

Who was Alan Turing and why should we care?

Government and National Apologies

Guidance Notes & Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives

- To understand Alan Turing's legacy
- To gain knowledge of other injustices
- To understand how the acquisition of knowledge can be turned into action
- To consider how events in the past can inform thinking about events in the present
- To understand how to support views on current events with reference to past events

Introduction

The aim of this lesson is two-fold: to consolidate the learning students undertaken about how and why attitudes and opinion about events in the past can change over time and, to consider how knowledge can be turned into action. This latter aim will be considered through the lens of a range of events, historical and more recent, that have been subject to calls for an apology from the relevant country's government. In considering these events, and the reasons for and against an apology, students will return to their earlier learning on how and why attitudes change over time and place.

The starter activity, a 20 question, multiple-choice quiz, will remind students of the salient points they have covered with regards to Alan Turing, but not the social and legal contexts explored in lessons 3 and 4, nor the question of government apologies, except insofar as that pertains to Turing. The rationale behind this decision is so that students are reminded that they are, after all, learning about one of Britain's great unsung heroes, Alan Turing. The 'Thinking Time' question can be used to briefly explore the notion that judgements about people and events can often be influenced by the context in which the judgement is being made.

Throughout the scheme of work, and particularly in Lesson 5: Pause – Reflect – Discuss; students have had opportunities to consider Turing's legacy (or legacies). The main activity in this lesson is aimed at expanding this consideration, specifically by looking at the issues surrounding government/national apologies. As students have seen, with regard to Alan Turing,

it took many years and much campaigning before the apology and Royal Pardon was issued, and longer before 'Turing's Law' was enacted. The main activity in lesson 6 lets students explore why government/national apologies are so slow in forthcoming and how knowledge can inspire activism.

An optional opening to this activity is included, which teachers are strongly advised to include – if time allows – as it is designed to open the activity on a note of positivity.

Key Information

This lesson is designed for students aged 13 and above. It is devised for History classes.

The timings suggested are based on a one-hour lesson and may need adapting based on circumstances. Possible adaptations have been suggested where appropriate.

The lesson is designed to follow lesson five of the scheme of work: Pause – Reflect – Discuss. Prior knowledge of Alan Turing is needed, and the lesson cannot be used effectively as a standalone lesson. The students' knowledge, ideas and preconceptions should be utilised to explore and resolve misconceptions.

The lesson plan provides one way to navigate the content and tasks. Teachers are encouraged to use and/or adapt the resources based on the needs, abilities and prior knowledge of their classes.

As far as possible, students should remain in the same small group (ideally four people) throughout this course of lessons.

Resources

- Lesson plan
- Lesson PowerPoint
- Starter quiz question sheet
 - To be printed double-sided one per student
- Injustices/Apologies cards
 - One set (6 cards) to be printed double-sided
- Windrush Scandal Injustice/Apology card
 - To be printed double-sided enough for one copy for each small group

Lesson Plan

Starter (12-15 minutes)

The purpose of the quiz, apart from being fun, is to help consolidate the learning which has taken place over the previous five lessons, as well as to refresh understanding in order to get the most out of the rest of this lesson. Teachers can run this quiz how they please; students can answer individually, in pairs or teams; students can mark their own answers or each other's.

Start by giving each student (or pair/small group) a copy of the quiz sheet and explain the task. Display the 'Thinking Time' question (slide 2) and explain that if waiting for others to finish the quiz, they should consider their answers to these questions.

After showing the quiz answers (slides 3 and 4) return to the 'Thinking Time' questions (slide 5) and take some thoughts on them from the class. Students should understand that how a person (or, as they will see in the activity, an event) is judged is dependent upon the question being asked.

Activity: Research – Discuss – Feedback (30 minutes)

Introduction (5 minutes)

Begin by ensuring that students understand that they have already considered Turing's legacy in terms of his contributions to the war effort, computing, artificial intelligence and so on.

