. Winner of the Carnegie Medal and recently honored by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Ruta is renowned for giving voice to underrepresented history and those who experienced it. Ruta is the daughter of a Lithuanian refugee. Born in Michigan, she was raised in a family of artists, readers, and music lovers. She is passionate about the power of history to foster dialogue and global understanding. The New York Times Book Review declared, “Ruta Sepetys acts as champion of the interstitial people so often ignored—whole populations lost in the cracks of history.” Ruta lives with her family in the hills of Tennessee.

Other Ruta Sepetys Resources

- **Reading and Discussion Guides**

There are several excellent curriculum and discussion guides for Ruta Sepetys's books, including for *The Bletchley Riddle*:



Curriculum Guide for ELA, Social Studies, and Math

<https://www.penguinclassroom.com/authors/ruta-sepetys/>

https://rutasepetys.com/pdfs/bletchleyriddle_discussion-guide.pdf

GREAT LESSON ALERT: Be sure to check out the [“Make Your Own Cipher” worksheet](#) (as part of Lesson 3); it’s excellent!

The BLETCHLEY RIDDLE

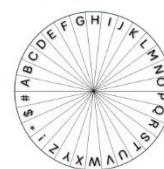
by RUTA SEPETYS and STEVE SHEINKIN

Lesson #3 | Template #1 | Make Your Own Cipher

Directions: Cut out each circle. Use the paper fastener to pierce a hole in the center of each circle stacking the little circle on top of the larger circle.

Spin your cipher to determine where your coded message will begin. Use the asterisk to record the letter and help you remember where you started your code.

The inner circle will be used as your “key” alphabet. To write your coded message, write the letter that lines up with the first letter of your message.



Source: original artwork by Courtney Wrennen
and Steve Sheinkin | Marshall West



- **Notable Interviews**

There are multiple terrific interviews in print and video of Ruta Sepetys.

Brave New Teaching (with Steve Sheinkin, about *The Bletchley Riddle*) podcast (25 minutes):

<https://www.bravenewteaching.com/home/episode227>

Publishers Weekly (about *I Must Betray You*): <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/88362-four-questions-for-ruta-sepetys.html>

Bradford Literary Festival video interview, (10 minutes):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ro1t6HebjMQ>

Off-Campus Writing Workshop: <https://ocww.info/About-Write?p=ruta-sepetys-on-ya-historical-fiction>

Fly By Night: <https://flybynighpress.com/2024/06/14/an-interview-with-author-ruta-sepetys/>

- **Excerpts from interviews:**

About History and Story:

“History writes my stories, and so I do feel a tremendous responsibility; but I also know that young readers are deep thinkers and they are deep feelers. And I think that books we read when we’re 13 or 14 have an ability to make a profound and lasting impression on us. And I was so emotional writing it, and I thought, ‘Well, if I’m emotional writing it, that means I should keep it — that readers will also absorb the emotional angst behind that.’”

Answering the question “Why So Dark?”

“Love and death are interwoven. Death and pain and loss are a very important part of the human experience, and so I want to put that in my stories, but I also want to bring beauty to it. If we’re sad and if we feel loss, that means we’ve loved. And what could be more important than the capacity to love? So by juxtaposing life and death and beauty and horror next to one another, I think they show us the beauty and depth of both.”

Strength Through Struggle

“I am drawn to stories of strength through struggle. I think how we deal with the challenges that face us, that’s what really define us.”

Find many interviews of Ruta Sepetys in this playlist:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnSWA3EFCkkLOVLH4D3vObitwkgRQ6xPu>

Knowledge Organizers

World War II Knowledge Organizer

Rationing
Worried that the country would run out of food the British (UK) government introduced rationing. This meant that people could only buy small amounts of foods – and there wasn't much choice. Everyone had a ration book to keep track of what they bought.
People had to make their food last a lot longer and had to come up with unusual recipes because they could not get the ingredients they needed.
There were no bananas during the war and people had to eat powdered eggs and milk.

The Blitz / Battle of Britain
The Luftwaffe, German air force, began what is called "The Blitz" with intense bombing (often at night) on towns and cities across Britain. The English response was termed "The Battle of Britain" where the RAF (Royal Air Force) fought back.
An air raid siren would sound to let people know when a bombing was about to start and again when the bombing was over.
To keep safe, people hid in air raid shelters. The bombings severely damaged cities and many people's homes were damaged.

