superlexa.

FREE SPANISH READER · LEVEL ONE

# The Enigma Machine

A true story in easy Spanish, written with words that look like English, so you can read it from day one.

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**80%** of the words in this story are cognates or names you can recognize from English, or one of the 50 little words listed on page 2.

## How to read this story

1. Read without stopping. Words like *información* look like English, so trust your guess.
2. A dotted word is explained in the box under its paragraph: first its meaning, then where it comes from. The origin is the link to English that makes it stick.
3. The little grammar words (the, of, and) are listed once, on the next page.

# Little words

These short words carry the grammar. They are everywhere, so learn them here and they will not be marked in the story.

**el** The (masculine singular)

**la** The (feminine singular); her, it

**los** The (masculine plural); them

**las** The (feminine plural); them

**lo** The (neuter); him, it (direct object)

**un** A, an; one

**una** A, one (feminine)

**unas** Some

**de** Of; from

**del** of the / from the

**a** To, at

**al** To the / at the (the contraction of a plus el)

**en** In / on / at

**y** And

**e** And, used before words beginning with i- or hi-

**que** that / which / than

**con** With

**por** for / by / through

**para** For / in order to

**su** His / her / its / their / your (formal)

**sus** His, her, its, their, your (formal plural)

**se** Himself, herself, itself, themselves; oneself; (impersonal) one, people

**no** No

**ni** Nor / not even

**más** more

**muy** Very

**ya** Already / now

**como** As, like

**pero** but

**sin** Without

**sobre** On / about / envelope

**entre** Between; among

**hasta** until, up to

**desde** from / since

**cuando** when

**donde** Where (relative)

**esta** This (feminine)

**estos** These (masculine plural)

**ese** That (demonstrative)

**esa** That (feminine)

**esos** Those (masculine plural)

**él** He / him

**ellos** They (masculine)

**había** there was, there were; had (imperfect of haber)

**fue** Was; went

**era** Was / used to be (imperfect of ser); also: era, age

**eran** Were

**estaba** Was

**tan** So, such

**también** Also / too

# The Enigma Machine

En la oscuridad total del océano Atlántico, un operador alemán escribía en un teclado extraño dentro de un submarino silencioso. Afuera, el agua fría presionaba contra el metal del casco. Adentro, el único sonido era el zumbido de los motores eléctricos. No era una máquina de escribir normal. Con cada tecla, la electricidad pasaba por un sistema de rotores mecánicos y una letra completamente diferente se iluminaba en un pequeño panel de luces. El operador copiaba, letra por letra, un mensaje que parecía puro caos: una serie infinita de símbolos sin ningún sentido lógico. Pero para el capitán del submarino, ese caos contenía órdenes precisas. Indicaban la posición exacta de un convoy aliado, cargado con provisiones esenciales, que navegaba en algún punto del océano sin imaginar el peligro que se acercaba bajo la superficie.

**alemán** *german.* Alemán comes from the Alemanni, a league of Germanic tribes on the upper Rhine, whose name probably meant "all men."

**teclado** *keyboard.* Teclado is "keyboard," built on tecla, "key."

**dentro** *inside / within.* Dentro is de, "from," plus Latin intro, "inside, inward," the intro- of "introduce" and "introvert."

**afuera** *outside, out.* Afuera is a plus fuera, "outside," from Latin foras, "out of doors," from foris, "door, outside."

**agua** *water.* Agua is Latin aqua, "water," the "aqua" of English "aquarium," "aquatic," and "aqueduct."

**fría** (frío) *cold (feminine); also, colloquially, a cold beer.* Frío, "cold," is English "frigid," from Latin frigidus, worn down in speech by losing its middle syllable.

**casco** *helmet; hull (of a ship); hoof.* Casco first meant "potsherd," a broken piece, from cascar, "to crack," and then any hard shell: a skull, a helmet, a hull, a hoof.

**adentro** *inside / within.* Adentro is a plus dentro, "inside," which comes from Latin de intro, "from within."

**zumbido** *a buzzing, humming, or ringing sound.* Zumbido is the noun of zumbar, "to buzz," a verb that imitates a droning zumm.

**cada** *each, every.* Cada comes from Greek kata, "down, one by one," which Late Latin borrowed in phrases like cata die, "day by day."

**tecla** *a key, on a piano, keyboard, or any pushbutton device.* Tecla comes from Medieval Latin thecula, "little box," from Latin theca, "box, case," perhaps blended with tegula, "tile," the source of Spanish teja, "roof tile."

**letra** *letter (of the alphabet); handwriting; lyrics.* Letra is English "letter," both from Latin littera, "letter of the alphabet," which also gives "literal" and "literature."

**pequeño** *small.* Pequeño probably belongs with French petit and Italian piccolo, and so with English "petite," "petty," and the piccolo, the small flute.

**luces** (luz) *lights.* Luz comes from Latin lux, lucis, "light," as in "fiat lux," "let there be light," in Spanish hágase la luz.

**parecía** (parecer) *seemed, was seeming.* Parecer is a cousin of English "appear": both come from Latin parere, "to come into view."

**ningún** (ninguno) *no, not any.* Ninguno is Latin nec unus, "not even one," worn down through Old Spanish neguno.

**cargado** (cargar) *loaded; charged; heavy, stuffy (of air or atmosphere).* Cargar gives English "cargo," a load, and is the same verb as English "charge."