Students may need to have the idea of 'legacy' clarified; in this instance, 'legacy' refers to the impact and values Turing left for future generations. Explain that a major part of Turing's story is the government's apology in 2009, the subsequent Royal Pardon and 'Turing's Law' (a provision of the Policing and Crime Act, 2017). They are going to finish the study of Alan Turing by considering the wider issue of government and national apologies.

Recap with students the work they did in lesson 4: Changing views about Alan Turing, specifically about governments issuing apologies for past injustices (slide 7). What were the reasons for giving an apology and a pardon to Alan Turing? Why might some people have argued against an apology and a pardon?

Ask for suggestions as to how the government was convinced that an apology should be given. Note that there is no need for students to know the details of the campaign for an apology and pardon; the idea is that they begin to think about how knowledge (in this case increasing public knowledge about Turing's war work and his subsequent treatment by the state) can inspire and lead to activism (which can be expressed in many ways). The final question on this slide links this point to the main activity.

After asking this last question, show the list of UK Government formal apologies (slide 8). Given the length of time between Turing's conviction and death and the apology and pardon, are the students surprised at how many apologies there have been? Then show the list of other countries' apologies (slide 9), asking if the students can see any commonality between them. There are in essence, two commonalities: half are linked to the Second World War and all involvement mistreatment of minorities.

Activity (25 minutes)

Give each student a copy of the Injustices/Apologies worksheet and distribute **three** randomly selected Injustices/Apologies cards to **each** small group. Give each small group a copy of the Windrush Scandal Injustice/Apology card and explain the task (slide 10).

The aim of the task is to look for similarities and differences in the methods and approaches used in regard to each injustice to try and obtain an apology. Students should answer the questions on their copy of the worksheet. The Windrush Scandal is included as an example of a (partially) successful campaign, which can be compared with the (as yet?) unsuccessful campaigns.

Whilst this is on the one hand, a straightforward tick/circle task, on the other it requires students to use their understanding from the work they have completed on Alan Turing to reach judgements about events and the efficacy of activism; an idea which is central to the feedback.

Abridged version: Clearly, time is tight on this activity, and individual lessons may be even tighter. Therefore, teachers may wish to use an abridged version of the activity. This version requires each group to only complete the worksheet for the cards that they have. They will not collect information from the other groups. Depending on the time available, the number of cards each group has could be increased.

Feedback: (10 minutes)

The feedback and discussion question on the presentation (slide 11) are deliberately open-ended and can be adapted, ignored or added to during the discussion as influenced by the responses. Whilst a deep dive into any one of the injustices specifically is best avoided, students will undoubtedly have strong views about some of them. In such an event, the focus of the discussion should be on why an apology is necessary (which requires knowledge on the part of potential activists) and how it is to be achieved (which requires the people with that knowledge to be active).

Where appropriate, students should be reminded about anything relevant from their work on Alan Turing. In particular, the fact that public knowledge, attitudes and opinions are central to obtaining change.

If the abridged version of the main activity has been followed there will be more time to explore specific injustices if appropriate and if the focus remains on how knowledge of an injustice can lead to activism. Students should also be invited to comment on methods of activism mentioned by other groups which they have seen on their own cards.

Summary (5 minutes)

So we return to the Enquiry Question Who was Alan Turing and why should we care? This is where the link between the treatment of Turing and the call for apologies for other injustices is strengthened. Students know who Turing was, they understand his importance to Britain and the wider world, and they know how he was persecuted and why. They have looked at how changing socio-cultural attitudes eventually created the conditions where a campaign for an apology, a pardon and a change in the law was increasingly likely to be successful.

Ask students if they can recognise the link between the work they have done on Turing and the other injustices they have looked at in this lesson. This can be achieved by showing the summary slide (slide 12) of the presentation with the prompt words.

Finally, pose the question 'should we care about Alan Turing?' Hopefully(!) the answer will be yes, so then ask why we should care. Students will have a range of responses, and these can be summarised on the board under two broad categories: 'we should care about injustices' and, 'knowledge allows us to do something about injustices'.