Image: A black and white photograph showing a destroyed city street with rubble and debris. Below it is a ration book cover with the text "GENERAL ISSUE RATION BOOK SUPPLEMENT" and "YOU WILL BE TOLD HOW MUCH YOU ARE ALLOWED TO BUY EACH WEEK" and "ONE RATION BOOK FOR ONE PERSON".

Like Ruta Sepetys's other novels, *The Bletchley Riddle* is set in a very specific historical time and place: World War II, on the grounds of a mansion turned top-secret organization in rural England, about 40 miles from London.

Students who learn more about this time and place will have an easier and more enjoyable reading experience. One way to facilitate this background knowledge is to share "Knowledge Organizers" – one-page documents with high-priority knowledge in the form of "key facts, literary terms, timelines of events, important quotations and historical background" (*The Teach Like a Champion Guide to the Science of Reading* by Doug Lemov, Colleen Driggs, and Erica Woolway, 2025).

These Knowledge Organizers are designed for students to consult frequently as they read and for teachers to use in quizzes and writing assignments. These simple pages give students the most important information they will need to meaningfully engage with a new text. When they are given in advance of reading, Knowledge Organizers support a richer and more rigorous analysis of text and, with repeated engagement, helps move knowledge from working memory into long-term memory.

Using Knowledge Organizers are key to "retrieval practice," a core memory and learning strategy that research shows works better than re-reading or highlighting texts:

"Retrieval strengthens the memory and interrupts forgetting. A single, simple quiz after reading a text or hearing a lecture produces better learning and remembering than rereading the text or reviewing lecture notes." – *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* by Peter C. Brown

We have created two Knowledge Organizers to use with *The Bletchley Riddle* – one for background knowledge about World War II and one about the novel itself. You might want to try your hand at creating your own! Find these in the Appendix of this guide.

Vocabulary

Word	Meaning
Air raid shelter	A building made to provide protection from air raids.
Allies/Allied Powers	One side of WWII. The United Kingdom, France and Poland, later joined by other countries including the Soviet Union, United States of America, and others.
Axis/Axis Powers	The other side of WWII. The Axis Powers were Germany, Italy, Japan, and Italy. Other countries joined them.
Battle of Britain	A battle in which the Royal Air Force (RAF) defended Britain from German bombing.
The Blitz	Night-time air raids on British towns and cities by German aircraft.
Evacuation	Being moved from your city in order to live in another, usually for safety, especially children, were evacuated.
Gas mask	Worn for protection from toxic gases.
Invoke	Using power in order to attack other countries.
Nazi Party	A German political party with racist and anti-Jewish ideas, led by Adolf Hitler.
rations	Food given to people in a camp or family to make sure there was enough for everyone.
The Blackout	People turned off their lights at night and covered their windows to prevent being spotted by German night planes.
Luftwaffe	The name for the German air force.

Key Figures & Facts about World War II

- World War I ended in 1918. Germany had to give up land and was banned from having armed forces.
- 1933: The German people elected Adolf Hitler as leader, who led the Nazi political party.
- UK Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain negotiated with Adolf Hitler to give Germany part of Czechoslovakia as long as Germany did not invade Poland or other countries.
- Friday, September 1, 1939: Germany invades Poland.
- A total of 1.25 million German soldiers swept into Poland.
- World War II was started by Germany in an unprovoked attack on Poland. Britain and France declared war on Germany after Hitler had refused to stop his invasion of Poland.

The red areas on this map show all the countries that were invaded at some point during World War II by the Nazis.

Background Knowledge: Bletchley Park

Bletchley Park and its historical significance in fighting World War II is key to enriching your students' comprehension and enjoyment of *The Bletchley Riddle*.

Fortunately, Bletchley Park is now a reserved historical site open to in-person and virtual visits, with museum exhibits in the original buildings, a podcast, and many short and long documentaries available on YouTube.

The description on their website and YouTube channel (<https://www.bletchleypark.org.uk/>; <https://www.youtube.com/@BletchleyParkTrust>) gives a great overview:

Discover Bletchley Park, the former top-secret home of British World War Two codebreaking; a place where technological innovation and human endeavor came together to make ground-breaking achievements that have helped shape the world we live in today. During World War Two, the Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS), now known as the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), was based at Bletchley Park. It grew from a small team of specialists to a vast intelligence factory of thousands of dedicated women and men. This extraordinary combination of brilliant and determined people and cutting-edge technology contributed significantly to Allied victory. In tough conditions, they provided vital intelligence and developed pioneering technological innovation that had a direct and profound influence on the outcome of the war. Subscribe to learn more about Bletchley Park and the secrets of the Home of the Codebreakers.

