BREAKING THE CODE

By Hugh Whitemore

28 OCTOBER- 19 NOVEMBER

DIRECTOR Rob Hastie
DESIGNER Ben Stones
LIGHTING DESIGNER Richard Howell
SOUND DESIGNER Emma Laxton

PERFORMED BY Geraldine Alexander (Sara Turing), Phil Cheadle (Mick Ross), Natalie Dew (Pat Green), Harry Egan (Ron Miller), Dimitri Gripari (Christopher Morgan & Nikos), Mark Oosterveen (John Smith), Raad Rawi (Dillwyn Knox), Daniel Rigby (Alan Turing).

TEACHER RESOURCE

This resource has been created by the Royal Exchange Theatre’s Participation & Learning team, with additional classroom activity written by Stephen Lucas. It has been written with Key Stage 3, 4 & 5 Drama and English teachers in mind, but many of the activities can be adapted to suit other subject areas and age groups. The resource aims to enhance students’ understanding of the BREAKING THE CODE rehearsal process and spark interesting conversations about the production.

For further information on our Schools’ Programme contact Chelsea Morgan on 0161 615 6750/ chelsea.morgan@royalexchange.co.uk
A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Director Rob Hastie, Artistic Director of Sheffield Theatres, finally brings Turing’s story to Manchester, the city where Turing lived and did some of his most important work. He says:

‘I’ve always been fascinated by the story of Alan Turing. There are very few individuals who have made as great a contribution to our lives today than this brilliant, complicated, stubborn, gay mathematician.

He not only cracked the code which changed the course of the Second World War, he was also more responsible than anyone for the development of modern computing. The work he did in Manchester after the war laid the foundations for the laptop or mobile device...To tell this story in the city where he worked and died is tremendously exciting.’
THE PLAYWRIGHT: HUGH WHITEMORE

BREAKING THE CODE was written by the English playwright Hugh Whitemore in 1986. After studying at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, Whitemore began writing for British and American television winning awards for his work. Like BREAKING THE CODE, many of Whitemore’s stage work are biographical.

BREAKING THE CODE was first performed in 1986. At this time Alan Turing was not so well known and the play was staged as a traditional biopic in a naturalistic style. After a run in the London West End the play successfully debuted on Broadway starring Derek Jacobi and was nominated for three Tony Awards. In 1996, the play was adapted and filmed by the BBC for television. BREAKING THE CODE has been adapted in many different languages and continues to be performed around the world.

WHY NOT?

Have a look at the BBC television adaptation of BREAKING THE CODE (1996). Ask your students to compare the televised version to the live version at The Royal Exchange.

What are the advantages and the disadvantages of a play adapted for a television drama and a play created to be performed live on stage? What similarities and differences are there in how the characters are portrayed?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S23yie-779k

ALAN TURING

Alan Turing was the extraordinary Cambridge mathematician who masterminded the cracking of the German Enigma ciphers and transformed the outcome of World War II. But his vision went far beyond this crucial achievement. Before the war he had formulated the concept of the universal machine, and in 1945 he turned this into the first design for a digital computer. Turing’s far-sighted plans for the digital era forged ahead into a vision for Artificial Intelligence. However, in 1952 his homosexuality rendered him a criminal and he was subjected to humiliating treatment. In 1954, aged 41, Alan Turing committed suicide and one of Britain’s greatest scientific minds was lost.

BREAKING THE CODE tells Alan Turing’s story, and asks big questions about the pressures of breaking both social and mathematic codes.

WHY NOT?

Ask your students to look at the following website showing a timeline of Alan Turing’s life and work presented by mathematician and author Dr Andrew Hodges.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/z8bgr82
HISTORICAL CONTEXT: HOMOSEXUALITY

In Alan Turing’s Britain homosexuality was illegal. In the UK today it can be difficult to imagine a person being criminal convicted for their sexuality and ideas that homosexuality could be ‘cured’.

