



INDIANA REPERTORY THEATRE

CHRISTEL DEHAAN
STUDENT MATINEE PROGRAM

at the Indiana Repertory Theatre

presented by



THE DA VINCI CODE

PRESENTED BY PRINTING PARTNERS
ADAPTED BY RACHEL WAGSTAFF AND DUNCAN ABEL
BASED ON THE NOVEL BY DAN BROWN
DIRECTED BY BENJAMIN HANNA

STUDY GUIDE

September 23 – October 18 | OneAmerica Financial Stage

Artwork Design by Jake Lebowitz. Photos by Zach Rosing.





Content
Spotlight

Contains mild profanity, gunshots, weapons including guns and knives, depictions of self-harm, death, and references to religious zealotry.

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heart-pounding action adventure

The international phenomenon and best-selling thriller comes to life onstage. Professor Robert Langdon must race across Europe to decipher a labyrinthine code that would clear his name—and reveal a secret that could change history. A tangled web of intrigue and deceit weaves together this pulse-racing mystery.

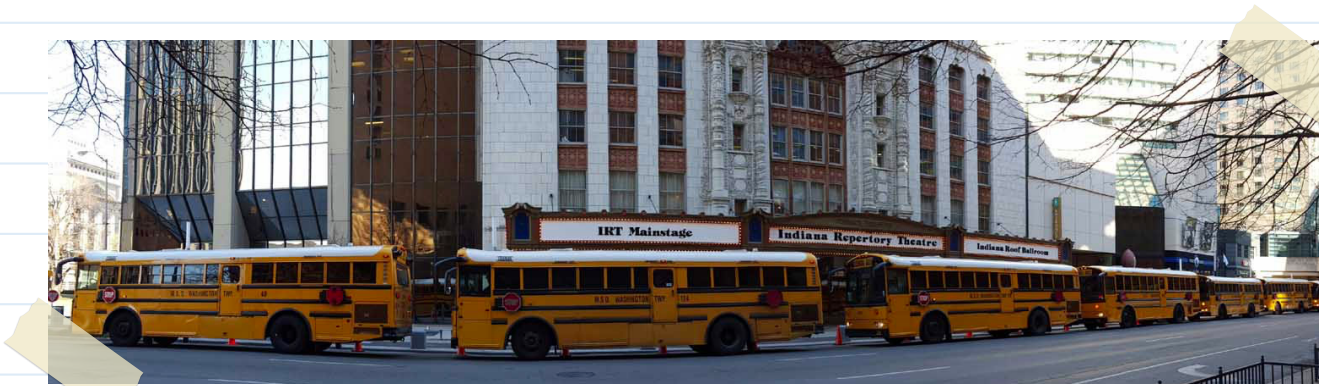
Recommended for students in grades 7-12

*The performance will last approximately
2 hours and 30 minutes, including a 15-minute intermission.*

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PLANNING YOUR VISIT



You, the audience, are one of the most important parts of any performance. Experiencing the theatre is a group activity shared not only with the actors, but also with the people sitting around you. Your attention and participation help the actors perform better, and allow the rest of the audience to enjoy the show.

Here are a few simple tips to help make each theatre experience enjoyable for everyone:

- Leave mobile phones, cameras, and other distracting and noise-making electronic devices at home or turned off.
- You may think texting is private, but the light and the motion are very annoying to those around you and on stage. Do not text during the performance.
- The house lights dimming and going out signal the audience to get quiet and settle in your seats: the play is about to begin.
- Don't talk with your neighbors during the play. It distracts people around you and the actors on stage. Even if you think they can't hear you, they can.
- Never throw anything onto the stage. People could be injured.
- Remain in your seat during the play. Use the restroom before or after the show, or during intermission.
- Focus all your attention on the play to best enjoy the experience. Listen closely to the dialogue and sound effects, and look at the scenery, lights, and costumes. These elements all help to tell the story.
- Get involved in the story. Laugh, cry, sigh, gasp—whatever the story draws from you. The more emotionally involved you are, the more you will enjoy the play.
- Remain at your seat and applaud during the curtain call; this is part of the performance too. It gives you a chance to recognize a job well done and the actors a moment to thank you for your attention.

