



EXTRACTS FROM THE ALEX RIDER SERIES BY ANTHONY HOROWITZ WEEK 10

Please note, this is a 2 week unit of work. Week 11 English will also focus on extracts from the Alex Rider series, but will offer different activities.

ALEX RIDER SERIES OVERVIEW OF LESSONS

The lessons over the next two weeks include extracts that have been taken directly from the books, corresponding discussion questions and cross-curricular activities that stimulate ideas around important themes in the series.

The lessons are aimed at developing descriptive and creative writing, including exploring different genres, writing strong lead characters, devising mission files, developing settings, and creating pacy stories.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the first book in the number one bestselling Alex Rider series by Anthony Horowitz, fourteen-year-old Alex is forcibly recruited into MI6. Armed with secret gadgets, he is sent to investigate Herod Sayle, a man who is offering state-of-the-art Stormbreaker computers to every school in the country. But the teenage spy soon finds himself in mortal danger.

****It's time for your first assignment . . . Are you ready for your secret mission?****

LESSON I

TO UNDERSTAND AND BE ABLE TO LIST THE FEATURES OF DIFFERENT GENRES IN FICTION.

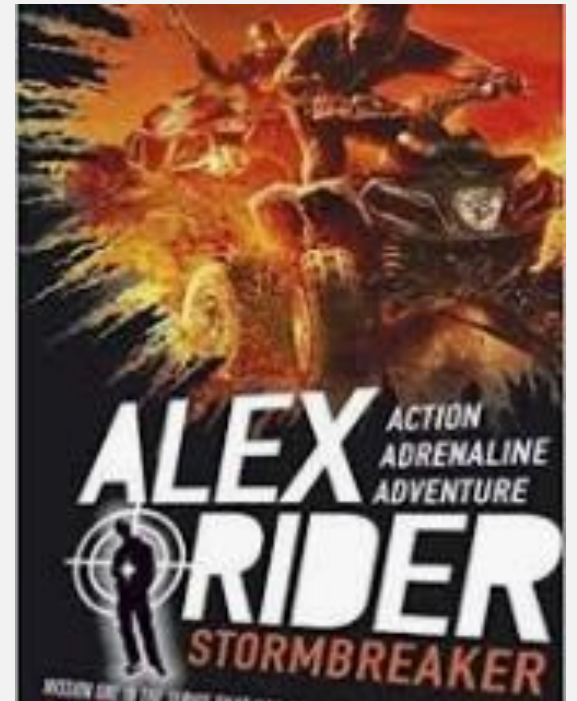
LEAD-IN QUESTIONS: Let's find out ...

What do you know about the Alex Rider series?

What genre of story do you think they fall into?

What does the cover of Stormbreaker make you think about?

What sort of story do you think this might be?



TASK 1

Read out the opening sentence of Stormbreaker:

“When the doorbell rings at three in the morning, it’s never good news.”

1. How does the sentence draw the reader in?
2. Does it create a feeling of mystery or adventure? How?
3. Can you pick out effective words and phrases that create atmosphere in the sentence?
4. Does the opening sentence make you feel that something important might happen next? How?

TASK 2

Predict what you think might happen after this sentence.

Write down your ideas and explain your reasoning.

“When the doorbell rings at three in the morning, it’s never good news.”

TASK 3

Look at the genre cards below. For each of them, think of an example of a book that fits into that particular genre. One of the cards has been left blank for you to come up with your own! Is it possible for a book to fit into more than one genre?

ADVENTURE	COMEDY	SPY
FANTASY	ROMANCE	

TASK 4

The Alex Rider series that we will be using fits into both the “adventure” and “spy” genres.

Can you predict why?

Create a list of six features of the adventure and spy genres. Give reasons for your choices. Use the example below to get you started!

- A mystery to be solved
-
-
-

LESSON 2

TO UNDERSTAND AND BE ABLE TO LIST THE FEATURES OF DIFFERENT GENRES IN FICTION.

Choose one of the Alex Rider books listed. Using the title and your knowledge of genre, create an exciting book cover to represent what you think the story is about.

Remember the following success criteria when creating a book cover:

- a bold design
- strong colours,
- a clear title.

STORMBREAKER
POINT BLANC
SKELETON KEY
EAGLE STRIKE
SCORPIA
ARK ANGEL
SNAKEHEAD
CROCODILE TEARS
SCORPIA RISING
RUSSIAN ROULETTE
NEVER SAY DIE
SECRET WEAPON



LESSON 3

TO CREATE A CHARACTER PROFILE FOR A FICTIONAL CHARACTER.