Specific YouTube videos from Bletchley Park that might be good to share with students before and during reading *The Bletchley Riddle* include:

- [Codebreakers' Stories: Recruitment](#)
- [Top 5 Features of the Enigma Machine](#)
- [Top 5 Weaknesses of the Enigma Machine](#)



“History Hit” has a longer look at how the Enigma Machine works:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcYY-sulyW4>



Another short video from a travel writer has excellent footage of the grounds of Bletchley Park as well as the mansion and out-buildings featured in *The Bletchley Riddle*.

Day Trip to Bletchley Park by “A Lady in London”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UZSpv8Q-GI>



Finally, there is an excellent “Kids Guide” to Bletchley Park by Kiddle:

https://kids.kiddle.co/Bletchley_Park

Lesson: It's a Text, Text, Text, Text World!

The world of *The Bletchley Riddle* – Britain, summer 1940 – is one full of written texts in the form of physical letters, postcards, diaries, magazines, books, newspapers, posters and more.

Today, text is no longer just on paper. The Internet, smart phones, iPads, email, texts, TikToks, and social media have moved written text to digital screens.

Explain this to students, and then tell them that you are going to explore together how written texts affect the story in *The Bletchley Riddle* as well as their own everyday lives today.

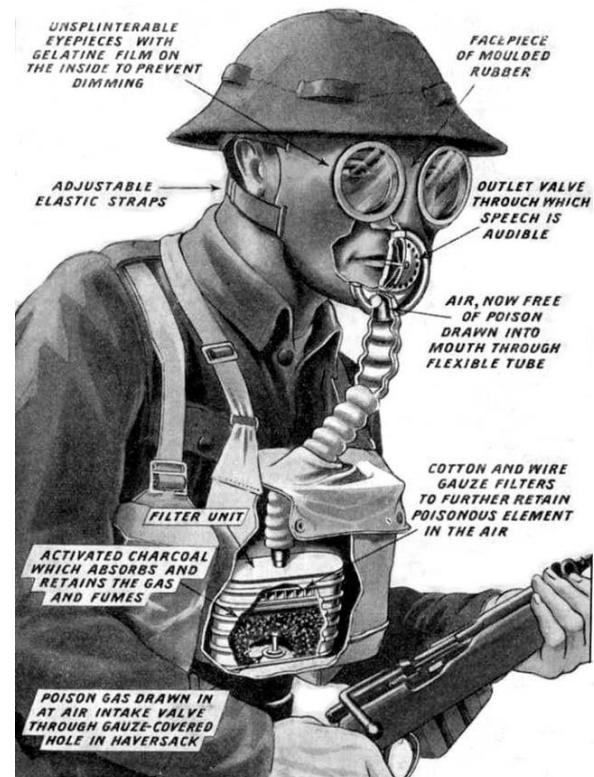
1. In small groups or as individuals, ask students to re-read Chapters 8, 9 and 10 in order to make a list of all of the different written texts that Jakob and Lizzie encounter. For each one, they should include the impact or meaning on the story.
Example: Posters on station walls: “Keep Your Gas Mask With You”; gas masks were carried by regular people at this time, including Lizzie and Jakob.
2. Optional writing activity in response to their lists:
 - a. Jot down ideas about what would happen if someone in this world (Summer 1940, England) could not read written text. What would it be like for them? What would be the biggest challenges?
 - b. As part of The Battle of Britain, the government blacked out street signs and other signs identifying places in order to confuse the invading Germans. How did this help the British?
 - c. How important is written text in code-breaking? How can it help – and hurt – efforts to crack secret messages?
 - d. How might the Secrets Act that Jakob and Lizzie agree to impede their use of written text?
3. Ask students to choose a day to record every encounter they have with written text, both physical and digital. Use the “My Day of Text” worksheet in the Appendix.
4. Share and compare! How was their experience similar to and different from Jakob and Lizzie’s experiences?

Lesson: Bletchley Riddle Objects

There are many objects in *The Bletchley Riddle*, some more important to the plot than others, but all contributing to the overall atmosphere and enjoyment of the novel.

One interesting way to introduce the novel is to share images and definitions BEFORE reading and asking students to stop during reading to note when an object appears and its importance to the plot or meaning of the novel.