STUDENT MATINEE ARRIVAL & PARKING INFORMATION

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

IRT is located one-half block west of Circle Centre Mall on Washington St., between north bound Illinois St. and southbound Capitol Ave.

- The physical address of IRT is 140 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204.
- Buses should unload and load directly in front of the theatre. (Do not block the entrance to Embassy Suites garage.) Please plan to arrive 20-30 minutes before your performance is scheduled to begin.
- You will be greeted at the curb by an IRT Staff Member and directed to the correct entrance.
- For shows on the Janet Allen Stage, students and teachers will take the stairs to the 4th floor.
- The teacher named on the reservation should check in with the IRT Education staff member stationed in the lobby.
- Your group will be ushered to your assigned seats.
- Students and chaperones should follow instructions of all IRT Staff for your safety.

LATE ARRIVAL

If you believe that you are going to be late, please contact the IRT House Manager, Katy Thompson at 317.916.4803. Provide them with a phone number and the name of the school so that Education staff may be in contact with you.

- You can contact IRT Education (education@irtlive.com) with non-emergency information on the day of the show.

PARKING

- Buses may park for free at Victory Field unless they are having an event - we will inform you if that is the case. The House Manager will give you a parking pass for each bus when you arrive at the theatre. It should be displayed in the windshield.
- Continue east on Washington St. past the JW Marriott and turn left across Maryland St. into the Victory Field lot.
- **PLEASE NOTE that Victory Field no longer has public restroom spaces available. We apologize for any inconvenience.**
- For car, and van parking information, please visit irtlive.com for the most up to date information
- **While IRT will make every effort to communicate parking information in advance, it is the responsibility of schools and drivers to make alternate arrangements.**



INDIANA STATE STANDARDS

Seeing a performance at Indiana Repertory Theatre is a great way to help make connections for students and facilitate their understanding of a text. Some key literature standards to consider on your trip can be found by scanning this QR Code:



ABOUT THE **PLAYWRIGHTS**



Rachel Wagstaff wrote the book for *Flowers for Mrs. Harris*, which transferred to Chichester Festival Theatre, directed by Daniel Evans, after premiering at the Sheffield Crucible. The original production won the UK Theatre Award for Best Musical, and the London premiere at Riverside Studios won the WhatsOnStage Award for Best Off West End Production. Her critically acclaimed adaptation of *Birdsong* opened in the West End, and was revived for a record-breaking fifth UK tour with Original Theatre in 2025.

With Duncan Abel, she adapted Dan Brown's *The*

Da Vinci Code, which toured the UK and made its US premiere at the Ogunquit Playhouse in 2023, and Paula Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train*, which had a record-breaking UK tour and West End run in 2019 and is now performed across the UK and beyond. Her adaptation of Agatha Christie's *The Mirror Crack'd* has enjoyed two UK tours and toured India, premiering in the USA in 2025.

She is currently under commission from major theatre companies and producers to adapt multiple novels for stage, television, and screen.

Duncan Abel is a writer of plays, radio plays, and short stories. Together, Abel and Rachel Wagstaff have collaborated on several writing projects, including their adaptation of *The Da Vinci Code*. He has written for BBC Radio 4, and his co-adaptation of *The Girl on the Train* transferred to the West End following a successful UK tour in 2019.

In 2010, Duncan was shortlisted for the Luke Bitmead Award for his novel *The Way Home*.

Left: Duncan Abel Right: Rachel Wagstaff

ABOUT THE ORIGINAL NOVELIST: **DAN BROWN**

Dan Brown is the author of eight #1 bestselling novels, including *The Da Vinci Code*, which has become one of the bestselling books of all time. His Robert Langdon thrillers—including *The Lost Symbol*, *Angels & Demons*, *Inferno*, and *Origin*—have captivated readers worldwide and continue to spark intellectual debate, dialogue, and conjecture. Brown's novels are published in 56 languages around the world with over 250 million copies in print.