LEAD-IN TASK: Let's read! Read the following extract from Stormbreaker:

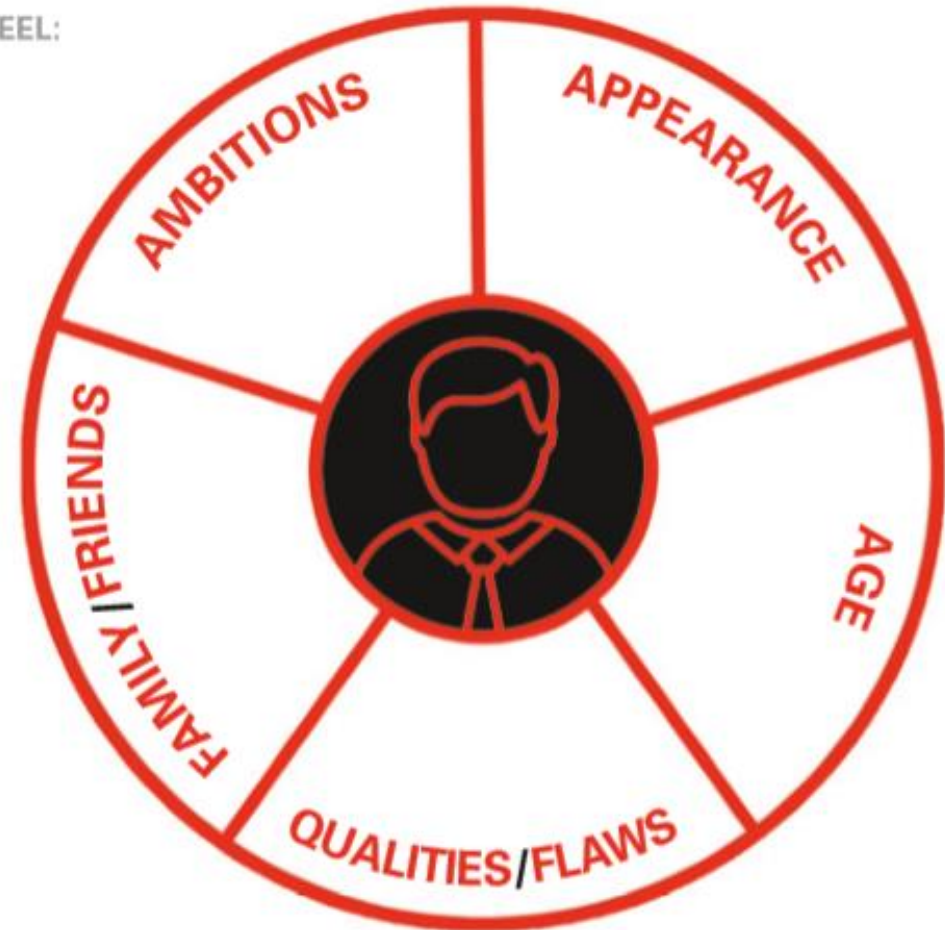
He rolled out of bed and walked over to the open window, his bare feet pressing down the carpet pile. The moonlight spilled on to his chest and shoulders. Alex was fourteen, already well-built, with the body of an athlete. His hair, cut short apart from two thick strands hanging over his forehead, was fair. His eyes were brown and serious. For a moment he stood silently, half-hidden in the shadow, looking out. There was a police car parked outside. From his second-floor window Alex could see the black ID number on the roof and the caps of the two men who were standing in front of the door. The porch light went on and, at the same time, the door opened.

What can you tell about Alex's character from this extract?

TASK 1

Look at the character wheel. Using the wheel, can you describe Alex as he is portrayed in the extract? Alternatively, can you describe yourself or an imagined character? Make notes in each segment of the wheel.