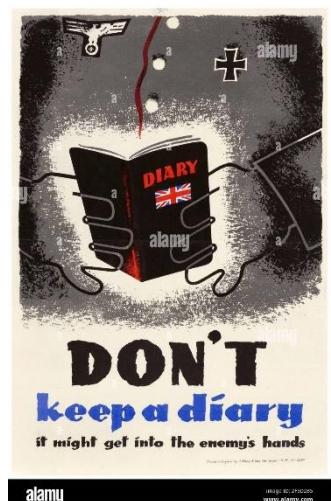
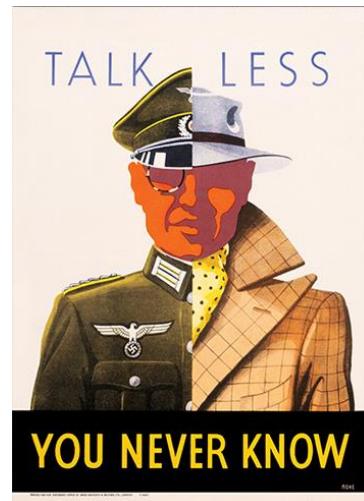
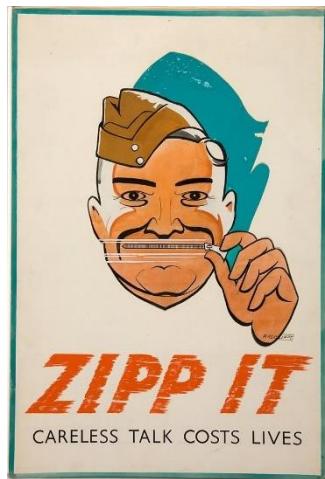
- Foot bath (pictured)
- Baby carriage (pictured)
- Enigma machine
- Gas mask (pictured)
- Ration book
- Government posters
- Street signs blacked out



Lesson: Turn Government Posters Into Short Videos

The British government used technology of the day – radios, posters, newspapers – to get out messages to their people about the war and how to behave. One message in particular was to STAY QUIET and don't share too much with other people in case they use or share that information with the enemy.

1. Share posters, below, that were common during World War II with this message.
2. Brainstorm (as a class, in groups, or as individuals) how to transform these posters into the technology of today of short-form videos.
 - a. What could happen in the video that gets across the message? Is there a protagonist and antagonist? What is the conclusion?
 - b. Dialogue or mostly silent?
 - c. What music / costumes / props can be used?
3. Select the best one to create and share videos!



Lesson: Fragments & Sentences

If you would like to combine the study of fragments and sentences with this novel, use the following sentences and worksheets in the Appendix.

Determine which of the following are fragments and which are complete sentences. Rewrite the fragments so they are complete sentences.

[Answers below]

1. Because Lizzie found the coded message. *Fragment*
2. Lizzie worked late into the night to decode the message. *Sentence*
3. Jakob examined the cipher wheel carefully before starting his shift. *Sentence*
4. If the Enigma machine had been damaged. *Fragment*
5. The intercepted message revealed a critical secret about the enemy fleet. *Sentence*
6. The codebreakers celebrated when they cracked the Enigma code. *Sentence*
7. While Jakob waited in Hut 6. *Fragment*
8. After Marion discovered the hidden cipher. *Fragment*
9. Without telling anyone about the intercepted note. *Fragment*
10. The Bletchley Park team shared their findings with Allied commanders. *Sentence*
11. When Colin entered the codebreaking room. *Fragment*
12. The riddle contained a clue that changed the entire investigation. *Sentence*
13. Before the meeting with Commander Travis. *Fragment*
14. The cipher wheel helped Colin decode the message in record time. *Sentence*
15. Although the clues were difficult to solve. *Fragment*
16. Since Jakob learned about the secret operation. *Fragment*
17. Marion praised Lizzie for her quick thinking during the operation. *Sentence*
18. While the rain fell outside Bletchley Park. *Fragment*
19. The secret message warned of an attack at dawn. *Sentence*
20. The team documented every step to ensure accuracy in their work. *Sentence*

Sample rewrites of fragments:

- (#1) Because Lizzie found the coded message. → Lizzie found the coded message and shared it with the team.
- (#4) If the Enigma machine had been damaged. → If the Enigma machine had been damaged, the mission would fail.
- (#7) While Jakob waited in Hut 6. → Jakob waited in Hut 6 for further instructions.
- (#8) After Marion discovered the hidden cipher. → Marion discovered the hidden cipher after hours of searching.
- (#9) Without telling anyone about the intercepted note. → Colin kept the intercepted note without telling anyone.
- (#11) When Colin entered the codebreaking room. → Colin entered the codebreaking room when the alarm sounded.
- (#13) Before the meeting with Commander Travis. → They prepared notes before the meeting with Commander Travis.

