

# FOUNDATIONS OF COMPUTING P/T

## QUESTIONS - TUTORIAL 4

### THE STORED-PROGRAM COMPUTER

The modified extract below is taken from:

<http://www.turing.org.uk/turing/scrapbook/computer.html>

It is from Alan's Turing's homepage, written by his biographer, Andrew Hodges

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1. (from page 1) Do you think it is reasonable to base our definition of the computer on whether or not it contains 'an internally stored modifiable program'?
2. Which machines in the 1940s would Hodges class as near-computers?
3. How did World War Two affect the development of computing?
4. Who came up with the idea of the stored-program computer? Who generally gets the credit for the invention?
5. (from page 6) What do you think are the essential features of a computer?
6. (from page 6) According to Hodges, what did Alan Turing alone grasp about the computer?
7. (from page 6/7) What could be achieved with a universal machine?

On page 7 there are two things to note. First, Hodges' warning about bad material, whether it is published in a book or on the web. Second, Hodges concludes by discussing how to define a computer. This takes us back to Bacon's ideas from tutorial 1 question 4, and Hodges asks us to decide how a computer is defined - physically, or logically? There is no single answer here – you will find examples of people following both paths, now and in the past.

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