**algún** (alguno) *some, any.* Alguno joins two Latin words, aliquis, "someone," and unus, "one," so it is "some one."

**punto** *point / dot.* Punto is English "point," from Latin punctum, "a prick, a dot," from pungere, "to prick."

**peligro** *danger.* Peligro is English "peril": both come from Latin periculum, "trial, risk, danger."

**acercaba** (acercar) *was bringing near, was approaching.* Acercar is a-, "to," plus cerca, "near": to bring near.

**bajo** (bajar) *under / low / short.* Bajar is to go down, the verb of bajo, "low."

La máquina se llamaba Enigma. Su mecanismo era simple y brillante a la vez. Varios rotores, con el alfabeto completo en su interior, giraban con cada letra y cambiaban la sustitución de cada símbolo. A eso se sumaba un clavijero que conectaba las letras en pares. El número de

configuraciones posibles era astronómico: millones y millones de combinaciones diferentes. Solo una era correcta, la clave secreta del día, y únicamente los operadores alemanes la conocían.

**llamaba** (llamar) *was calling / used to call.* Llamar comes from Latin clamare, "to shout, to call," the root of English "claim," "clamor," and "exclaim," with Latin cl- becoming Spanish ll-.

**vez** *time / occasion.* Vez is the "vice" of "vice versa," "the turn reversed," and of "vice president," one who serves in turn for another.

**giraban** (girar) *they were turning, spinning.* Girar is the gyr- of English "gyrate" and "gyroscope," and of the Greek "gyro," meat turned on a spit.

**cambiaban** (cambiar) *they were changing.* Cambiar is the same word as English "change."

**eso** (ese) *that (neuter demonstrative pronoun).* Ese is the ipso of "ipso facto," "by that very fact."

**clavijero** *pegbox, peghead (of a stringed instrument); plugboard (of a cipher machine such as Enigma).* Clavijero is a board that holds clavijas, "pegs, plugs": the pegbox of a guitar or violin, or the plugboard of the Enigma cipher machine.

**solo** *alone / only.* Solo is the "solo" of music, which English borrowed from Italian: a part played alone.

**alemanes** (alemán) *germans.*

**conocían** (conocer) *they used to know.* Conocer has the cogn- of English "cognition," "recognize," and "incognito," "unknown."

A cientos de kilómetros, en estaciones de radio repartidas por todo el territorio británico, los especialistas aliados interceptaban esa misma transmisión. Anotaban la serie completa de símbolos, letra por letra. Pero al terminar no tenían ningún mensaje legible, solo una cadena de letras sin ningún patrón visible. Mientras tanto, en algún punto del Atlántico, un convoy de barcos aliados navegaba directamente hacia el peligro. Nadie podía alertarlo. Los submarinos alemanes, invisibles bajo la superficie, esperaban su momento perfecto.

**cientos** (ciento) *hundreds.* Ciento is "hundred," from Latin centum, which gives English "cent," "century," and "percent," "for each hundred."

**repartidas** (repartir) *distributed, divided up.* Repartir is to divide into parts: re- plus partir, "to divide," from Latin pars, partis, "part," the root of English "part" and "partition."

**todo** *all; everything.* Todo comes from Latin totus, "whole, all," the toto of "in toto," "as a whole," and the source of English "total."

**misma** (mismo) *same (feminine).* Mismo comes from Vulgar Latin metipsimus, "the very self," built on ipse, "self," the ipso of "ipso facto," "by the fact itself."

**anotaban** *they were noting down.* Anotaban is the imperfect of anotar, "to note down": anotaban los datos, "they were noting down the data."

**cadena** *chain.* Cadena is the same word as English "chain," which was worn down in French.

**patrón** *boss, employer; patron saint; pattern or template.* Patrón is English "patron," and also "pattern," which began as the same word: a patron sets the model to copy.

**mientras** *while, meanwhile.* Mientras holds the same Latin as English "interim," "meanwhile."

**tanto** *so much; as much.* Tanto comes from Latin tantus, "so great, so much," which English keeps in "tantamount," at root "amounting to as much."

**barcos** (barco) *boats, ships.* Barco grew out of barca, "small boat," the word inside English "embark" and "bark," an old name for a sailing ship.

**hacia** *toward.* Hacia, "toward," began as Old Spanish faz a, "face to": to go hacia a place is to go the way one's face is turned.

**nadie** *nobody.* Nadie comes from Latin nati, "people born," used in negative sentences like "born people did not do it," which came to mean "nobody did it."

**podía** (poder) *could; was able to (imperfect of poder).* Poder is the source family of English "power": both continue spoken Latin potere, "to be able," a regularized form of Latin posse, the verb behind "potent" and "possible."

**esperaban** (esperar) *were waiting, were hoping.* Esperar means both "to hope" and "to wait," from Latin sperare, "to hope."

Esa era la realidad constante de la guerra: mensajes urgentes, vidas humanas en peligro e información crucial encerrada dentro de un código aparentemente imposible de romper. Durante los primeros años del conflicto, los aliados atacaron el problema con métodos puramente

matemáticos y no consiguieron nada. Cada intento terminaba en frustración. Demasiadas variables, demasiadas combinaciones y un sistema diseñado para resistir cualquier ataque lógico convencional. Para muchos oficiales aliados, Enigma era un muro invisible e impenetrable.