- (#15) Although the clues were difficult to solve. → Although the clues were difficult to solve, the team persisted.
- (#16) Since Jakob learned about the secret operation. → Since Jakob learned about the secret operation, he worked faster.
- (#18) While the rain fell outside Bletchley Park. → While the rain fell outside Bletchley Park, Lizzie focused on decoding.

Lesson: Letters from Lizzie (& Others)

Writing prompts from characters to other characters

1. Write a letter from Mr. Fleetwood, Lizzie's intended chaperone back to the United States, to Lizzie's grandmother, telling her about Lizzie's escape(s).
 - a. What reasons will he give for losing Lizzie multiple times?
 - b. What tone will he use – begging, haughty, business-like?
2. Write a letter from Lizzie to her grandmother after the third unsuccessful attempt to remove her to Cleveland.
 - a. Re-read some of the chapters in which Lizzie is the narrator. What are some features of her voice? Jot down some of the words she likes to use.
 - b. What will her attitude toward her grandmother be? Sorry, defiant, angry, conciliatory?
3. Write a letter from Jakob to Alan Turing about what happened to his buried silver.
 - a. Does he give a specific or general explanation?
 - b. Will he offer any help or other words of advice to find the silver again?

Book Reviews: *The Bletchley Riddle*

Booklist:

Grades 5-8 /* Starred Review */ Two powerhouse authors collaborate on an enormously entertaining, expertly researched WWII novel with broad appeal. The adventure begins when Lizzie, 14, gives her chaperone the slip and sets out to join her brother in London. Jakob, 19, is actually at Bletchley Park. It is May 1940, and he has joined the “most worthwhile game,” the effort to break Germany’s Enigma codes. Time is of the essence if they are to foil Hitler’s invasion of England, but Lizzie needs Jakob’s help to solve a more personal puzzle—finding their mother. Their Jewish British father died nine years earlier, and now their mother, an American, is missing and presumed dead while on an embassy assignment in Poland. Jakob withdraws into his work, while Lizzie throws herself into uncovering the truth. The siblings narrate in short, alternating chapters that propel the reader forward. Daily life at the Park is intriguing and mysterious: an MI5 spy lurks on its edges, making cryptic threats, and secret messages appear in Lizzie’s lodgings, begging to be deciphered. The authors successfully blend genuine suspense, sibling relationship issues, and humorous hijinks to create a tone both heartfelt and playful. Lizzie is a star—precocious, bossy, daring, and willing to risk everything for her family and new friends. Perfect for fans of Alan Gratz, this is an excellent fictional companion to Candace Fleming’s *The Enigma Girls* (2024). HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Both masters of their craft, Sepetys and Sheinkin’s collaboration will draw fiction and nonfiction fans, not to mention a code-breaking coterie. -- Angela Carstensen (Reviewed 9/1/2024) (Booklist, vol 121, number 1, p78)

School Library Journal:

/* Starred Review */ Gr 6–10—This dual-narrative novel follows siblings Jakob and Lizzie Novis through WWII-era London just prior to the Blitz. Jakob is 19, working as a codebreaker at Bletchley Park, trying to unlock the secrets of the German Enigma machine. His younger sister Lizzie wants to remain in England but is caught in a furious battle with her American grandmother over an attempt to bring her to the U.S. Lizzie is vehement about staying because she wants to locate their mother, an embassy worker who went missing in Poland when the Nazis invaded. And while Jakob doesn't believe their mother is alive, when he and Lizzie start receiving coded messages in the mail, the siblings unite to uncover the truth. This book is an impressive joint effort between Sepetys and Sheinkin. Not only do they present a history of cryptography within details of life at Bletchley Park, they also highlight the Enigma-cracking contributions of well-known figures (e.g., Alan Turing) along with the lesser-known Polish team of Marian Rejewski, Henryk Zygalski, and Jerzy Ró ycki. Sepetys and Sheinkin have created two protagonists who balance and complement each other in the dual-narrative format: Lizzie is assertive, quick-thinking, and persistent, while Jakob is reserved, thoughtful, and protective. The dangers of life in wartime England are ever present, but this book introduces enough levity to keep the tone light and engaging. VERDICT With broad appeal to both WWII and mystery

enthusiasts, this highly recommended title is a first purchase for all libraries serving tweens and teens.—Michael Van Wambeke --Michael Van Wambeke

Publishers Weekly:

/* Starred Review */ This dynamic collaboration from Sepetys (I Must Betray You) and Sheinkin (Impossible Escape), set in May 1940, is marked by swift, snappy, and suspenseful storytelling narrated by Polish Jewish siblings Jakob and Lizzie. Nineteen-year-old Jakob has been recruited from Cambridge University by Britain's Government Code and Cypher School at Bletchley Park to help decipher messages encrypted using the German Enigma machine. When his self-described straightforward-speaking 14-year-old sister Lizzie eludes their American grandmother's (first, but not last) attempt to bring her to Cleveland, she, too, ends up at Bletchley Park, assigned to carry packages between departments. Now, Lizzie endeavors to disprove the apparent death of their mother, who worked at the American Embassy in London and disappeared in Poland during the 1939 German attack. Short chapters make for fast-paced narration through simultaneously developing mysteries and relationships. Especially well depicted—and explained—is the excitement, as well as the daily drudgery, of codebreaking, culminating in a seamlessly entertaining and edifying read. Most characters, all portrayed as white, are fictional, but historical figures such as U.S. Ambassador Joseph Kennedy and mathematician Alan Turing play minor roles. Ages 10-up. (Oct.)

Kirkus:

Siblings decode familial and wartime secrets in 1940 England. Headstrong 14-year-old Lizzie Novis refuses to believe that her mother, a U.S. embassy clerk who was working in Poland, is dead. After fleeing from her grandmother—who's attempting to bring her back to America—Lizzie locates her 19-year-old brother, Jakob, a Cambridge mathematician who's stationed at the clandestine British intelligence site called Bletchley Park. Hiding from her grandmother's estate steward, Lizzie becomes a messenger at Bletchley Park, ferrying letters across the grounds while Jakob attempts to both break the ciphers generated by the German Enigma machines and help his sister face the reality of their mother's likely fate. With a suspicious MI5 agent inquiring about Mum and clues and codes piling up, the siblings, whose late father was "Polish Jewish British," eventually decipher the truth. Shared narrative duties between the siblings effectively juxtapose the measured Jakob with the spirited Lizzie. Lizzie's directness is repeatedly attributed to her being "half American," which proves tiresome, but Jakob's development from reserved to risk-tolerant provides welcome nuance. The authors introduce and carefully explain a variety of decoding methodologies, inspiring readers to attempt their own. A thoughtful and entertaining historical note identifies the key figures who appear in the book, such as Alan Turing, as well as the real-life bases for the fictional characters. Interspersed photos and images of ephemera help situate the narrative's time period. A rich, enthralling historical mystery that engages and educates. (Historical mystery. 10-14) (Kirkus Reviews, August 15, 2024)

Related Titles

If you are looking for read-alikes of Ruta Sepetys's intense historical fiction:

	<p>The Hunger Between Us by Marina Scott</p> <p>When her best friend disappears in the summer of 1942, Liza resolves to rescue her no matter the cost, entangling herself in an increasingly dangerous web with two former classmates, one a member of the militia and other other forced to live in Leningrad's tunnels.</p> <p><i>Young women living in the shadow of World War II are forced to do anything to survive in these bleak historical stories. Liza's (Hunger) story is set during the siege of Leningrad, while Lina (Shades) lives in exile in Siberia.</i></p>
	<p>Firebird by Elizabeth Wein</p> <p>Nastia is no traitor. She is a daring pilot, the daughter of revolutionaries, and now, as the Second World War descends on Russia, she must fight to save the glorious Motherland. But all is not as it seems, and when the battles begin, secrets are revealed and everything that she once knew is challenged... A thrilling adventure brimming with historical detail and powerful female characters. Particularly suitable for struggling, reluctant or dyslexic readers aged 13+.</p> <p><i>Set in World War II, this suspenseful novel follows young people who must find ways to fight back mysterious forces in war.</i></p>
	<p>The Enigma Girls by Candace Fleming</p> <p>During WWII, Bletchley Park, operating under the code name Station X, was run by teenaged girls who helped turn the tide of the war for the Allies with their hard work, their determination and, most importantly, their ability to keep a secret.</p> <p><i>This nonfiction work is perfect for readers who want to learn more about the real Bletchley Park codebreakers, in particular the young women who helped break the Nazi Enigma Code.</i></p>

Appendix: World War II Knowledge Organizer

World War II Knowledge Organizer

September 1, 1939	September 3, 1939	January 1940	May-June 1940	July 1940	October 1940	September 2, 1945
Germany invades Poland.	Britain and France declare war on Germany – World War II begins.	Rationing starts across the United Kingdom.	British soldiers are evacuated from Dunkirk. France surrenders to Germany. Germany invades much of Western Europe.	Germany launches air raids on Great Britain starting with the Battle of Britain. (The Blitz). Italy and Japan sign an agreement with Germany and join The Axis Powers.	Germany continues to bomb British cities.	World War II ends.