In 1952, Alan Turing was arrested for having an affair with a 19 year old man. Following a conviction for gross indecency Turing lost his job with the secret service, and was forced to undergo a chemical castration.

In 1954, Alan Turing took his own life.

In 1967, homosexuality was decriminalised in England and Wales.

In 2013, Alan Turing was granted a posthumous royal pardon for his conviction for gross indecency.

In 2014, same-sex marriage became legal in England and Wales.

In 2016, after decades of campaigning from the LGBT community, including Turing’s family, the Government has announced that, in due course, thousands of gay and bisexual men convicted under the gross indecency laws are to be posthumously pardoned. This legislation is known as ‘The Alan Turing Law’.

Daniel Rigby playing Alan Turing Dimitri Gripari playing Christopher Morcom in BREAKING THE CODE. Photo Richard Davenport
WHY NOT?

Ask your students to look at this brief reflection of the oppression and struggle Gay and Lesbian people have faced in the UK. Create conversation groups for the students to discuss some significant steps in a long and often brutal history.


You could now ask your students to open up their discussions thinking on a more global scale.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/30/gay-rights-world-best-worst-countries

SYNOPSIS

BREAKING THE CODE begins in 1952 in Manchester, when Alan Turing is speaking with Detective Sergeant Mick Ross who is investigating a burglary at Alan’s home. Alan suggests he might know who was involved as a man came to his home and told him another man called George might be planning a burglary (later Alan changes this from the man being a stranger knocking at the door, to a friend telling him about George). The play then continually shifts between time periods.

We see Alan as a young man aged 17, living at home with his mother and a school friend called Christopher. It later transpires that Christopher has died young. In a later scene, we see Alan’s mother again, this time meeting a friend from work (Pat – see below). Later in the play, Alan comes out to his mother when he is facing criminal charges.
We see the story of Alan and Ron. Alan meets Ron in a bar and invites him back (with the intention of having sex with him). Later Ron is at Alan’s. It is Ron who knows George (the burglar) but to start with Alan doesn’t feel he can be honest with the police about the nature of their relationship. At the end of Act one, Alan tells the Detective the truth about Ron, at which point, Alan becomes a suspect in a crime of sexual indecency.

We also see Alan starting work at Bletchley Park where he will be part of team that helps to break the Enigma Code (a secret code, used by the Germans in World War II). Alan creates a machine to decipher the code, an early type of modern computer. Alan works closely with Pat a woman also working on the Enigma Code (also a Cambridge graduate). We believe that Pat loves Alan but her love is unreciprocated – however, they have a close friendship and she meets his family. Alan’s boss, Knox also warns Alan about being too indiscreet in a relationship he is developing with another young man at Bletchley. Later in the play, Pat and Alan learn of Knox’s death at which point Pat reveals that in his younger years Knox had had a same sex relationship, even though he went on to marry and have children.

Towards the end of the play, Alan is in Greece with a young Greek man, Nikos, who can’t speak English. Alan reveals to Nikos that he has seen an analyst (therapist). Whilst talking Alan fixes a broken radio for him. As Nikos can’t understand him, Alan tells him the secret about his work at Bletchley, a secret he has never been able to tell anyone.

The play ends with Sara (Alan’s mother) meeting Ross (the Detective) following Alan’s death. The detective suggests that Alan has taken his own life, however, his mother is adamant that he would never do that. The final words of the play are Alan’s as he prepares an apple by contaminating it with potassium cyanide before eating it.

**KEY THEMES**

**Secrets and lies** - In the very first scene, Alan tells a lie to detective Ross. Throughout the play, we see him struggle with the need to tell lies about his secret sexuality and his secret
work at Bletchley Park. It is significant that, at the end of his life, he is finally able to be honest with Nikos.

The art of mathematics - Alan’s passion for mathematics and logic is palpable. He talks about mathematics as an art-form or a religion; a way of making sense of the world. In the final scene, he creates a logical argument for killing himself: “being a practical man, I tend to look for practical solutions; in this case namely to dispose of the body and release what is left”.