**guerra** *war.* Guerra gives English "guerrilla," "little war," a word borrowed from Spanish.

**vidas** (vida) *lives.* Vida is the vita of "curriculum vitae," "the course of a life," and of "vitamin" and "vital."

**encerrada** (encerrar) *locked up, enclosed (feminine).* Encerrar is en- plus cerrar, "to close," so it means "to shut in."

**romper** *to break.* Romper, "to break," comes from Latin rumpere, "to break, to burst," the root of English "rupture," "erupt," "interrupt," and "corrupt."

**durante** *during.* Durante is English "during," and both began as the present participle of a verb meaning "to last," Spanish durar and French durer.

**primeros** (primero) *first (masculine plural).* Primero comes from Latin primarius, "of the first rank," from primus, "first," the source of English "primary" and "prime."

**años** (año) *years.* Año is the annus of "anno Domini," A.D., "in the year of the Lord."

**consiguieron** (conseguir) *they achieved, obtained.* Conseguir is "to get what one goes after," from Latin consequi, "to follow closely, to catch up with."

**nada** *nothing.* Nada comes from Latin (res) nata, "a thing born," used in sentences like "not a thing born," which wore down to mean "nothing."

**demasiadas** (demasiado) *too many, excessive (feminine plural).* Demasiado means "too much," what goes past the rest.

**cualquier** (cualquiera) *any, whatever.* Cualquiera is cual, "which," plus quiera, "it may want": whichever one may want, and so "any at all."

**muchos** (mucho) *many.* Mucho comes from Latin multum, "much," the root of English "multiple," "multitude," and "multi-."

**muro** *wall (especially an exterior or fortifying one).* Muro is the wall behind English "mural," a painting on a wall, and "intramural," within the walls.

Pero el secreto de Enigma ya tenía una grieta, abierta años antes del inicio oficial del conflicto. En Polonia, un grupo pequeño de matemáticos había dedicado años enteros a estudiar esta máquina en silencio. Trabajaban en oficinas modestas, rodeados de papeles cubiertos de ecuaciones y de diagramas de rotores imaginarios. No tenían acceso al original alemán. Tenían teorías, deducciones lógicas y una intuición matemática extraordinaria. Noche tras noche probaban hipótesis, eliminaban modelos incorrectos y reconstruían, pieza por pieza, un mecanismo que ningún civil debía conocer jamás. Al final consiguieron construir réplicas funcionales de la máquina alemana y crearon métodos originales para atacar el código. Era un logro casi imposible de imaginar sin haber tocado nunca el original.

**tenía** (tener) *I/he/she/you had (was having).* Tener comes from Latin tenere, "to hold," the root of English "tenant," "maintain," "obtain," and "lieutenant," from French lieu tenant, "place holder."

**grieta** *crack, crevice.* Grieta, Old Spanish crieta, comes from Latin crepita, the past participle of crepare, "to crack, to creak."

**abierta** (abierto) *open (feminine).* Abierto comes from Latin apertus, "opened," the word behind English "aperture," an opening.

**antes** *before.* Antes is ante, "before," with an adverb -s, and ante is the a of a.m.: ante meridiem, "before midday."

**inicio** *beginning; start.* Inicio is Latin initium, "a beginning," from inire, "to go in, to enter upon," from in-, "in," and ire, "to go."

**trabajaban** (trabajar) *they were working, used to work.* Trabajar is the verb of English "travail," painful toil.

**papeles** (papel) *papers; roles.* Papel is English "paper": both come from Latin papyrus, from Greek papyros, the reed the ancient world wrote on.

**cubiertos** (cubierto) *covered (plural); also cutlery.* Cubierto is the past participle of cubrir, "to cover," and English "cover" is the same Latin verb.

**noche** *night.* Noche comes from Latin nox, noctis, "night," the root of English "nocturnal" and "equinox," when night equals day.

**debía** (deber) *I/he/she had to, used to owe.* Deber shares its Latin source with English "debt" and "debit," and the silent b in "debt" was put back to match the Latin.

**conocer** *to know, to be acquainted with; to meet.*

**jamás** *never; ever.* Jamás is Latin iam magis, "already more," fused into one word, and both parts survive alone as ya, "already," and más, "more."

**alemana** (alemán) *german (feminine).*

**logro** *achievement, accomplishment.* Logro is the noun of lograr, "to achieve, to manage": un gran logro, "a great achievement."

**casi** *almost.* Casi is Latin quasi, "as if, nearly," which English keeps as "quasi-," as in "quasi-official."

**haber** *to have (as an auxiliary); there to be.* Haber comes from Latin habere, "to have, to hold," the verb of "habeas corpus," "you shall have the body," the order to bring a prisoner before a judge.

**nunca** *never.* Nunca comes from Latin numquam, "never," built from ne, "not," and umquam, "ever," exactly as English "never" is "not ever."

En 1939, con las divisiones alemanas concentradas en la frontera y una invasión inminente, estos matemáticos polacos tomaron una decisión crucial: pasar todo su conocimiento a los aliados británicos y franceses antes de que fuera demasiado tarde. Documentos, diagramas técnicos y máquinas construidas por ellos cruzaron fronteras en secreto absoluto, apenas unas semanas antes de la invasión alemana de Polonia. Fue cuestión de días. Los aliados ganaron por muy poco.

**alemanas** (alemán) *german (feminine plural).*

**polacos** *polish people or things.* Polacos is the plural of polaco, "Polish, a Pole," borrowed from Polish Polak, "a Pole."