Rationing

Worried that the country would run out of food, the British (UK) government introduced rationing. This meant that people could only buy small amounts of foods – and there wasn't much choice. Everyone had a ration book to keep track of what they bought.

People had to make their food last a lot longer and had to come up with unusual recipes because they could not get the ingredients they needed.

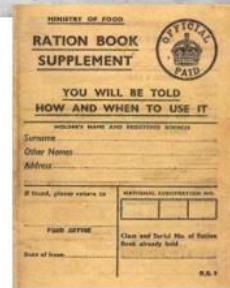
There were no bananas during the war and people had to eat powdered eggs and milk.

The Blitz / Battle of Britain

The Luftwaffe, Germany's air force, began what is called "The Blitz" with severe bombing (often at night) on towns and cities across Britain. The English response was termed "The Battle of Britain" where the RAF (Royal Air Force) fought back.

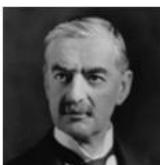
An air raid siren would sound to let people know when a bombing was about to start and again when the bombing was over.

To keep safe, people hid in air raid shelters. The bombings severely damaged cities and many people's homes were damaged.



Vocabulary

Word	Meaning
Air raid shelter	A building made to provide protection from air raids.
Allies/ Allied Powers	One side of WWII. The United Kingdom, France and Poland, later joined by other countries, including the USSR, the United States of America, and China.
Axis/ Axis Powers	The other side of WWII. The Axis Powers were originally Germany, Japan, and Italy. Other countries joined later.
Battle of Britain	A battle in which the Royal Air Force (RAF) defended Britain from German bombing.
The Blitz	Night-time air raids on British towns and cities by German aircraft.
Evacuation	Being moved from your city in order to be safe. Many people, especially children, were evacuated.
Gas mask	Worn for protection from toxic gases.
invade	Using power in order to attack other countries.
Nazi Party	A German political party with racist and anti-Jewish ideas, led by Adolf Hitler.
rations	Food and water that are given out fairly to make sure there was enough for everyone.
The Blackout	People turned off their lights at night and covered their windows to prevent being spotted by German fighter planes.
Luftwaffe	The name for the German air force.



Key Figures & Facts about World War II

- World War I ended in 1918. Germany had to give up land and was banned from having armed forces.
- 1933: the German people elected Adolf Hitler as leader, who led the Nazi political party.
- UK Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain negotiated with Adolf Hitler to give Germany part of Czechoslovakia as long as Germany did not invade Poland or other countries.
- Friday, September 1, 1939: Germany invades Poland.
- A total of 1.25 million German soldiers swept into Poland.
- World War II was started by Germany in an unprovoked attack on Poland. Britain and France declared war on Germany after Hitler had refused to stop his invasion of Poland.



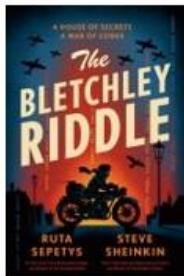
The red areas on this map show all the countries that were invaded at some point during World War II by the Nazis.

Appendix: *The Bletchley Riddle*

Knowledge Organizer

Knowledge Organizer: *The Bletchley Riddle*

Key Vocabulary	
Cipher	A secret or disguised way of writing; a code.
Code-breaking	Translating a cipher into understandable words and meaning.
Precocious	Having developed certain abilities at an earlier age than usual – particularly children.
Correspondence	Written letters or other mail.
Posh	Elegant or stylishly luxurious.
Cryptic	Having a meaning that is mysterious or obscure.



See "Knowledge Organizer: World War II" for background information about the setting (time + place) of *The Bletchley Riddle*.

Characters	
Jakob Novis	A university student recruited to Bletchley Park as codebreaker. Co-protagonist of novel.
Lizzie Novis	Jakob's younger sister who begins working at Bletchley Park. Co-protagonist of novel.
Willa Novis	Jakob and Lizzie's mother. Presumed dead at beginning of novel.
Gran	Jakob and Lizzie's grandmother.
Fleetwood	Man charged with taking Lizzie back to U.S.
Detective Jarvis	Policeman trying to catch spies.
Colin	Local boy and friend of Lizzie.
Marion	Lizzie's friend and fellow employee.

