**Spartacus Educational Classroom Activity**

# Alan Turing (Questions & Answers)

http://spartacus-educational.com/EXCOM2ww3.htm

**Q1: Study source 2. Why did Alan Turing have problems at Hazel Hurst Preparatory School?**

A1: Alan Turing was very interested in science and mathematics but the school "specialized in teaching Latin, Greek, literature and the classics in preparation for public school."

**Q2: How did Alan Turing's mother deal with his "appalling school reports at Sherborne"?**

A2: According to his brother John she was "constantly nagging him" about his failings.

**Q3: Make a list of the teacher's comments at Sherborne that (a) praised (b) criticized Alan Turing.**

A3: (a) "genius"; "special gifts". (b) "Alan's mathematics... was not very good"; "He spends a great deal of time in investigations in advanced mathematics to the neglect of his elementary work"; "his knowledge (in science) is scrappy": "trying to build a roof before he has laid the foundations"; "anti-social"; "the kind of boy who is bound to be a problem in any kind of school".

**Q4: Select passages from the sources that explain why Alan Turing became friends with Christopher Morcom.**

A4: "Together they discussed the latest scientific news and conducted their own experiments" (source 6). "Morcom gave Turing a vital period of intellectual companionship" (source 7).

**Q5: How does source 10 help us understand what Alan Turing meant in his letter to Christopher Morcom's mother (source 9).**

A5: Alan Turing told Christopher Morcom's mother that the photograph of her son on his table encouraged him to work hard. The author of source 10 believes that he was motivated by the need to "fulfill his friend's potential". Morcom had already won a place at Cambridge University. "Turing believed it was his duty also to win a place at Cambridge, and then to make the discoveries his friend would otherwise have made."