**tomaron** (tomar) *they took.* Tomar is the everyday Spanish "to take," of unknown origin, shared only with Portuguese.

**conocimiento** *knowledge.* Conocimiento is the noun of conocer, "to know," with -miento, like English "-ment."

**fuera** (ser) *outside, out; away (from home); also "were" (imperfect subjunctive of ser and ir).* Ser, "to be," carries Latin esse, "to be," the root of English "essence": Spanish es, "is," is Latin est, and soy, "I am," goes back to sum.

**demasiado** *too much / too.*

**apenas** *barely / hardly.* Apenas is a penas, "with pains": what is barely done is done with difficulty.

**semanas** (semana) *weeks.* Semana, "week," comes from Latin septimana, "a set of seven," from septem, "seven," the root of "September," once the seventh month of the Roman year.

**ganaron** (ganar) *they won, earned.* Ganar is the Spanish cousin of English "gain."

**poco** *little / few.* Poco comes from Latin paucus, "few, little," the root of English "paucity," a scarcity.

Con esa base fundamental, Gran Bretaña estableció un centro especial de operaciones en una propiedad rural apartada: Bletchley Park. Ahí llegaron cientos de matemáticos, lingüistas e ingenieros, que trabajaban en turnos continuos, de día y de noche. Cada medianoche, los operadores alemanes cambiaban la configuración completa de sus máquinas y establecían una clave nueva. Eso significaba que, cada veinticuatro horas, el equipo británico empezaba otra vez desde cero: millones de combinaciones posibles y unas pocas horas para encontrar la correcta antes de que la información perdiera su valor táctico.

**ahí** *there (near the listener).* Ahí is a plus the old word hí, "there," which probably comes from Latin ibi, "there."

**llegaron** (llegar) *they arrived.* Llegar began as a sailor's word.

**medianoche** *midnight.* Medianoche is media noche, "middle of the night," from Latin medius, "middle," as in "medium," and nox, noctis, "night," as in "nocturnal."

**nueva** (nuevo) *new (feminine); (noun) a piece of news.* Nuevo is the "New" in Nuevo México, New Mexico, and Nueva York.

**veinticuatro** *twenty-four.* Veinticuatro is veinte, "twenty," plus cuatro, "four," once written veinte y cuatro.

**empezaba** (empezar) *was beginning.* Empezar is en plus pieza, "piece": to begin was to break into something whole, as one starts on a loaf by cutting off a piece.

**otra** (otro) *another, other (feminine).* Otro is the alter of "alter ego," "the other self."

**pocas** (poco) *few.*

**perdiera** (perder) *(That) he/she lost, would lose.* Perder is the verb behind English "perdition," being lost for good.

**valor** *value / courage.* Valor covers both English "value" and "valor," courage.

Para acelerar ese proceso imposible, el equipo diseñó una máquina electromecánica especial: la «bombe». Con un ruido constante de engranajes y contactos eléctricos, probaba combinaciones a una velocidad muy superior a la de cualquier persona y eliminaba configuraciones imposibles

hasta llegar a unas pocas candidatas probables. El proceso todavía necesitaba intuición humana, paciencia extrema y trabajo colectivo. Pero con la «bombe» en marcha, el tiempo necesario para descifrar un mensaje se redujo de forma radical.

**ruido** *noise.* Ruido is the "ado" of Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing," which in Spanish is Mucho ruido y pocas nueces, "much noise and few nuts," also the everyday saying for a big fuss over little.

**engranajes** *gears, gearing mechanisms.* Engranajes is the plural of engranaje, "gearing," from engranar, "to mesh, to engage gears," plus the ending -aje, English "-age."

**superior** *upper, higher in rank.* Superior is English "superior," the same Latin word unchanged.

**llegar** *to arrive.*

**todavía** *still / yet.* Todavía is toda vía, "all the way": what is still going has kept on all the way to now.

**trabajo** (trabajar) *work.*

Los especialistas también aprendieron a aprovechar la rutina de los operadores alemanes. Ciertos mensajes militares se transmitían cada mañana a la misma hora y contenían casi siempre las mismas palabras: informes meteorológicos, saludos formales y frases administrativas repetidas por operadores cansados al final de su turno de noche. Un especialista atento, familiarizado con esos patrones, podía adivinar fragmentos probables del texto antes de descifrar el mensaje completo. Así reducía muchísimo el número de combinaciones que la «bombe» tenía que examinar. La disciplina militar alemana se convirtió, paradójicamente, en una debilidad: la rutina, tan valorada por sus oficiales, ofrecía pistas silenciosas al otro lado.

**aprendieron** *they learned.* Aprendieron is the preterite of aprender, "to learn": aprendieron a volar, "they learned to fly."

**aprovechar** *to take advantage of, to make the most of.* Aprovechar is built on provecho, "benefit," which is the same word as English "profit."

**ciertos** (cierto) *certain, sure (masculine plural).* Cierto is English "certain," from Latin certus, "settled, sure," first the participle of cernere, "to sift, to decide."

**mañana** *morning; tomorrow.* Mañana is the "mañana" of English, an easygoing "tomorrow, sometime later."

**siempre** *always.* Siempre, "always," is the semper of the U.S.

**mismas** (mismo) *same, themselves.*

**palabras** (palabra) *words.* Palabra is the same word as English "parable."

**saludos** (saludo) *greetings, regards (used as a closing in letters and messages).* Saludo is "a greeting," from saludar, "to greet," Latin salutare, "to wish good health," the source of English "salute."