Literary Terms	
Dual narrative	A story that is told from the point of view of two different characters.
Setting	When and where a story takes place
Conflict	The central problem in the story: External conflict = motivation + obstacle Internal conflict = negative thoughts and feelings or tough choices
Motivation	What a character wants or needs (often causes the conflict)
Obstacle	What stands in the way of a character reaching their motivation
Perspective	The way a character views or thinks about a situation, another character, or themselves

Can you identify the objects and where each one shows up in the novel?



What is an Enigma Machine?

- Electrical-mechanical device first made in early 1920s for coding messages
- Initially used for commercial use (banks) but German government bought about 30,000 and modified them to make code stronger
- Allows operator to set rotors that establish initial keyword for code – this key will change while machine is being used
- Pushing buttons completes circuit, turning text X into coded text Y
- The Turing Bombe was an electromechanical device used to discover daily messages of the Enigma Machines in Germany



Key Facts About Bletchley Park

- Bletchley Park was a country house and estate (with 581 acres of land) sold to Great Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) in 1938 and set up as a secret location for codebreaking during World War II.
- British codebreakers were in debt to Polish codebreakers, who shared their intelligence and an Enigma Machine in 1939.
- The organization was called by several names, included GC&S (Government Code and Cipher School) and "Station X."
- Secrecy was key – every employee had to sign the Official Secrets Act, which prevented them from talking about their work during the war and for 30 years after (until the mid-1970s). Some people never talked about their Bletchley Park experiences.
- Workers were recruited from students at Oxford and Cambridge (all men), but 75% were women. Around 10,000 people in total worked at Bletchley Park between 1938 and 1945, when the war ended.
- Other people recruited included mathematicians, military experts, historians, bankers, musicians, chess masters and winners of crossword competitions.
- Codebreakers translated around 4,000 messages a day.
- Shifts were long and difficult, but there were occasional concerts, a tennis court, dancing, and chess clubs.

Appendix: “My Day of Text” Worksheet

Pay attention to the text around you! Write down all instances of interacting with text either in print or digital format.

Appendix: Fragments & Sentences

Explanation

A fragment is an incomplete thought that is missing a subject, a verb, or both. A complete sentence expresses a full idea and includes at least one subject and one verb.

Part 1: Is It a Fragment or Sentence?

Read each example below. Decide whether it is a fragment or a complete sentence. Circle whether each group of words is a fragment or sentence.

1. Because Lizzie found the coded message. *Fragment or Sentence*
2. Lizzie worked late into the night to decode the message. *Fragment or Sentence*
3. Jakob examined the cipher wheel carefully before starting his shift.
Fragment or Sentence
4. If the Enigma machine had been damaged. *Fragment or Sentence*
5. The intercepted message revealed a critical secret about the enemy fleet.
Fragment or Sentence
6. The codebreakers celebrated when they cracked the Enigma code.
Fragment or Sentence
7. While Jakob waited in Hut 6. *Fragment or Sentence*
8. After Marion discovered the hidden cipher. *Fragment or Sentence*
9. Without telling anyone about the intercepted note. *Fragment or Sentence*
10. The Bletchley Park team shared their findings with Allied commanders.
Fragment or Sentence
11. When Colin entered the codebreaking room. *Fragment or Sentence*
12. The riddle contained a clue that changed the entire investigation. *Fragment or Sentence*
13. Before the meeting with Commander Travis. *Fragment or Sentence*
14. The cipher wheel helped Colin decode the message in record time.
Fragment or Sentence
15. Although the clues were difficult to solve. *Fragment or Sentence*
16. Since Jakob learned about the secret operation. *Fragment or Sentence*

17. Marion praised Lizzie for her quick thinking during the operation. *Sentence*
18. While the rain fell outside Bletchley Park. *Fragment or Sentence*
19. The secret message warned of an attack at dawn. *Fragment or Sentence*
20. The team documented every step to ensure accuracy in their work.
Fragment or Sentence

Part 2: Rewrite the Fragments.

There are exactly ten (10) fragments in Part 1. Rewrite each one to be a complete sentence.

Fragment 1: _____

Rewritten Sentence: _____

Fragment 2: _____

Rewritten Sentence: _____

Fragment 3: _____

Rewritten Sentence: _____

Fragment 4: _____

Rewritten Sentence: _____

Fragment 5: _____

Rewritten Sentence: _____

Fragment 6: _____

Rewritten Sentence: _____

Fragment 7: _____

Rewritten Sentence: _____

Fragment 8: _____

Rewritten Sentence: _____

Fragment 9: _____

Rewritten Sentence: _____

Fragment 10: _____

Rewritten Sentence: _____