CFE Second to Fourth Levels (Ages 8 – 14)

Anthony Horowitz learning resources

Activities based on 
Stormbreaker and Point Blanc

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Note to teachers using this resource

These resources are 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 resources 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 work of this author.

Don’t worry if you miss the live online event – you can watch it later in our Watch on Demand section: www.scottishbooktrust.com/watch-on-demand

Note On a few occasions you’ll see that activities are supplemented by ‘Rich Tasks’. These tasks are designed to help pupils transfer the learning from one task into another context.

About Anthony Horowitz

Anthony Horowitz is one of the most prolific and successful writers working in the UK – and is unique for working across so many media. Anthony is a born polymath; juggling writing books, TV series, films, plays and journalism.

Did you know that he wrote screenplays for the first seven episodes of Midsomer Murders and is the writer and creator of Foyle’s War? He knew that he wanted to be a writer by the age of eight and now writes for both adults and children. One of his most popular series is the teen spy novel series Alex Rider which celebrates its 15th birthday in 2015. The first novel in the series, Stormbreaker, was made into a feature-length film in 2006. The series is thought to have sold over 19 million copies worldwide. He is particularly interested in thriller and suspense genres.

He was awarded an OBE in January 2014 for his services to Literature.

Anthony’s website: www.anthonyhorowitz.com
Preparing to watch the Authors Live event

Author research
Lit 2/3/4-14a
Find online interviews with Anthony Horowitz to get a clearer picture of his thoughts and ideas. YouTube videos include discussions about his favourite villains and how to write well.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZA7jkL_IPI  His five favourite villains

www.youtube.com/watch?v=fS659EznCMc  Top five favourite gadgets

www.youtube.com/watch?v=DT_uLF1G3ws  Five rules for succeeding in a short story writing competition

Party!
HWB 2-11a

Stormbreaker celebrates its 15th anniversary in 2015. Plan a party including costumes, Rider-themed activities and all relevant paperwork.

Graphic novels

Find a copy of the Alex Rider books in graphic novel form to read and compare.
**Stormbreaker activities**

When MI6 recognises his potential. Alex Rider is armed with secret gadgets and sent on his first mission. But the teenage spy soon finds himself in mortal danger. [Walker Books]

**Compare and contrast within one genre**

Lit 2/3/4-16a, Lit 2/3/4-19a

Horowitz wrote episodes for both *Midsomer Murders* and *Foyle’s War*. Spend time watching an episode of each, taking notes as you watch. Compare and contrast the writing styles within the same ‘detective’ genre. Can you identify similarities and recognise any common traits or themes which could be attributed to Horowitz’s style? Would you be able to tell that they had both been written by the same author?

Do make sure the episodes you choose have been written by Horowitz: all his episodes are detailed below.

**Midsomer Murders**

- ‘The Killings at Badger’s Drift’ - screenplay - adapted from the novel by Caroline Graham
- ‘Written in Blood’ - screenplay - adapted from the novel by Caroline Graham
- ‘Death’s Shadow’
- ‘Stranglers Wood’
- ‘Dead Man’s 11’
- ‘Judgement Day’

midsomermurders.org/anthonyhorowitz.htm

**Foyle’s War**

Most episodes – check series 5, 6, and 7 for other writers.

**Rich Task** Write a proposal for another episode, or go one further and try for a spin-off show.

bit.ly/TvShowProposal

**Screening Shorts**

TCH 2/3/4-04a, Lit 2/3/4-04a

Access this resource through GLOW to help learners to appreciate Moving Image Education before you go on to look at the film version of *Stormbreaker*. If you can’t access GLOW, you can go directly to the website. www.screeningshorts.org.uk
Imaginate
Eng 2-19a, TCH 2-04a

Imaginate is a teaching tool designed to help learners to evaluate live performances. It is equally effective when used to evaluate films. Watch Stormbreaker, the film, and try out this resource. Skip to page 19 if you download the Evaluating the Performing Arts step by step teaching guide, or dive straight into the Talking about Theatre resource.

www.imaginate.org.uk/learn/schools-teachers
classroom.imaginate.org.uk

Study Notes
Eng 2/3/4-31a, Eng 2/3/4-17a

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.