Love - Different forms of love are explored via Alan’s relationship with Pat, his mother, Ron and Nikos. We also learn about the romantic loves other characters, such as Knox (who married and had children despite having a same sex relationship earlier in his life.)

Changing attitudes to homosexuality - Because the play moves backwards and forwards through time, it is possible to see how attitudes towards homosexuality changed during the 20th century. Importantly, the play also shows the psychological damage caused by oppression (Alan’s stammer could be a result of this).
A MEMORY PLAY

When BREAKING THE CODE was first written and performed (1986), Alan Turing was not so well known. Therefore, the play tended to be performed as a traditional biopic in a naturalistic style.

Now, Alan Turing is more of an icon, partly as a result of Benedict Cumberbatch’s performance in THE IMITATION GAME, and the heightened awareness raised about his life and the prejudice he suffered. Because of this, the creative team at the Royal Exchange felt they had more freedom to experiment with imaginative performance styles than the original production.

The design and direction emphasise that this is a memory play. The fluidity of the play working in the theatre module aims to bring to life the high-speed nature of Alan Turing’s mind.

The parquet floor acts as a memory of the Sherborne School that Turing attended as a boy (the happiest time of his life). Above, there is a canopy of strip lights, creating a futuristic, computerised world above Turing’s head.
LIGHTING

The strip lights fly in and out to create different locations in the play. At the start, for instance, the lights fly in to make a glowing cube on stage to suggest the interrogation room. Later, bars of light fly down to create the bar, or the corridors in Bletchley Park.

As we go back and forth in time the lighting dims and becomes brighter to help create the different atmospheres of the times in Turings’ life.

The lights have been designed to allow fast transitions between scenes and use easily repeatable patterns to help orientate the audience to the different settings.

PROPS & COSTUME

The Royal Exchange production’s use of furniture and props is minimal, but are very detailed to help ‘sell’ the location of each scene. The director, Rob Hastie, wanted to create the feeling that all the scenes are taking place in a much wider context than what you are seeing on stage.

Costumes are of the period and very detailed, with supporting characters’ changing between 1920’s, 30’s and 1950’s, to give the audience an understanding of the different time periods. Alan has the same base costume throughout with occasional alterations to his costume for some scenes.

Raad Rawi playing Dillwyn Knox in BREAKING THE CODE. Photo Richard Davenport
CREATIVE CODES: VISUAL ARTS MEETS MATHEMATICS

Challenge your class to make their own code-breaking artwork linking mathematics with visual arts.

Ask students to hide creatively coded messages about equality, using this cipher for the alphabet inspired by the Fibonacci sequence (on the right). The cipher is far simpler than the type of codes the Enigma machine used! We hope it will give students the chance to have fun with a mathematical theory through art.

The colours and shapes chosen for each letter are highly important. They create a rich, tonal environment when the artwork is brought together, echoing nature and the patterns found in Moroccan interiors and artworks. It is very important that the cipher is followed as closely as possible to create the desired impact and so that it is possible to decipher the messages in the artwork.

STEP 1 – DECIDE ON A MESSAGE
Because BREAKING THE CODE looks at issues around LGBT rights, we would like to challenge your students to hide a message about equality in their artwork.

Perhaps in small groups, ask your students to discuss the following questions:

- Are all people treated equally?
- If the answer is no, who is treated unfairly?
- If the answer is yes, why is it important to treat people equally?
- Do you think that some people are treated differently because of their gender / sexuality / race / religion / status?
- Have you (or someone you know) ever been treated unfairly?

Once your students have had time to chat and reflect, challenge them to create a message about equality that is no longer than 6 words. Instead of each student creating their own message you may want to create 5 key messages together that they can choose from for individual work.

Remember, the less characters in the message, the easier the artwork will be to create!