**cansados** (cansar) *tired (plural).* Cansar is "to tire," and it belongs with cansado, "tired," descansar, "to rest," literally "to un-tire," and incansable, "tireless."

**patrones** (patrón) *patterns; bosses, patrons.*

**adivinar** *to guess; to foretell, divine.* Adivinar is English "divine" as a verb, as in to divine the future, and to guess is to divine an answer.

**así** *like this / thus / so.* Así holds the Latin sic, "thus," of English "[sic]," the note that a quoted error was written thus in the original.

**muchísimo** (mucho) *very much, a great deal.*

**otro** *other / another.*

**lado** *side.* Lado comes from Latin latus, "side, flank," the root of English "lateral," "bilateral," and "collateral."

Sin embargo, la versión naval de Enigma, la que usaban los submarinos alemanes, era todavía más compleja: rotores adicionales, procedimientos de seguridad más estrictos y una protección casi imposible de romper solo con matemáticas. Para atacar esa versión, los aliados necesitaban algo más directo: documentos originales, capturados físicamente de manos alemanas.

**embargo** *embargo (only in the phrase sin embargo, "however, nevertheless").* Sin embargo is "without hindrance," and so "nevertheless."

**algo** *something.* Algo comes from Latin aliquod, "something," built from alius, "other," and quod, "what."

**manos** (mano) *hands.* Mano is Latin manus, "hand," the root of English "manual," "manuscript," literally "written by hand," and "manicure," "care of the hands."

En mayo de 1941, en pleno océano Atlántico, un destructor británico detectó con el sonar la presencia silenciosa de un submarino alemán bajo la superficie. Durante horas tensas lanzó carga tras carga de profundidad. Las explosiones agitaban el agua con violencia y buscaban forzar al submarino a subir. Al final, con daños severos, el submarino alemán emergió a la superficie. Su tripulación pensó que el submarino se hundiría en pocos minutos y lo abandonó rápidamente en botes salvavidas.

**pleno** *full; complete; plenary.* Pleno comes from Latin plenus, "full," the root of English "plenty," "plenary," and "replenish."

**sonar** *to sound / to ring.* Sonar, "to sound, to ring," comes from Latin sonare, from sonus, "sound," the root of English "sound" itself, "sonic," "sonata," and "resonate."

**lanzó** (lanzar) *he/she threw, launched.* Lanzar comes from Late Latin lanceare, "to wield a lance," from lancea, "spear," so throwing began as hurling a spear.

**carga** *load, cargo; charge.* Carga is a load, the same word as English "cargo" and "charge," from spoken Latin carricare, "to load a cart."

**profundidad** *depth, profundity.* Profundidad is English "profundity," the ordinary Spanish word for "depth."

**agitaban** (agitar) *they were shaking, stirring up.* Agitar is English "agitate," and it keeps the physical sense: agítese antes de usar is "shake before use."

**buscaban** (buscar) *were looking for, were searching.* Buscar is probably the source of English "busk" and "busker": the street performer goes about seeking a living.

**subir** *to go up / to climb.* Subir is the verb behind English "sudden," which first meant something that comes up stealthily.

**tripulación** *crew.* Tripulación comes from tripular, "to man a ship," which traces to Latin interpolare, "to refurbish, to alter," the source of English "interpolate."

**hundiría** (hundir) *would sink.* Hundir is Latin fundere, "to pour, to melt," the verb behind English "foundry," where metal is melted and poured, and "fuse."

**pocos** (poco) *few.*

Pero un grupo pequeño de marineros británicos remó hacia el submarino abandonado, que todavía flotaba entre las olas. Era un riesgo enorme. Subieron a bordo con extrema precaución y bajaron hacia los compartimentos interiores, donde el agua ya subía lentamente por el metal. Ahí, entre instrumentos dañados y luces que parpadeaban, encontraron una máquina Enigma naval completa y varios libros de código secretos. Eran justo los documentos que ningún matemático había podido reconstruir con pura lógica y análisis. Trabajando con urgencia extrema, pasaron todo el material a su propio barco. Pocos minutos después, el submarino alemán se hundió en las aguas oscuras del Atlántico y se llevó con él cualquier evidencia de lo que acababa de ocurrir.

**remó** (remar) *he/she rowed.* Remar is "to ply the oar," from remo, "oar," Latin remus.

**olas** (ola) *waves.* Ola is the "la ola" that fans in Germany and Italy call the stadium wave, which spread worldwide at the 1986 World Cup in Mexico.

**subieron** (subir) *they went up, climbed.*

**bordo** *the board or side of a ship, as in "a bordo," aboard.* Bordo is English "board" in its ship sense, and a bordo is "aboard."

**bajaron** (bajar) *they went down, got off.*

**subía** (subir) *he/she was going up, climbing.*

**parpadeaban** *they were blinking.* Parpadeaban is the imperfect of parpadear, "to blink": they were blinking.

**encontraron** (encontrar) *they found.* Encontrar is English "encounter," from Latin in- plus contra, "against": to come up against something.

**libros** (libro) *books.* Libro comes from Latin liber, libri, "book," the root of English "library" and of "libretto," the "little book" of an opera's words.

**podido** (poder) *been able to.*

**trabajando** (trabajar) *working.*

**propio** *own / one's own.* Propio comes from Latin proprius, "one's own," the root of English "proper," "property," and "appropriate."

