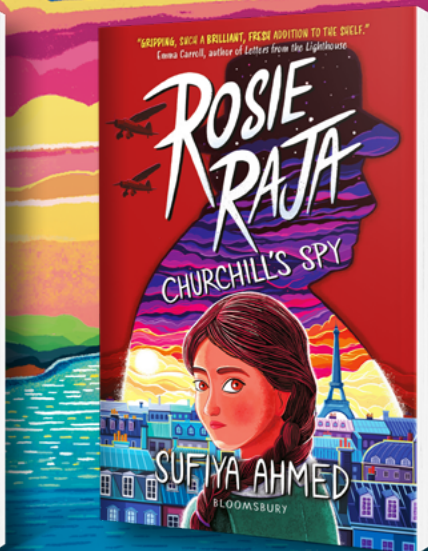


TOP SECRET: DECODE LIKE A SPY



BLOOMSBURY



TOP SECRET: DECODE LIKE A SPY

Codebreaking Activity Sheets by Sufiya Ahmed, author of *Under Fire* and the award-winning *Rosie Raja* series

Welcome to Spy School. The year is 1943. Before you have the honour of serving your country, you must pass a test to become a spy for the British government. If you pass the following decoding task, you will go on to serve your country like the World War II hero Hasan.

Let's begin... imagine you are Hasan.

You are in Goa and two of your fellow British agents have been betrayed to the Nazis by a traitor. The Nazi spies are hunting for the two British agents on every street in Goa. The agents have gone into hiding and trust no one. You must reach them in order to pass on the details of their travel back to England. You have been informed by London HQ that a tiny plane will be waiting for them at a secret location in Goa tomorrow night. You need to contact them before time runs out and the plane flies off without them.

There are codes and passwords you must break in order to accomplish this. They have been written in a hurry, under real pressure, and may contain mistakes. You may have to improvise.

(Note for teachers: Please pass one task sheet at a time to the pupils as the answers are on the following pages)





TASK ONE:

REVERSE ALPHABET

The alley behind the main Goa train station is a secret message drop off location. All undercover agents know this. You go to the alley to see if a message has been left for you by the agents. You spot a piece of paper under a brick. The paper is covered in jumbled letters, but you know it is a reverse alphabet message.

You pick up the paper and run to a cafe. Sitting down, you work it out by writing out the alphabet in reverse and then matching the words.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
ZYXWVUTSRQPONMLKJIHGFEDCBA

One is a message

One is a password

What is the message?

YLLP HVOOVI LFGHRWV GIZRM
HGZGRLM

What is the password?

HVXIVG TZIWVM





TASK TWO: ENCRYPTED PAGES

You approach the bookseller outside the train station and say the password. The bookseller passes you a book. It is *The Secret Garden*. There are two bookmarks inside the pages. You return to the cafe to break the codes hidden inside the book. The first bookmark is on page one. Letters have been underlined. Can you assemble the message from the underlined letters?

AT FIRST PEOPLE REFUSE TO BELIEVE THAT A STRANGE
NEW THING CAN BE DONE, THEN THEY BEGIN TO HOPE
IT CAN BE DONE, THEN THEY SEE IT CAN BE DONE -
THEN IT IS DONE AND ALL THE WORLD WONDERS WHY IT
WAS NOT DONE CENTURIES AGO.

What is the code?

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Goa Beach | 3. Goa Hotel |
| 2. Beach Cafe | 4. Goa Station |

The second bookmarked page reads:

HOWEVER MANY YEARS SHE LIVED, MARY ALWAYS FELT
THAT 'SHE SHOULD NEVER FORGET THAT FIRST MORNING
WHEN HER GARDEN BEGAN TO GROW'.

What is the answer?

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Man in blue shirt | 3. Child in red shorts |
| 2. Woman in black dress | 4. Man in red hat |





TASK THREE:

MORSE CODE

You hurry to the Goa Hotel and stand by the entrance to make yourself visible. Five minutes pass and then a man in a red hat walks past you without looking at you and drops a note.

You pick up the note quickly and hurry away. When at a safe distance, you unfold it. There is a message in Morse Code. You are very good at Morse Code, but just to be on the safe side, you pull out a copy of Morse Code symbols to check the message.