STEP 2 – CREATE THE CODE
Count out the characters in the message and note how many of each letter there is.
For example, if your message was ‘ONLY EQUAL ON PAPER’, you would count 16 characters and:
O – 2
N – 2
L – 2
Y – 1 etc....

THEN... MAKE YOUR ARTWORK!


After steps 1 and 2, do the following:

STEP 3 – Find the square root of the number of characters.
So, 16 = 4.

For our example message (‘ONLY EQUAL ON PAPER’), the number of characters fits perfectly into a square of 4 x 4. However, if you have a message that does not fit neatly into a square, e.g. 20, make sure to go to the next square up (25) so that the characters can fit in a square. This will just mean there will be a few blank squares in the artwork, which is fine. Below shows how ‘ONLY EQUAL ON PAPER’ fits into a square 4 x 4.

Draw a square onto graph paper and practice fitting the letters into it. It does not matter about spaces between words, but you may want to use these if you have more squares than total characters. Then use the cipher to find which shapes to use for each space. This does not need to be done in colour, but can help.

STEP 4 – Draw a new square onto white card at the scale you have chosen. Cut it out. Ideally, individual squares should be no smaller than 3cm x 3cm, or bigger than 4cm x 4cm. This way the work is not too fiddly or time consuming for students to work with.

STEP 5 – Cut out the correct number of triangle and square shapes according to the cipher ready for lay out. It may be helpful to have these pre-cut, or have strips of coloured paper pre-cut at set widths for students to cut from. You may want to select a few squares or triangles from corrugated card to add different textures.

STEP 6 – Arrange the coloured shapes in order on the white card. Do not stick down until this has been double-checked!
STEP 7 – Stick the coloured triangles and squares onto the white card using glue, keeping things as neat and clean as possible.
CREATIVE CODES CIPHER

CREATIVE
CODES:
ALPHABET
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

These classroom activities, designed for the Royal Exchange by Stephen Lucas, link BREAKING THE CODE to examination criteria.

**AS and A Level English Literature specs:**

**OCR:** AS Level - students make comparisons in the drama and poetry sections. A Level - students make comparisons between a pre 19\textsuperscript{th} Century drama text and a poem; and between two novels in the comparative and contextual study.

**AQA:** AS Level (Spec A) – prose section requires comparative skills. All A Level components test comparative skills, including the non-examined comparative essay in the A Level. Possible themes for the comparative critical study which relate to Breaking the Code are: the struggle for identity, crime and punishment, representations of sexuality.

**Edexcel:** all components of AS and A Level English Literature, including the coursework component, require comparative skills.
AI ACTIVITY

http://www.androidauthority.com/google-ai-romance-novels-691082/ Shutterstock

**Student Exercise:**

Is it possible to generate answers that will help you study for your exams?

Split into pairs.

Your teacher will give you an extract from BREAKING THE CODE and you must anticipate all the questions you might be asked about the extract, including answers to follow up questions.

When you’re writing your answers bear the following in mind:

- Back up any opinions with evidence from the text.
- Identify technical devices, but don’t stop there; say what the effect is

If you think the writer is trying to make the audience feel a certain way, work out how Whitemore or Hastie (if you have seen the Royal Exchange production) does this. It might be through:

- Language techniques
- By tapping into the context of when the play is set (1920s-50s), or when it was written (1980s), or when it was seen by an audience (2016).
- By referencing other texts

If you have seen any other versions of the play, mention how different directors interpreted your section of the text.

After 20 minutes’ stop writing

The different extracts will now be projected onto the whiteboard.
The class will now ask questions about the extract that you have prepared answers for.
Your teacher times how long you are able to provide answers.
The class or your teacher will judge whether the answers are relevant.
One member of your pair hands an answer to the other team member. If the answer is irrelevant or you run out of answers you are out.
The teacher times each pair, and the pair that is able to provide relevant answers for the longest time wins.