Rich Task
Create the exam questions for writing a critical essay which 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.

Character development
Eng 2/3/4-27a, Eng 2/3/4-31a, Lit 2-2/3/4-20a

In chapter 4 Horowitz introduces us to Herod Sayle, the main villain. Sayle isn’t present but we are given a comprehensive insight into his background. Obviously 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 and note any details. Don’t allow the film version to influence you. Take all the information and 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 isn’t possible, the links below may be of help in introducing your pupils to psychological profiling:
- Explore Forensics website – bit.ly/CrimProfiling
- Criminology Careers website – bit.ly/CareerProfiler

Alternatively, create your own villain profile. You can transfer your profiling skills by trying a different ‘genre’ of protagonist.
Local historic site – setting development
Eng 2/3/4-31a, Lit 2-2/3/4-20a, Lit 2/3/4-24a

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.

Plot development – being chased/travelling through tunnels
Eng 2/3/4-27a, Eng 2/3/4-31a, Lit 2-2/3/4-20a

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 the ‘lost’ chapter for Alex Rider, selecting an interesting setting e.g. a rocky gully, small but tightly-packed woodland, a ruined mansion. You’ll need to 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 Brian Klems in his blog – number four is particularly good and easy to apply to a shorter piece of fiction:

[Link to blog post]

You may also find it helpful to watch parts of the opening scene from Casino Royale – you can find a link to this scene on page 10 as well as some questions for note taking.

Six-part drama series
Lit 2/3/4-16a, Eng 2/3/4-31a, Eng 2/3/4-19a,

Imagine a TV channel has asked you to prepare an outline or proposal for a six-part drama series of Stormbreaker. Looking at the chapters and the action, how would you do this? What would you include or discount? It will be especially important to think about how you would end one episode and begin the next – there is a list of ways to end book chapters in this page which can be applied for this task:

[Link to editor’s blog post]

**Fire building**  
HWB 2/3-11a, Lit 2/3/4-14a

During his SAS training, Alex is sent on manoeuvres with limited equipment. His team were not given fire-making tools to be able to have a hot meal.

Research different safe methods of fire building and try them out. If you have access to a Forest School Leader, request some sessions where you can experience a range of outdoor activities/survival skills. Arrange to use a fire pit to practise before attempting some outdoor cooking or try using a Dutch oven or Storm kettle.

Back in the classroom produce the manual/recipe book in written or video form to help others to learn too. Test out the quality of your instructions by inviting another class to use them to ‘have a go’, or contact a local primary and find out if they would like to have you share both the information and the activities with some of their pupils.

Always ensure full risk assessments have been made before carrying out this type of activity.

www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/Practical-guide/public/Lighting-fires

**Basic Training**  
HWB 2/3/4-25a

Alex is forced 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 track your progress. Use a range of different software programmes to do this, working with the maths department as well to present the data in a variety of ways. 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 warm 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.

**Gadgets**  
Eng 2/3/4-27a, TCH 2/3/4-14a

All good spies have a box of tricks up their sleeve, designed by an enthusiastic, knowledgeable technician specialist. The reader/audience
can begin to second guess some of the action to come as the spy invariably uses all the gadgets featured.

Have each class member outline a possible spy plot. They will need 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 to take with her. You can use the profiling task on page 5 to help you.

- **A setting which 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.

There is some further helpful explanation of what the pupils should consider when designing their gadgets here: bit.ly/AlexRiderGadgets

**Extension** you could use this task to lead into the scene writing task on page 6 where the pupils’ gadgets could be used within the scene.

**Hardware design**

MNU 2/3/4-09b, HWB 2/3/4-14a

*Stormbreaker* is noted for its distinctive design. Spend time designing your own custom-made computer hardware. Work to a specific design brief. This could be a collaborative project, with learners working in small groups; possibly developed into an enterprise topic. Offer up a budget and charge the teams for everything they use when designing their prototypes e.g. basics such as pen and paper are free; the use of scissors incurs a nominal fee and a sliding scale is developed for all other items. Charge ‘consultancy’ fees if the team has to ask for advice.

