



1815 - 1852

# Ada

# Lovelace

## The computer programmer with ideas long before there were computers

Ada was the daughter of the extravagant and notorious romantic poet Lord Byron and his young wife, Annabella Milbank, whom Byron called the 'Princess of Parallelograms'. Annabella gave Ada a deep education and, notably, a love of mathematics and science.

At 17, Ada met mathematician and inventor Charles Babbage (1791-1871). She was fascinated by his Difference Engine, an early large-scale calculator designed to generate mathematical tables. Babbage became her mentor and friend. Shortly after, he designed a more flexible calculator that was programmable by punched cards, called the Analytic Engine.

In 1843, Ada published a large set of notes on programming the Analytic Engine. It included a detailed study of a program and its execution. She also speculated on the scope of the machine, that it could do more than calculate with numbers, and compute with algebraic symbols. She cautioned that: 'The Analytical Engine has no pretensions whatever to originate anything. It can do whatever we know how to order it to perform.'

Hers is the first explanation of computer programming and, because of her abstract way of thinking, she is often considered the first computer programmer.

Ada died of cancer aged 36.

**Full name:** Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace

**Born:** 10 December 1815

**Hometown:** London, England

**Occupation:** Mathematician and writer

**Died:** 27 November 1852

**Best known for:** Often regarded as the first computer programmer



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