TEACHER GUIDANCE
As a warm up watch the section of Alan Turing – BBC Horizon Documentary from 29.47 to 34.34. Talk about AI in Science Fiction films, like Stanley Kubrick’s 2001 and the Channel 4 series Humans. And in everyday life with Siri for instance. Finally debate the following two quotations from Act 2 Scene 1:
Project the following quotations from Act 2 Scene 1 on the whiteboard:

There are those who say that thinking is a function of man’s immortal soul and since a machine has no soul it cannot think. Surely this is blasphemous — who are we to deny the possibility that God may wish to grant a soul to a machine?
I can see no reason at all why a thinking machine should not be kind, resourceful, beautiful, friendly, have a sense of humour, tell right from wrong, make mistakes, fall in love, or enjoy strawberries and cream.

Read the whole of Act 2 Scene 1 and discuss Turing’s work on what is now called artificial intelligence.
When the students are doing the pair work, prompt with the following questions as you monitor if need be.
How are themes brought out in the extract?
How are dramatic effects created? Think about where the actors are positioned on stage, that the performance at The Royal Exchange is in the round, lighting, sound, wardrobe, props. Think also about where your extract appears in the play – what scenes succeed and precede it. For instance, Knox reminding Turing that revealing his sexuality may make people fearful or angry, precedes the scene where Turing tells his mother that the police have discovered his ‘affair with a boy’.
Does your extract connect to any other plays that have been performed at The Royal Exchange?
Does the extract connect to the context it was written in (the 1980s) and how it is received today (October-November 2016)

AO ACTIVITY

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Hugh Whitemore’s BREAKING THE CODE is not a set text, but this activity aims to help students hone skills needed in AS and A Level English Literature exams.

- Watch the Royal Exchange production of Hugh Whitemore’s BREAKING THE CODE, directed by Rob Hastie.
- Watch the 1996 TV version of the play, directed by Herbert Wise and starring Derek Jakobi as Alan Turing.
- Read the play.

Elicit from students what they understand each of the AS and A Level assessment objectives mean.

AO1: articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression. Informed means backed up with references to the text or different productions, personal can mean their own ideas, ones that build on acknowledged sources, ideas not discussed in class or those discussed in class that they make their own or articulate in their own words, creative can mean original, even outlandish provided they are backed up and thus credible.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts. This means how the playwright/director/actors use stage directions, the stage, the fact it is in the round at The Royal Exchange, lighting, wardrobe, props, sound, the language of the play (does it echo other parts of the play, is it redolent of a particular context and thus emotive for an audience for instance) to create effects on the audience, or to bring out a theme or idea.

AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received. The context in which it was written means 1986 or the 80s, the era of Section 28, Peter Tatchell’s OutRage! It was no coincidence that the play was written in that time. The time it was received means anytime the play is read or performed. LGBTQ rights have progressed, gay marriage is being legalised globally, but LGBTQ people have to remain under the radar in countries where it remains illegal. The play is still relevant. Context is a tool writers, directors and performers can utilise to trigger audience reaction.

AO4: Explore connections across literary texts. This means look out for similar techniques used by other playwrights, actors or directors to create similar (or different) effects in the audience. Look out for similar themes. Link BREAKING THE CODE with Tennessee Williams’ CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF. Turing argues that his sexuality is not wrong, if ‘Even in mathematics there’s no infallible rule for proving what is right and what is wrong’ and ‘each decision – requires fresh ideas’ then the same must go for ‘less certain, areas’
than mathematics such as sexuality. Brick, however, drinks to blot out feelings for Skipper in *CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF*. Look at other plays that have been performed at The Royal Exchange and try to make links. For instance: When Turing tells Sara that he is gay, she responds by relating to him a memory she has of him running after her at school. Is Sara blaming herself? Is she letting him know she still loves him and always has? We’re not sure. This is Pinteresque – real meaning is lurking somewhere beneath the words. So a link could be made here to virtually any part of Harold Pinter’s *THE HOMECOMING*.

**AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.** This means consider different productions and how different actors and directors interpret Hugh Whitemore’s text.

Remind students that it’s difficult to tackle one AO at a time. Whilst tackling AO4 for instance and linking *CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF* with *BREAKING THE CODE*, you’d be hard pushed not to bring in AO3 (context). Williams play (written in 1939 as Turing tackled Enigma, and first performed in 1955, three years after Turing’s trial and a year after his death) is set in the mid-1950s. *BREAKING THE CODE* looks at how Turing did little to hide his sexuality and paid the price, and *CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF* looks at the damage Brick does to himself and Maggie by hiding his sexuality.

Similarly, when tackling AO5, and referencing Rob Hastie’s Royal Exchange production or Herbert Wise’s TV adaptation, students should remember AO1 (personal responses), and remember that their own alternative interpretations of how stage directions, for instance, or language might be interpreted are valid too.

**ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS**

The aim of the activity is for students to work out a method for tackling their AS and A Level texts, so that they hit the above assessment objectives.

Students should see how far they can tackle a text like a computer, answering yes and no to a series of questions. Ask them to note the point that the yes/no questions become impossible, and broader discussion is required. In other words, when the computer programme breaks down.

Students can work in pairs or in groups.

They write an instruction table: a series of closed questions about a section of *BREAKING THE CODE*. Tell students that each part of the instruction table should relate to a specific AO. Students should note when one AO branches into another. For instance, on the example student sheet the red boxes relate to AO2, the yellow to AO3, and the blue to
AO4. Students should be given large sheets of paper so that they can continue the instruction tables for as long as possible.

They then give the instruction table to another pair or group and they play the computer, reading the instructions and applying them to the section of BREAKING THE CODE (referring to Rob Hastie’s production at The Royal Exchange, Herbert Wise’s 1996 TV adaptation, and Hugh Whitemore’s playscript).

By generating the yes/no questions, and when answering the questions, students will start to engage with the text on a critical level.

After they have completed their instruction tables, they should discuss each yes/no answer, fleshing out their initial work. They can then present their findings to the class, and groups can feedback on how effective/comprehensive the instruction tables are.

The example ‘instruction table’ (AO example sheet 1 jpeg) can be used to critically analyse the opening lines of BREAKING THE CODE, below:

_AT RISE: Winter afternoon. ALAN TURING enters with MICK ROSS._

_TURING is about 40: untidily dressed, unkempt appearance; an occasional stammer. ROSS is carrying a file; he is a Detective Sergeant.__

ROSS: Sorry to keep you waiting, sir. Sit down. (TURING sits, ROSS sits facing him.) Make yourself comfortable. (Opens the file.) Well now, let’s get the basic facts sorted out. We’re talking about a burglary that occurred on January the 23rd and you are Mr Spurling.

TURING: No – Turing.

ROSS: I beg your pardon?

TURING: My name is Turing, not Spurling.

ROSS: Sorry, sir, beg your pardon. Bloody illiterate, some of our young constables. (Displays a sheet of paper.) Just look at this atrocious writing. It could be Spurling, Spilling, Tilling.

TURING: Well, it’s Turing. (spelling) T-U-R-I-N-G.

ROSS: (writing) Alan Mathison Turing. Is that right?

TURING: Yes.


TURING: How do you do.

ROSS: How do you do, sir
COMPARISON ACTIVITY

Student information

This activity will help you hone skills that will help you compare texts. You’ll look at Hugh Whitemore’s script in relation to The Royal Exchange’s 2016 production and Herbert Wise’s 1996 TV adaptation.

Before doing this task:

1. Read the script for Hugh Whitemore’s play BREAKING THE CODE
2. Watch Rob Hastie’s production for The Royal Exchange Hugh Whitemore’s BREAKING THE CODE.
3. Watch the 1996 adaptation of BREAKING THE CODE, directed by Herbert Wise.