**Rich Task** Set up an Apprentice-Style presentation for each time where they must ‘sell’ their design to various suppliers. Look for companies in your area which might be willing to become involved for these presentations, or a parent who may work in this field. Remember to download the theme tune and series music.

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0071b63
Point Blanc activities

On his second mission, Alex Rider must infiltrate the exclusive Point Blanc Academy. But the academy hides a deadly secret. Can Alex alert the world to the truth before it’s too late? [Walker Books]

Time Magazine
HWB 3/4-11a, TCH 3/4-04a

Michael J, Roscoe, the first character to be introduced to us, is described as the ninth or tenth richest man in the world, who had appeared on the cover of Time Magazine dubbed ‘The Electronics King’.

Find out about Time Magazine. It runs a feature called Person of the Year (formerly Man of the Year). Although this sounds like an accolade, in reality the title is not necessarily given to a person who has done positive and virtuous things. Have a look through previous People of the Year, and see if you can work out the criteria for receiving the title. After this, think about and research the current year so far. Who do you think would win the award based on events this year? Write the Time article for that person, announcing them as Person of the Year and describing the impact they have made on world news.

http://time.com/magazine/

Extension If you could choose someone you know from your life who has had a positive impact on you to go on the cover, who would it be, and why? If possible, set up the photo shoot, organising everything from lighting to make up and direct then produce the front cover.

Exclusive boarding school design challenge
HWB 2/3-14a, Lit 2/3-20a, Lit 2/3-24a. Eng 2/3-27a

If you were to go to an exclusive boarding school with a limited number of places what would it be like? Create a school, thinking about the following: how many pupils will there be attending, where will the school be, what will it look like, what subjects will be covered, is there a uniform and how will the school be different from any other boarding school – what makes yours unique?

Design brochures, draw out floor maps, map out the curriculum and provide information on all areas requested as part of your design challenge. Link with IT to ensure the resulting presentations are as professional as possible. Set up a ‘schools fair’ where everyone puts up a ‘stall’ and can cast a vote for their favourite school.
School Debate – The Shooting party – transition opportunity
Lit 2/3/4-28a, Lit 2/3/4-09a

Guns have become almost daily news now. Debates rage regarding a range of issues including US Gun laws, the influence of computer games on young people, general rise in gun culture and even whether teachers should be armed or not. Decide on a specific issue and write a discursive essay on the subject. Alternatively, form teams and hold formal debate. Invite other classes or year groups to be involved: primary 7 pupils could watch the debates and vote for the winners.

Screenplay
EXA 3/4-01a, Lit 2/3/4-16a

In many spy thriller films there is usually an opening scene to set up the rest of the film. The *Stormbreaker* film is no exception. After reading the first few chapters of *Point Blanc* can you write the opener for this novel turned film? After you’ve written the scene, liaise with the drama department and bring the scene to life!

For a good example of an opening scene, check out *Casino Royale*: bit.ly/CasRoyaleOpening. Make notes on 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.

Create a title sequence
HWB 3/4-11a, HWB 3/4-14a, TCH 3/4-04a, EXA 3/4-06a, EXA 3/4-17a

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. The website below shows some of the best Bond sequences to use as a starting point.

bit.ly/BondTitleSeq

Theme tunes written for characters in Alex Rider series:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBCtPAIHcVU

Vehicle Detail
Lit 2/3-15a, Lit 2/3/25a

Horowitz always gives the specific name of vehicles used in his novels e.g. “It [the helicopter] was a Robinson R44 four-seater aircraft, American built.”

Put together a factfile for all the vehicles featured in *Point Blanc*. Are there any similarities between the vehicles? Why does he choose these particular models and why give such specific details? Has Horowitz chosen them deliberately for his characters to tell us something more about the person or did he just choose them because they were appropriate for the job?
Dolly the Sheep
Lit 2/3/4-28, Lit 2/3/4-29a, SCN 4-13c, SCN 2/3/4-20a, SCN 2/3/4-20b
Cloning is at the heart of the villainous plot engineered by Dr Grief. He cites Dolly as an example of this.