**barco** *boat / ship.*

**después** *after / afterward.* Después holds Latin post, "after," the P in "p.m.," post meridiem, "after midday."

**hundió** (hundir) *he/she/it sank.*

**aguas** (agua) *waters.*

**llevó** (llevar) *he/she carried, took.* Llevar comes from Latin levare, "to lift," the root of English "lever," "elevator," and "relieve," to lift a burden off.

**acababa** (acabar) *was finishing; (acababa de) had just.* Acabar is a-, "to," plus cabo, "end, tip," so to finish something is to bring it to its end.

Ese material llegó a Bletchley Park con máxima urgencia y transformó el proceso de descifrado naval. Con los documentos originales en la mano, los especialistas confirmaron sus teorías matemáticas sobre la configuración interna de los rotores navales. La comunicación secreta de los submarinos alemanes empezó a abrirse, mensaje tras mensaje.

**llegó** (llegar) *arrived.*

**mano** *hand.*

**empezó** (empezar) *began.*

**abrirse** (abrir) *to open (itself); to open up.* Abrir comes from Latin aperire, "to open," which gives English "aperture," the opening of a camera lens.

La información recibió un nombre en código: «Ultra». Y Ultra cambió el curso de la Batalla del Atlántico. Ahora, cuando un convoy aliado entraba en una zona peligrosa, los comandantes recibían la posición aproximada de los submarinos alemanes que esperaban en esa misma ruta. Convoyes enteros cambiaban de dirección en silencio, en medio de la noche, sin ninguna explicación visible para los marineros a bordo. Ellos obedecían las órdenes de navegación sin conocer el origen secreto de esa información. Mientras tanto, muchos submarinos alemanes esperaban inmóviles en un punto exacto de un océano vacío y solo escuchaban silencio donde esperaban los motores de los barcos aliados. Barcos enteros, cargados con combustible, alimentos y municiones esenciales para el esfuerzo militar aliado, llegaron intactos a su destino final. De no ser por Ultra, muchos de ellos probablemente habrían desaparecido bajo las olas, y sus tripulaciones nunca supieron lo cerca que habían estado del desastre.

**nombre** *name.* Nombre comes from Latin nomen, nominis, "name," a cousin of English "name" and the root of "noun," "nominate," and "nominal."

**cambió** (cambiar) *changed.*

**ahora** *now.* Ahora is Latin hac hora, "at this hour," and Old Spanish still said agora.

**peligrosa** (peligroso) *dangerous (feminine).* Peligroso is "perilous," built on peligro, "danger," from Latin periculum, "trial, danger," the root of English "peril."

**ninguna** (ninguno) *none, not a single one (feminine).*

**escuchaban** (escuchar) *they were listening.* Escuchar comes from Latin auscultare, "to listen closely," which doctors still use as "auscultation," listening to the chest with a stethoscope.

**cargados** (cargar) *loaded (plural).*

**combustible** *fuel.* Combustible, "fuel," is what is combustible, able to burn.

**alimentos** (alimento) *food, foodstuffs.* Alimento comes from Latin alimentum, "nourishment," from alere, "to nourish."

**esfuerzo** *effort.* Esfuerzo is English "effort," both from spoken Latin exfortiare, "to show strength," built on fortis, "strong," as in "fortitude" and "fort."

**ser** *to be.*

**habrían** (haber) *they would have.*

**tripulaciones** *crews (of a ship, plane, or spacecraft).* Tripulaciones is the plural of tripulación, "crew," the noun that goes with tripular, "to crew a vessel."

**supieron** (saber) *they found out, knew.* Saber is the source of English "savvy," picked up from sabe, "he knows," in the pidgin of sailors and traders.

**cerca** *near / fence.* Cerca is the circa of English dates, as in "circa 1900," "around 1900."

**habían** (haber) *they had.*

**estado** (estar) *state / status / condition.* Estar comes from Latin stare, "to stand," the root of English "state," "station," and "status quo," "the state in which" things stand.

Ultra también fue decisiva en el norte de África y ayudó a las fuerzas aliadas a anticipar los movimientos de las divisiones alemanas en el desierto. Pero el momento más dramático llegó en 1944, en los meses anteriores a la invasión de Normandía. Toda la operación, conocida como el «Día D», dependía de un elemento crucial: convencer al alto mando alemán de que la invasión real ocurriría en un lugar completamente diferente. Con los mensajes descifrados por Ultra, los aliados podían verificar, día tras día, que las divisiones alemanas de tanques seguían lejos de las playas verdaderas de Normandía, burladas por el plan de engaño aliado. Sin esa confirmación constante, la invasión más grande de la historia moderna habría sido un riesgo terrible, casi imposible de calcular.

**ayudó** (ayudar) *helped.* Ayudar shares its Latin root with English "aid."

**meses** (mes) *months.* Mes comes from Latin mensis, "month," which gives English "menstrual" and "semester," from sex menses, "six months."

**toda** (todo) *all, the whole of (feminine).*

**conocida** (conocido) *known (feminine).* Conocido is the Spanish twin of "incognito," which is its opposite, "not known."

**alto** *tall / high; stop!.* Alto, "high, tall," comes from Latin altus, "high," the source of English "altitude" and "exalt," and of the alto voice in a choir.

**mando** *control; command; remote control.* Mando is the noun of mandar, "to order," so it means command, and by extension the device that gives orders: el mando a distancia, "the remote control."