In 2005, he was named one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World by TIME Magazine, whose editors credited him with “keeping the publishing industry afloat; renewed interest in Leonardo Da Vinci and early Christian history; spiking tourism to Paris and Rome; a growing membership in secret societies; the ire of Cardinals in Rome; eight books denying the claims of the novel and seven guides to read along with it; a flood of historical thrillers; and a major motion picture franchise.”

The son of a mathematics teacher and a church organist, Brown was raised on a prep school campus where he developed a fascination with the paradoxical interplay between science and religion. These themes eventually formed the backdrop for his books. He is a graduate of Amherst College and Phillips Exeter Academy, where he later returned to teach English before focusing his attention full time to writing. He lives in New England.



Dan Brown. | Content from danbrown.com

SYNOPSIS (CONTAINS SPOILERS!) —

Robert Langdon, a professor of Religious Symbolology at Harvard University, is giving a presentation in Paris on the presence of symbols in modern life. Elsewhere, Silas, a Catholic monk from an extreme sect called *Opus Dei*, is using a knotted-rope tie against his own back as a whip, as an act of penance, as he prays for forgiveness for the crime he just committed.

Robert is called to the Louvre Museum after hours by detective Bezu Fache, who brings Robert to the site of the murder of Jacques Saunière, the curator of the museum. Prior to his death, Saunière left a coded message: a pentacle drawn using his own blood and a cryptic message written in UV ink. Robert has been called to help investigate the possible meaning behind this symbol and discover the identity of the murderer and the motive behind the crime.

Sophie Neveu, a cryptologist, has also been called to the scene to decode Saunière's clues. She warns Robert that he is in danger, that he must escape from Detective Fache, and that he and Sophie need to talk privately.

Sophie tells Robert that Fache suspects him of Saunière's murder. Sophie then reveals that Saunière was her estranged grandfather who raised her as a child, and that part of his UV message made Robert Fache's prime suspect in the investigation. Sophie needs Robert's help to determine what potential dangers Saunière wanted to share with her. Together, they decode the clue which points them to the *Mona Lisa*, painted by Leonardo Da Vinci.

