



Alex Rider learning activities

Activities based on
Stormbreaker by Anthony
Horowitz

Age 8 – 14

CFE Second to Fourth
Levels

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About this resource

This resource is full of cross-curricular activity suggestions to help you explore Stormbreaker and Point Blanc with your students in library and classroom activities. Adapt and use as you see fit! The activities have been produced to help you get the most out of our online [Authors Live event with Anthony Horowitz](#), but you can use them at any point to engage students with the Alex Rider series.

Stormbreaker activities

Software for schools LIT 2-01a, LIT 3-01a

In *Stormbreaker*, an amazing new software program for schools has been invented. It has now been over twenty years since the novel was written - discuss whether the ideas from the novel are still relevant and if any of them have become a reality. If *Stormbreaker* was written now, what new additions might you make? Would social media be the new focus, rather than software? Encourage pupils to think big!

Developing villains ENG 3-27a, ENG 3-31a, LIT 3-20a

In chapter four, Horowitz introduces us to Herod Sayle, the main villain. Sayle is not present but we are given a comprehensive insight into his background. There is much more to Sayle than meets the eye, as we discover throughout the book.

Take time to go through the book for occasions when more 'nuggets' are offered regarding his character including his physical appearance. Read this aloud to pupils and encourage them to note details they think are significant. Remind pupils not to let the film version or TV influence them. Take all the information and ask pupils to create a profile of Sayle including, if possible, psychological profiling.

Ask the local Police Scotland team if they would be interested in working with you on this, or coming in to give your learners a talk on where profiling sits within investigations made by the police force. If this is not possible, then the [Explore Forensics](#) website may help introduce your pupils to psychological profiling.

Alternatively, create your own villain profile. You can transfer your profiling skills by trying a different 'genre' of protagonist.

Designing gadgets ENG 3-27a, TCH 3-14a

All good spies have a box of tricks up their sleeve, designed by an enthusiastic, knowledgeable technician specialist. Ask pupils to outline their own possible spy plot, and design their own gadgets to go along with the plot.

Ask pupils to come up with the following elements:

- A villain to defeat. The villain's abilities will probably determine some of the gadgets a spy would need. You can use the "developing villains" task to help with this.
- A setting that poses hazards. Does the villain live in a stronghold of some kind? Again, this will necessitate the use of gadgets.

Your pupils can then spend time designing the gadgets required to negotiate these obstacles. Type everyone's spy plots up on one sheet, and type up everyone's gadget on another sheet, before handing the sheets around the class. Can the

gadgets be matched up to the appropriate plot? There are opportunities here for collaborative writing as the learners can then discuss the plots and improvements which could be made.

Local settings ENG 3-31a, LIT 3-20a, LIT 3-24a

In this novel, Horowitz has made use of local historic landmarks synonymous to Cornwall. They feature quite heavily in his setting and plot.

Thinking about your own setting, which local site of interest would you feature in an Alex Rider novel? Would it be a historical site, a popular tourist space such as a theme park, or a geographical phenomenon? Put together a storyboard featuring your chosen site to show how this would fit in with the novel. You may find that you can use your chosen setting for the next task.

Write your own escape scene ENG 3-27a, ENG 3-31a, LIT 3-20a

Alex is involved in some nerve-wracking situations, as you might expect. At one point, he is running for his life, being chased by two men driving quad bikes. He has to contend with the men whilst coping with the rough terrain near an old tin mine in Cornwall. In another incident he has to travel through the tunnels or shafts of the tin mine following a map with only the cold and the dark for company.

Write a short Alex Rider story, selecting your own interesting setting that Alex has to navigate while escaping a villain e.g. a rocky gully, small but tightly packed woodland, a ruined mansion. Alex could make use of the gadgets designed in the activity above.

Think carefully about how to manage the pace of the writing: there may be sections where the character hides or loses sight of his pursuers, which will help to slow the pace down before you bring it up again. To help pack your writing with suspense, read these [suggestions from writer Elizabeth Sims](#). Number 4 is particularly good and easy to apply to a shorter piece of fiction.

You may also find it helpful to watch parts of the [opening scene from Casino Royale](#) and think about the following:

- How the action builds throughout the scene;
- How the writers establish who the main character is;
- How tension and uncertainty are created in the scene, particularly through the use of setting.

Screen adaptations ENG 3-16a, ENG 3-19a, ENG 2-31a, ENG 3-31a, TCH 3-04a

There are two different screen adaptations of the Alex Rider books – a movie released in 2006, and a TV series released in 2020.

Watch either of the existing adaptations in class, and ask your pupils to identify the similarities and differences between the adaptations and the source material. Which do they prefer? Why? The resources available on the [Screening Shorts website](#) or [Into Film website](#) might help pupils to analyse the film/TV show.

Ask pupils to produce an outline or proposal for their own adaptation of *Stormbreaker*. Would they choose a TV series or a film, and why? Looking at the chapters and the action in the original book, how would they pace their own adaptation? What do they think would be the most important aspects of *Stormbreaker* to include, and what would they discount?

SAS training course HWB 3-25a

Alex has to attend a two week SAS training course before carrying out his mission.

Liaise with the PE department to design a training programme which could meet your needs should you be called upon a mission. Follow the programme for a six-week period and keep a diary to record how the training makes you feel and if you are getting stronger. Could this be transferred to a block of regular PE to develop a rich task? Perhaps your local TA would be interested in helping with this.

Look further at healthy lifestyles and consider the nutrition the body needs to sustain quality training or workouts. What should you be eating before these activities to help your body and enhance your performance, and what should you be doing afterwards? The muscles need to cool down, but you need to think about recovery for the rest of your body too. Are expensive energy gels and recovery drinks all they are built up to be, or are there more natural alternatives? Involve the Health and Wellbeing team in this.

Study notes ENG 3-31a, ENG 3-17a

Imagine the current versions of study notes for *Stormbreaker* have gone out of print and all electronic versions have been destroyed. Take each chapter and create your own crib notes until you have a fully-fledged study guide. What will you have to consider? Think about what would be most useful to you e.g. a synopsis of each chapter, a summary of the themes covered, and assessments of each protagonist or character.

Create the exam questions for writing a critical essay that would best suit the use of *Stormbreaker* when answering them. Make up the marking sheet to accompany the questions. Share your questions with others, answering under exam conditions, before marking each other's work according to the criteria set.

Minecraft TCH 3-04a

Using Minecraft, select a scene from an Alex Rider novel and recreate it. Choose the same scene as a friend and compare your Minecraft versions. What are the similarities/differences?

Alex Rider word games LIT 2-21a

Hold an Alex Rider word tournament using games like scrabble, Boggle or Bananagrams. Restrict answers to words found in Alex Rider novels (this will probably mean you need to allow proper nouns), or on the theme of spies. This is a fun way to assess recall skills.

Winning Moves provides sets of Bananagrams for free when you register for their [Bananagrams School](#) Club, although they do have a limit each year and close the actual challenge once they have reached their subscription maximum.

Create a title sequence TCH 3-04a, EXA 3-06a, EXA 3-17a

Think about famous sequences to films, particularly those from the Bond franchise. Using the software programmes available in your school, take graphics, animation and music and bring them together successfully to produce a title sequence for an Alex Rider novel. You could use [digital storytelling techniques](#), or take a similar approach to any book trailers you produce in school. You can look at some [James Bond title sequences](#) for inspiration.

Book cover design EXA 3-06a

To celebrate the 15th anniversary of Stormbreaker, the Alex Rider novels had a makeover in 2015. What would you have done had you been given the commission? Select a novel and design the a new cover.