**lugar** *place.* Lugar comes from Latin localis, "of a place," from locus, "place," the root of English "local," "locate," and "locomotive."

**podían** (poder) *they could, were able to.*

**seguían** (seguir) *they were following.* Seguir means "to follow" and "to keep on," and comes from Latin sequi, "to follow," the root of English "sequel," "sequence," and "consequence."

**lejos** *far, far away.* Lejos comes from Latin laxius, "more loosely, more widely," from laxus, "loose," the root of English "lax" and "relax," so what is spread wide apart is far away.

**playas** (playa) *beaches.* Playa is the playa of Playa del Carmen in Mexico, "the beach of Carmen."

**verdaderas** (verdadero) *true, real.* Verdadero is verdad, "truth," plus -ero, so "truthful, genuine."

**burladas** *mocked, tricked (feminine plural).* Burladas is the feminine plural of burlado, "mocked, tricked," from burlar, "to mock, to outwit."

**engaño** *deception, trick, deceit.* Engaño is what the matador's cape is called in the bullring: el engaño, the lure that fools the bull.

**habría** (haber) *would have (auxiliary); there would be.*

**sido** (ser) *been (the participle of ser, "to be").*

Dentro de Bletchley Park, la operación continuaba con una intensidad industrial. Miles de personas —matemáticos, operadores de radio, técnicos y empleados de oficina— procesaban un volumen enorme de mensajes cada día. Venían de redes de radio distintas: el ejército, la marina y la fuerza aérea alemana, cada una con sus propias claves y sus propios patrones. La disciplina era total. Nadie hablaba de su trabajo, ni siquiera con las otras secciones de la misma propiedad. El secreto de esta operación era, en sí mismo, un arma tan importante como la información descifrada.

**miles** (mil) *thousands.* Mil is Latin mille, "thousand," the root of English "million," "millennium," and "mile": the Roman mile was mille passus, "a thousand paces."

**venían** (venir) *they were coming, used to come.* Venir is Latin venire, "to come," the veni of Caesar's "veni, vidi, vici," "I came, I saw, I conquered."

**redes** (red) *nets, networks.* Red is the Spanish word for a net and for any network, including la red, "the internet," and las redes sociales, "social networks."

**ejército** *army.* Ejército shares its root with English "exercise": an army is a drilled, exercised body of soldiers.

**propias** (propio) *own, one's own.*

**claves** *keys, clues.* Claves is the plural of clave, "key, code," as in palabras clave, "keywords," and the clave of a mystery, its clue.

**propios** (propio) *own, one's own.*

**hablaba** (hablar) *was speaking, used to speak (imperfect of hablar).* Hablar, "to speak," comes from Latin fabulari, "to chat, to tell stories," from fabula, "story," the source of English "fable" and "fabulous."

**siquiera** *even (as in "ni siquiera," not even).* Siquiera is si, "if," plus quiera, "one might want," from querer: "if one even wished."

**otras** (otro) *other.*

**sí** *yes.* Sí, "yes," is the "sic" that English writers put in brackets to mean "thus, exactly as written."

**mismo** *same; self, -self, as in yo mismo, "I myself.".*

**arma** *weapon.* Arma is the singular of English "arms," as in "to bear arms."

Cuando por fin terminó el conflicto global, las máquinas se desactivaron y los documentos se archivaron en secreto. Miles de personas volvieron en silencio a su vida normal, con instrucciones estrictas de no mencionar jamás lo que habían hecho. Durante décadas, la historia completa de Enigma permaneció oculta, protegida por el gobierno británico como información clasificada, mientras el mundo entero pensaba que la victoria en el Atlántico había sido simple cuestión de fortuna y valentía militar convencional.

**fin** *end.* Fin, "end," is the "fin" printed at the end of old films.

**volvieron** (volver) *they returned.* Volver is the turning in English "revolve," "evolve," and "involve."

**vida** *life.*

**hecho** (hacer) *made, done; fact.* Hacer comes from Latin facere, "to do, to make," the verb of "de facto," "in fact," and of "facsimile," from fac simile, "make alike."

**permaneció** (permanecer) *remained.* Permanecer is the verb behind English "permanent": both come from Latin permanere, "to stay to the end," from per-, "through," and manere, "to stay."

**mundo** *world.* Mundo is Latin mundus, "world," the mundi of "sic transit gloria mundi," "so passes the glory of the world," and of a "mappa mundi," a medieval world map.

**pensaba** (pensar) *I was thinking; he/she was thinking.* Pensar opens the Spanish version of Descartes's "Cogito, ergo sum": "Pienso, luego existo," "I think, therefore I am."

Mucho tiempo después, los documentos empezaron a abrirse y apareció poco a poco una historia extraordinaria: la de un código considerado invencible, roto pieza por pieza por matemáticos silenciosos, primero en Polonia y después en una propiedad rural de Gran Bretaña, con la ayuda de máquinas electromecánicas, de un análisis lógico implacable y, en momentos cruciales, de actos de valentía pura en medio del océano Atlántico. Una guerra completa se decidió en parte en batallas visibles de barcos y tanques, pero también en un silencio absoluto, entre rotores que giraban y letras que se transformaban, noche tras noche, en una casa de campo donde nadie podía imaginar que ahí, precisamente ahí, se estaba escribiendo el final del conflicto más grande de la historia moderna.