Find out more about Dolly and the impact of the scientists’ achievements. What is the current stance on cloning? Consider the ethics debate. Can you write a discursive essay on this subject?

Blue Plaques are displayed to link important historical figures with the buildings in which they lived and worked. Dolly’s Blue Plaque reads "Dolly the Sheep, 1996-2003. First mammal to be cloned from an adult cell." Look out for plaques in your local area and research the recipients. Present your findings in an interesting way.

Meet your Doppelganger
Eng 2/3/4-31a
Imagine if you were ever to come face to face with your clone? What would you do? What would you say? Write an imaginative piece describing that moment of recognition.

Boastful confessions
Lit 2/3/4-29a
Dr Grief confesses all to Alex. He doesn’t do so because he regrets his actions and is contrite, no – he is boastful and conceited. He wants to finally be recognised for his ‘brilliance’. Come up with your own villain and write a persuasive piece with the added frisson of ‘creepy genius’. What has your villain done? What do they think is so brilliant and what makes your flesh crawl when you read his/her boasting? Consider the most far-fetched idea then tone it down to make it believable. There are lots of examples in action movies and novels to help you get started. Have a class discussion first to find out as many fictitious dastardly plots/evil plans you have already encountered before developing your own.

Ironing board
TCH 2-14a
Alex converts an ironing board into a rudimentary snowboard with the minimum materials and tools available to him.

What transport could you fashion if you needed a quick escape? Choose a basic piece of household equipment or furniture and write a description of how you convert it into something you can use to travel in.
General activities

**OO7**
Lit 2/3/4-16a, Eng 2/3/4-19a

Horowitz has been heavily influenced by Bond. He has said that Alex Rider is the result of a lightbulb moment, ‘Let’s make Bond a teenager’. He uses Bond references across the novels, including their influence in his choice of chapter headings. You can find his thoughts on this in the afterword of *Stormbreaker*.

Spend time tracking down these references and homages. Do they enhance the writing? Can you incorporate some ‘Bondness’ into a piece of writing?

**Minecraft**
TCH 2/3/4-04a, Eng 2/3/4-16a, Eng 2/3/4-19a

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? Is this due to artistic licence or because someone didn’t follow the written description well enough?

**Bletchley Park**
TCH 2/3/4-04a, TCH 2/3/4-08a

Log in to the Bletchley Park website to take a virtual tour, or look at the activities available to you through Enigma Outreach which includes access to an online safety project.

[www.bletchleypark.org.uk/edu/visit/outreach.rhtm](http://www.bletchleypark.org.uk/edu/visit/outreach.rhtm)

**Book Cover Design**
EXA 2/3/4-06a

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

**Scrabble or Banagrams – Rider-Style**
HWB 2/3/4-14a

Play scrabble or another word puzzle game but restrict answers or choices to words found in Alex Rider novels (this will probably mean you need to allow proper nouns). This is a fun way to assess recall skills.
There are many, many ways to develop skills in book reports. Try some of the ideas available from Unique Teaching which is a site run by a teacher from the United States. She tends to make UK versions as well to avoid spelling issues! You do pay a fee to download your chosen report but it is very low cost and there are often ‘sales’. Choose from a board game template, Wanted posters and hamburgers to name but three. Can you create your own ‘Unique Teaching’ pack?

www.uniqueteachingresources.com/

Resource websites

www.walker.co.uk
www.alexrideradventures.com
bit.ly/WalkerAlexRiderRes
www.pearsonschoolsandfecolleges.co.uk/Secondary/Drama/14-16/NewWindmillsFiction/Resources/P-T/PointBlanc.pdf

If You loved Stormbreaker and Point Blanc

Check out our list of fantastic spy novels for teens:
www.scottishbooktrust.com/reading/book-lists/i-spy