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George Boole

Biography for children

The story of important figures in the history of
computing



George Boole (1815 – 1864)

Who was George Boole?

- He was an English mathematician
- He believed that human thought could be written down as 'rules'
- His ideas led to boolean logic which is used by computers today





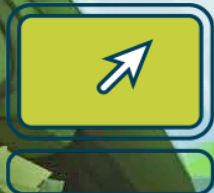
Why is George Boole important?

- ☞ He invented a set of rules for thinking that are used by computers today
- ☞ The rules were that some statements can only ever be 'true' or 'false'
- ☞ His idea was first used in computers as switches either being 'on' or 'off'
- ☞ Today this logic is used in almost every device and almost every line of computer code



His early years

- ☞ Born 2nd November 1815
- ☞ His father was a struggling shoemaker
- ☞ George had had very little education and taught himself maths, French, German and Latin



iCompute



- ☞ He also taught himself Greek and published a translation of a Greek poem in 1828 at the age of 14!
- ☞ Aged 16, the family business collapsed and George began working as a teacher to support the family
- ☞ At 19 he started his own school

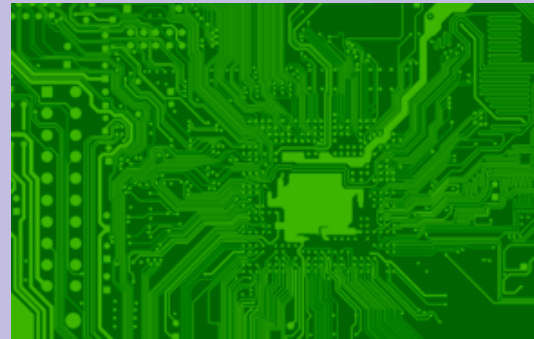


- ☞ In 1840 he began having his books about mathematics published
- ☞ In 1844, he was given the first gold medal for Mathematics by the Royal Society
- ☞ Despite never having been to University himself, in 1849 he became professor of Mathematics at Queens College Cork in Ireland
 - ☞ He married Mary Everett in 1855
 - ☞ They had four daughters between 1856-1864
- ☞ He died at the age of 49, on the 8th December 1864 from fluid on the lungs



George Boole and Logic

- ☞ Boole did not think of logic as part of mathematics
- ☞ He thought that logic could be expressed using mathematical symbols - algebra
- ☞ One hundred years later, his boolean algebra would be used for the electrical circuits inside the first computers
- ☞ Boole's algebra has transformed the world we live in
- ☞ The technology we use every day depends on the logic Boole invented
- ☞ For this reason, Boole is one of the founding fathers of computer science



Computer Circuit