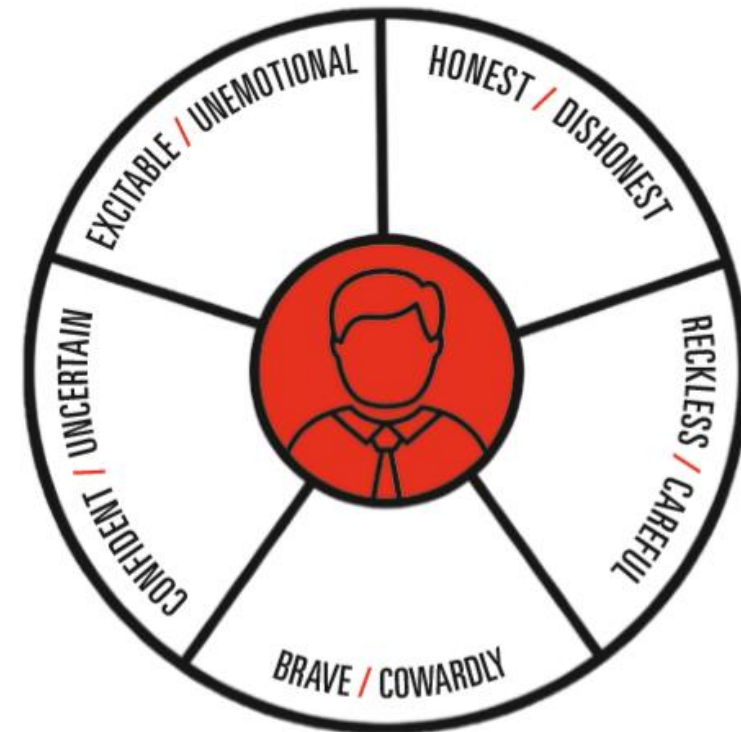
CHARACTER WHEEL:



TASK 2

When writers build characters, they have to make sure that all of the elements of the character wheel are covered in detail. In order to achieve this detail, it might be helpful to create further wheels for each of the categories. For example, look at the wheel for 'Character Qualities/Flaws'. Can you use it to go into more detail when describing yourself or your imagined character.

CHARACTER WHEEL:
QUALITIES/FLAWS



TASK 3

Add some segments to the Qualities/Flaws wheel. Alternatively, create a new wheel for one of the other categories from the first Character Wheel.

Go into as much detail as possible about your character – the more the better!

Once you've created a few wheels, use them to write a paragraph describing your character.

LESSON 4

TO CREATE A STORYBOARD FOR A NEW SECRET MISSION

Read the following extract from Stormbreaker:

“What we’re suggesting is that you come and work for us,” Mrs Jones said. “We have enough time to give you some basic training – not that you’ll need it, probably – and we can equip you with a few items that may help you with what we have in mind. Then we’ll arrange for you to take the place of this other boy. You’ll go to Sayle Enterprises on 29th March. That’s when this Lester boy is expected. You’ll stay there until 1st April, which is the day of the ceremony. The timing couldn’t be better. You’ll be able to meet Herod Sayle, keep an eye on him and tell us what you think. Perhaps you’ll also find out what it was your uncle discovered and why he had to die. You shouldn’t be in any danger. After all, who would suspect a fourteen-year-old boy of being a spy?”

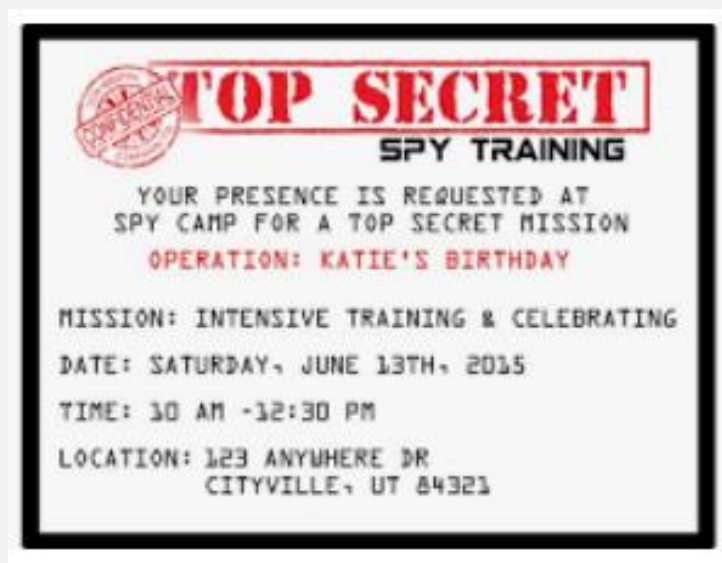
1. What is Alex’s mission?
2. Who is Alex spying on?
3. Why does Mrs Jones think this is a good idea?
4. What has happened to Alex’s uncle?

TASK 2

Create a Mission File for Alex. Note down all of the important information that he needs to remember into bullet points. Draw pictures of anyone he needs to look out for!

Look at examples on the following slides.





LESSON 5

TO CREATE A STORYBOARD FOR A NEW SECRET MISSION

Create your own Secret Mission for Alex or for the character that you created in the previous lesson. Make an original Mission Storyboard showing how the mission should progress. For example, in the first box you might draw a character or scene at the beginning of the mission. Consider whether it includes a crime scene, or even a person wondering how to get revenge. Use words and illustrations to tell the story of your mission.

See storyboard example on the next slide.

MY MISSION: STORYBOARD