Activity

1) Split the class into groups. Each group takes a scene each from the play. Act 1 has eight scenes; Act 2 has nine scenes.

- What are the differences between the script and The Royal Exchange’s production?
- What are the differences between the script and the TV adaptation?
- What are the differences between the Royal Exchange production and the TV adaptation?
- Why have the directors and the original author made these choices? In other words, what are the dramatic effects of the directors’ choices?

2) Now consider structure.

For instance, the group looking at Act 1 Scene 1 should confer with the group looking at Act 1 Scene 2, and discuss the dramatic effects of these two scenes following each other?

- Why did Hugh Whitemore choose to have these scenes follow each other?
- What are the dramatic effects of the way Wise links the two scenes?
- How does Rob Hastie link these scenes in his Royal Exchange production?

Further into the play look at scenes that precede and follow others. What dramatic effects are achieved? Also consider whether you can find links between scenes that are far apart in the play. What devices are used by Whitemore (he might use language or stage directions to link scenes), Wise and Hastie (they might use props, costume, lighting to flag up links)

Extension task:

Read Andrew Hodges’ book ‘Alan Turing: The Enigma’.

Why do you think Hugh Whitemore chose to include the parts of the book he did in his play?
**Teacher information:**

Structure. In Act 1 Scene 1 and Scene 2 of the TV series there is a pre-lap – a screenwriting term when the dialogue in the next scene can be heard at the end of the previous scene.

Christopher Morcom says ‘He should never have lied. That was the real mistake’ is a pre-lap. The effect is that Morcom’s words take on a double meaning. He refers to his fellow student in the Latin exam and, if it wasn’t already obvious, that Alan Turing has been lying to Detective Sergeant Mick Ross.

**LINKING ACTIVITY**

**Teacher information**

These tasks will help develop comparative skills, as students link plays under themes and explore the presentation of the theme by different directors.

Students should try to make as many links as they can between the themes in BREAKING THE CODE and other plays that have been staged at The Royal Exchange.

Forbidden love is a key component in lots of stories. Discuss as a class how many novels, films, books, computer games in which forbidden love features.

Discuss with the class what makes the presentation of forbidden love powerful in BREAKING THE CODE? Is it context? Turing fought his corner, using logic to reason that being gay was not wrong in an era when it was illegal. Is it character? If there are areas of mathematics that cannot be explained, Turing argues, then it follows that there are areas of human behaviour that are inexplicable too. His arguments are original and credible and ones typical of his character to arrive at.

What ingredients make the presentation of this theme powerful in BREAKING THE CODE?

- Turing does not hide the fact he is gay.
- He rattles the government because he is gay – in the UK and the US.
- He admits to being gay, even though it is a crime
- He is ahead of his time.

In what ways does Rob Hastie, the director, make the presentation of this theme powerful in the production at The Royal Exchange?

Next, ask students to look at the list of productions on The Royal Exchange resources page. Are students familiar with any of the plays? Royal Exchange plays that feature the theme of forbidden love include BEAUTIFUL THING, 1984, TO KILL A MOCKING BIRD, ROMEO AND JULIET, HAMLET, EDWARD II, A DOLL’S HOUSE, and THE HOMECOMING.
What makes the presentation of forbidden love in other productions powerful? Context in
BEAUTIFUL THING – the council estate; A DOLL’S HOUSE– the era; EDWARD II –
forbidden love not the most contentious thing in the original text (Old Mortimer is
homophobic at one point), Derek Jarman’s interpretation drew out the homophobia in the
play, linking it to 80s and 90s queer activism; in Marlowe’s original play it is Gaveston’s
class and that he distracts Edward from his kingly duties which causes contention.

Students do the linking activity worksheet, and feedback to the class on the comparisons
and contrasts that they found.