**mucho** *a lot / much.*

**empezaron** (empezar) *they began.*

**roto** (romper) *broken.*

**ayuda** (ayudar) *help.*

**casa** *house.* Casa is the house in English "casino," Italian for "little house."

# Words from this story

Every explained word, by its dictionary form. Cover the right side and test yourself.

**abierto** Open
**abrir** To open
**acabar** To finish
**acercar** To bring closer, to move something near
**adentro** Inside / within
**adivinar** to guess; to foretell, divine
**afuera** Outside, out
**agitar** To shake, wave, stir; to agitate
**agua** Water
**ahí** There (near the listener)
**ahora** Now
**alemán** German
**algo** Something
**alguno** Some / any
**alimento** Food; nourishment
**alto** Tall / high; stop!
**año** Year
**anotaban** They were noting down
**antes** Before
**apenas** Barely / hardly
**aprendieron** They learned
**aprovechar** to take advantage of, to make the most of
**arma** Weapon
**así** Like this / thus / so
**ayudar** To help
**bajar** To go down / to lower
**barco** Boat / ship
**bordo** The board or side of a ship, as in "a bordo," aboard
**burladas** Mocked, tricked (feminine plural)
**buscar** To look for, to search
**cada** Each, every
**cadena** Chain
**cambiar** To change
**cansar** To tire, to make weary
**carga** Load, cargo; charge
**cargar** To load; to charge (a battery); to carry a burden
**casa** House
**casco** Helmet; hull (of a ship); hoof
**casi** Almost
**cerca** Near / fence
**ciento** Hundred
**cierto** Certain, true
**claves** Keys, clues
**clavijero** Pegbox, peghead (of a stringed instrument); plugboard (of a cipher machine such as Enigma)
**combustible** Fuel
**conocer** To know, to be acquainted with; to meet
**conocido** known / acquaintance
**conocimiento** Knowledge
**conseguir** to get / to manage to
**cualquiera** whichever / anyone
**cubierto** Covered; also a place setting of silverware
**deber** to owe / must, should
**demasiado** too much / too
**dentro** inside / within
**después** after / afterward
**durante** During
**ejército** Army
**embargo** Embargo (only in the phrase sin embargo, "however, nevertheless")
**empezar** To begin / to start
**encerrar** To lock up, to shut in, to enclose; to contain (an idea, a truth)
**encontrar** To find / to meet
**engaño** Deception, trick, deceit
**engranajes** Gears, gearing mechanisms
**escuchar** To listen
**ese** That (demonstrative)
**esfuerzo** Effort
**esperar** To hope / to wait / to expect
**estar** To be (temporary states, location)
**fin** end
**frío** cold
**ganar** to win, to earn
**girar** to turn, rotate, spin
**grieta** Crack, crevice
**guerra** War
**haber** To have (as an auxiliary); there to be
**hablar** to speak
**hacer** To do, to make
**hacia** toward
**hundir** to sink, to submerge
**inicio** Beginning; start
**jamás** never; ever
**lado** side
**lanzar** to throw, to launch
**lejos** far, far away
**letra** Letter (of the alphabet); handwriting; lyrics

**libro** book
**llamar** to call; to name (llamarse = to be called)
**llegar** to arrive
**llevar** to carry; to wear; to take (someone or something) somewhere
**logro** Achievement, accomplishment
**lugar** place
**luz** Light
**mañana** morning; tomorrow
**mando** Control; command; remote control
**mano** hand
**medianoche** Midnight
**mes** month
**mientras** while, meanwhile
**mil** thousand
**mismo** same; self, -self, as in yo mismo, "I myself."
**mucho** A lot / much
**mundo** World
**muro** Wall (especially an exterior or fortifying one)
**nada** Nothing
**nadie** Nobody
**ninguno** None / not any
**noche** Night
**nombre** Name
**nuevo** New; (as a noun, nueva) a piece of news
**nunca** Never
**ola** Wave (of water); a surge or wave of something, such as heat or crime
**otro** Other / another
**palabra** Word
**papel** Paper
**parecer** To seem / to appear
**parpadeaban** They were blinking
**patrón** Boss, employer; patron saint; pattern or template
**peligro** Danger
**peligroso** Dangerous
**pensar** To think
**pequeño** small
**perder** to lose
**permanecer** To remain; to stay
**playa** Beach
**pleno** Full; complete; plenary
**poco** little / few
**poder** to be able to / power
**polacos** Polish people or things
**primero** first
**profundidad** Depth, profundity
**propio** own / one's own
**punto** point / dot
**red** Net; network
**remar** To row
**repartir** To distribute; to hand out; to deliver; to deal (cards)
**romper** To break
**ruido** Noise
**saber** To know
**saludo** Greeting
**seguir** To follow / to continue
**semana** Week
**ser** To be
**sí** Yes
**siempre** Always
**siquiera** Even (as in "ni siquiera," not even)
**solo** Alone / only
**sonar** To sound / to ring
**subir** To go up / to climb
**superior** Upper, higher in rank
**tanto** So much; as much
**tecla** A key, on a piano, keyboard, or any pushbutton device
**teclado** Keyboard
**tener** To have
**todavía** Still / yet
**todo** All; everything
**tomar** To take
**trabajar** To work
**tripulación** Crew
**tripulaciones** Crews (of a ship, plane, or spacecraft)
**valor** Value / courage
**veinticuatro** Twenty-four
**venir** To come
**verdadero** True / real
**vez** Time / occasion
**vida** Life
**volver** To return
**zumbido** A buzzing, humming, or ringing sound

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