International Morse Code

A	·—	N	—·	1	·— — — —
B	—···	O	— — —	2	·· — — —
C	— · — ·	P	· — — ·	3	··· — —
D	— · ·	Q	— — · —	4	···· —
E	·	R	· — ·	5	·····
F	··· — ·	S	···	6	— ····
G	— — ·	T	—	7	— — ···
H	····	U	·· —	8	— — — ··
I	··	V	··· —	9	— — — — ·
J	· — — —	W	· — —	0	— — — — —
K	— · —	X	— · · —	·	· · · · ·
L	· — · ·	Y	— · — —	,	— — — · · —
M	— —	Z	— — · ·	?	· · — · · ·

— · · · · · — · | · · — · | · · · — · — · · · — · — — | — · · · |
 — · · — — · — | · — · — — · — · ·

What is the message?





TASK FOUR: MATHEMATICAL MYSTERY

Vasco de Gama Road is just a few blocks from the Goa Hotel. You hurry to the street and search for a bin. There is one in the middle of the road. With your gloves on, you place a hand inside the bin and feel an envelope taped to the inside wall. You pull the envelope out and open it.

Here is a maths code that needs to be broken. The alphabet is equal to numbers. You stand under a street lamp and begin to work it out with a pencil.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

$3 - 2 =$

$3 \times 7 =$

$10 + 10 =$

$15 + 4 =$

$26 - 6 =$

$10 - 5 =$

$5 + 4 =$

$20 / 4 =$

$12 - 9 =$

$2 \times 7 =$

$4 + 4 =$

$8 / 2 =$

$3 \times 5 =$

What is the message?





CONCLUSION

You walk to the house at the end of the road and climb the stairs to the attic.

You open the door and enter. Two men are sitting on the floor. They look scared and hungry.

‘Hello, I’m Hasan. I have the plan to get you back to England. Come with me. We must hide you inside a bakery van that is scheduled to leave Goa at dawn. It will deliver you to a green field. Lie low until the middle of the night. A plane will land, drop off two new agents, turn around and take you back to England. Are you ready?’

Mission Success!

Well done! You have done an excellent job of codebreaking.

You have done your duty of finding the agents and passing on their escape information.

You will make an excellent spy and Prime Minister Winston Churchill is proud to welcome you to his Special Operations Executive, also known as Churchill’s Secret Army of Spooks.

SUCCESS





UNDER FIRE



Join 12-year-old Anglo-Indian boy Hasan in 1943, after his family's life in Coventry is upturned during the Blitz and his parents send him to live with his grandpa in Calcutta.

When he reaches India, Hasan is quickly introduced to a world of inequality, secrets and codebreaking, where his identity is more complicated than he thought possible. Hasan befriends his strong-minded neighbour, a girl named Jaya. The pair must decide whether to stand up for what they believe is right: fighting for freedom.

An exciting and heartfelt WW2 adventure featuring an engaging, brave and determined preteen, from the award-winning author of the *Rosie Raja* series. Follow Hasan as he uncovers more about war, injustice and secret messages. Perfect for fans of Michael Morpurgo and Emma Carroll, and those looking for diverse historical fiction.

Author's note: Through these characters I want young readers to walk away with a rounder view of WWII. The *Rosie Raja* books mention the Empire's soldiers that fought in the war. Most people don't know that 5 million soldiers from the British Empire came to fight in WWII. They came from African countries, the Caribbean, New Zealand, Canada and Australia. Of the five million, half that number, 2.5 million, were from India! That was the largest volunteer army in history, and they came to fight the Nazis for Britain. They also fought the Japanese from a base in India. I think it's important that young readers see this side of the war too. It's not an alternative history. It's our shared history.

Perhaps it could help British children of colour with their sense of belonging to their birth country, and also allow all children to see why our country looks the way it does. Personally, I've always felt that I belong to this country, but there were times as a little girl that I felt I was peeping into someone else's history. It seemed that WWII was fought and won by people who did not look like me. But that is so far from the truth.

Read *Under Fire* to learn more about the contributions of Indians to the war effort.