Other themes in BREAKING THE CODE that appear in other Royal Exchange plays:

**Disguise**: BREAKING THE CODE, AS YOU LIKE IT, HAMLET, MUCH ADO, MACBETH,
LITTLE VOICE, THE HOMECOMMING.

**One’s name and defending it**: THE CRUCIBLE, HAMLET, TO KILL A MOCKING BIRD

**Power**: 1984, TO KILL A MOCKING BIRD

**STUDENT WORKSHEET**

Read the extract from BREAKING THE CODE by Hugh Whitemore, and then compare and
contrast it with the passages from EDWARD II by Christopher Marlowe that follow.

**BREAKING THE CODE**

**Knox**: About this young engineer chap you’ve got working with you. Tongues are
beginning to wag.

**Turing**: (stares at him.) Am I in for a lesson in morals?

**Knox**: In common sense. I don’t give a tupenny damn whether you choose to go to bed
with choirboys or cocker spaniels, but it would be wiser to keep your private life to
yourself.

**Turing**: Is this an official reprimand?

**Knox**: Friendly advice, nothing more. (trying to adopt a more relaxed tone) I mean, first
things first: let’s get our priorities right. What we’re doing here – and most especially what
you’re doing her – has a direct and crucial bearing on the progress of the war. A pretty
young engineer comes a rather poor second to that surely?

**Turing**: Nobody complained when I was working with Pat.

**Knox**: That was different.

**Turing**: Was it?
EDWARD II

Extract 1

Mortimer Senior: Let him without controlment have his will.
The mightiest kings have had their minions:
Great Alexander loved Hephaestion,
The conquering Hercules for Hylas wept,
And for Patroclus stern Achilles drooped.
And not kings only, but the wisest men:
The Roman Tully loved Octavius,
Grave Socrates, wild Alcibiades.
Then let his grace, whose youth is flexible,
And promiseth as much as we can wish,
Freely enjoy that vain, light-hearted earl,
For riper years will wean him from such toys.

Mortimer: Uncle, his wanton humour grieves not me,
But this I scorn, that one so basely born
Should by his sovereign’s favour grow so pert
And riot it with the treasure of the realm.
While soldiers mutiny for want of pay…”
(427-8)

Extract 2

Edward: Shall I still be haunted thus?
Mortimer: Nay, now you are here alone, I’ll speak my mind.
Lancaster: And so will I, and then, my lord, farewell.
Mortimer: The idle triumphs, masques, lascivious shows,
And prodigal gifts bestowed on Gaveston
Have drawn thy treasure dry and made thee weak,
The murmuring commons overstretcheòd hath.
Lancaster: Look for rebellion, look to be deposed.
Thy garrisons are beaten out of France,
And lame and poor lie groaning at the gates.
The wild O’Neill, with swarms of Irish kerns,
Lives uncontrolled within the English pale.

TAPE TASK

Teacher guidance

Students choose a piece of text, and lay a piece of tracing paper over it. They mark words that relate to AO2 – how writers create effects – this could be through language use; or AO3 – context. Students can also mark words that relate to AO1 – a technical device they can name. Additionally, for A Level students, AO4: words or phrases that link to other plays or novels that the audience might be familiar with, or to other parts of BREAKING THE CODE. GCSE Literature students also have to make connections between texts – but this is not related to AO4 in the GCSE specifications.

The sheet of paper – which will look something like the tape Turing fed into the ACE computer for instance – is then handed to another student for analysis.

The other student lays the tracing paper over the text and looks at the marks, and decides which AO the marks relate to and writes them on the sheet. Students then compare answers. Many of the AOs overlap so there should be plenty of discussion – AO2 – how writers generate effects – isn’t limited to language. A writer can create effects by tapping into a context (AO3) that the audience is familiar with. In the scene below, London after a bombing raid is compared to Pompeii – an image audience’s will be familiar with from films and art. Or (for A Level students) by referencing another part of the play, or a different play (AO4) or a different interpretation of the same play (AO5).