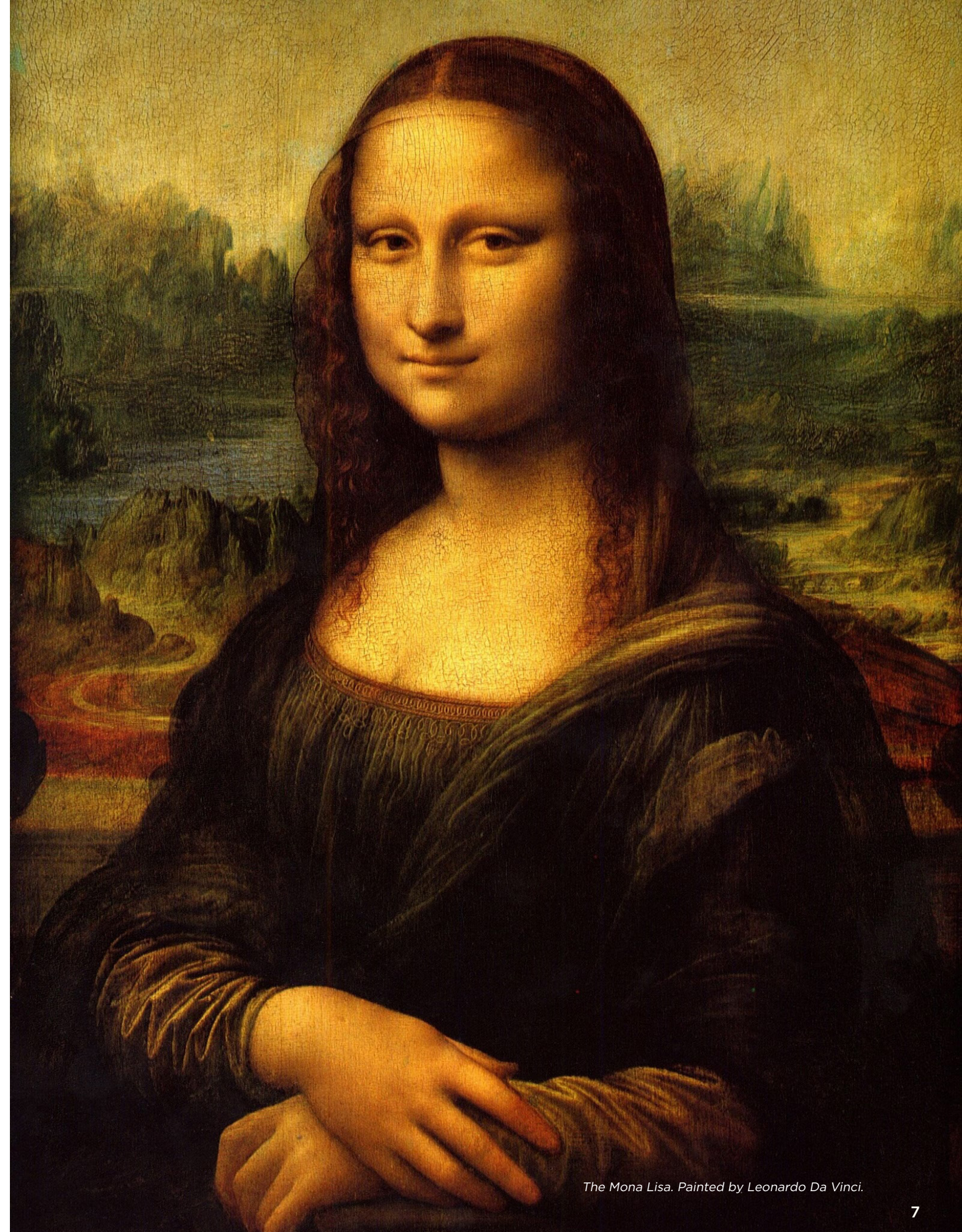
While at the painting, Robert and Sophie discover a few drops of blood—and another encoded UV message left by Saunière, which sends them to another Da Vinci painting, *Madonna of the Rocks*. Behind this painting, they find a key to a bank deposit box marked with a fleur de lis and “PS,” which they understand to reference both “Princess

Sophie” and a secret religious society called the Priory of Sion, based on clues in both of Da Vinci's paintings. Sophie realizes this whole series of clues is meant to protect the secrets her grandfather kept about this secret society, and she begins to suspect that Saunière was an important member of this group. They evade Fache and his lieutenant, escape the museum, and head toward the bank.

At the bank, Sophie and Robert must further decode the clues left by Saunière to access the bank vault—they only get one attempt to access the vault, or they will be trapped inside. Within the vault, they discover a locked cryptex made by Saunière in the deposit box, which contains a message left for Sophie by him. They must unlock the cryptex using an unknown password. Then, Robert notices a message on the lid of the deposit box. As they attempt to leave, they discover a suspicious bank worker has called the police, and their chase continues.

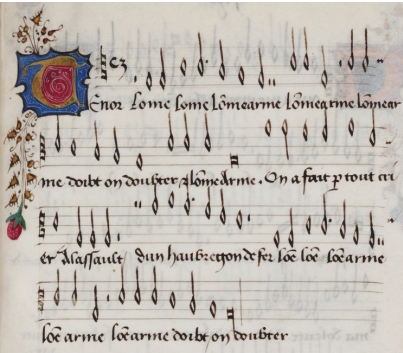
Sophia and Robert meet with Sir Leigh Teabing at his chateau near Versailles. Robert believes he can help them determine what to do next. They ask Teabing about the Priory of Sion, which he explains is a brotherhood determined to protect the Holy Grail. Teabing tells Robert and Sophie that Leonardo Da Vinci painted the secret about the Holy Grail in plain sight in his painting *The Last Supper*.

