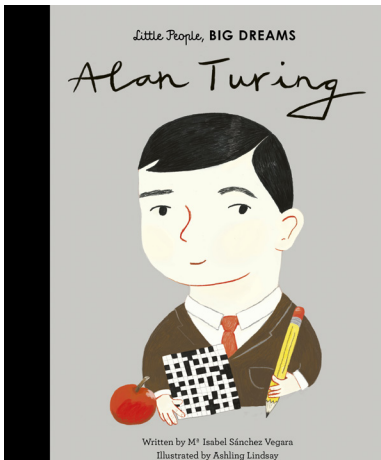


Little People, BIG DREAMS™

TEACHERS' GUIDE



Alan Turing

Little People, BIG DREAMS™

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Ages: 4 to 8 (Grades: PreK to 2)

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Alan Turing was a shy, quiet child, and many people did not think he would amount to much. However, he went on to develop his keen interest in mathematics and invent an early version of the computers we use today. He also saved countless lives by helping his country crack the secret codes the German army was sending its soldiers during World War II. Tragically, Alan was persecuted and treated badly simply because he was gay, and he was forced to undergo a strange, unproven treatment to change who he was. Despite this, Alan persevered and serves as heroic inspiration, teaching children to always stay true to themselves.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS IN THIS UNIT

1. What is Alan Turing famous for creating?
2. Who was Alan's first love?
3. What important and sad thing happened while Alan was at boarding school?
4. What did Alan know was the only thing to break the German army's secret code machine?
5. How were Alan's contributions celebrated at the end of the war?
6. Why did Alan lose his job?

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Alan experienced a lot of loss and disappointment early in his life, first when his love passed away, then again when Germany invaded his home country of France. Ask the class how they think

Alan used his interest in mathematics to persevere. How did these losses inform who Alan would become?

2. The book explains that “Alan knew that another machine—not a human mind—was the only thing to beat” Germany’s code-making machine. Ask the class how they think Alan knew that. Why do they think a human mind couldn’t figure out the secret codes?

3. Because being gay was against his country’s laws, Alan “lost his job and was forced to take a bizarre treatment that made him feel very sad.” Do students think that it was fair to take away Alan’s job and try to change him? Have students silently consider how they would feel if the government told them there was something wrong with them, took their job away, and tried to change them. Does anyone want to share how that would make them feel?

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. Alan famously helped crack the secret code used by the Germans in World War II. Divide the class into two groups. Ask one group to work together to create a secret code, then write a message using that code. Ask the second group of students to try and decode it. Which group thought their assignment was more challenging, and why?

2. As a class, reexamine the pages that describe the treatment Alan was forced to undergo. Ask the students to identify the ways the images help express what Alan is feeling. Have them select an emotion, then create a drawing that expresses it. Share the drawings with the class. Invite volunteers to explain why they chose their emotion.

3. Breaking a secret code is similar to solving riddles. Select a favorite riddle book and see if the students can solve a few. If applicable, go further and see if they can create their own riddles for others to solve!

4. Take another look at the illustrations in the book, starting with the cover. Do the students see something that appears on almost every page? Why do they think that object is used in the book? How do they think it relates to Alan and his achievements? Ask the class to think of an object that means something special to them and create an illustration that features that object.