Robert, Sophie, and Teabing surmise that the map to the Holy Grail is hidden within the cryptex. Teabing hypothesizes that the message is contained within the safe deposit box in London. The three head to London with Teabing's assistant Rémy to investigate, and with the detectives on their trail. Discover what steps Sophie and Robert take next—how they recapture the cryptex, how they prove Robert innocent of Saunière's murder, and how they unlock the clues that will lead them to the real secret of the Holy Grail—in the fast-paced final minutes of *The Da Vinci Code*.



The Mona Lisa. Painted by Leonardo Da Vinci.

TERMS, CONCEPTS, AND PHRASES TO KNOW



“L’homme armé doit on doubter”: a lyric to a French song from the late middle ages, meaning “the armed man should be feared.”

“Purge me with **hyssop** and I shall be clean”: hyssop is a shrub that, due to its antiseptic properties, is often used in traditional herbal medicine.

Pagan: a general term that refers to a person that does not adhere to a mainstream religion, particularly Christianity, Islam, or Judaism.

Curator: a manager, researcher, and caretaker for museum collections.

Cryptographer: a person who is skilled in codebreaking.

Iconographer: a specialized artist who paints traditional religious icons, often using ancient techniques and subjects to create their works.

Symbologist: a specialist who studies, interprets, and analyzes symbols.

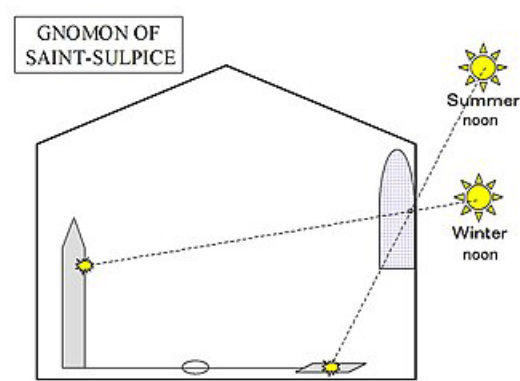
Caravaggio: an Italian painter who lived in the 16th century, known for depictions of religious scenes.

Cipher: a mathematical algorithm used for scrambling or unscrambling readable text; a way to send secret messages without being read.

*“I am from the **prelature** of Opus Dei”*: a Catholic Church institution focused on specific pastoral activities, such as promoting the call to holiness in daily life. Often accused of insular, cult-like practices.



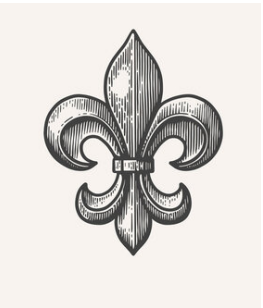
Saint-Sulpice- a Catholic church; the largest church in Paris, constructed in 1646.



*“The sun shines through the **oculus** on the south wall; you can watch the passage of time – the graduated shadows on the **gnomon**”* – an oculus is a window through which the sun shines onto a certain spot. A gnomon is an astronomical instrument that works as a sundial; it’s a blade that casts a shadow in order to determine the position of the sun in the sky.

La Salle des États: meaning “the Room of the States”, it’s the largest room in the Louvre and houses the Mona Lisa.

Priory: a small monastery of men or women under religious vows.



Fleur de lis: French for “lily flower”, it is a symbol that traditionally represents French royalty. It’s also often associated with the Virgin Mary and the Holy Trinity.

Heretic: a person who differs in opinion from established religious dogma.

*“The French always look at me like that. Maybe it’s the **Harris Tweed**”*: Harris tweed is handwoven tweed cloth with a distinct dyeing and weaving process. It is created in Scotland.

Cilice: a garment or undergarment made of coarse cloth worn close to the skin, used by members of various Christian traditions.

Chalice: a footed cup used in Christian religious services.

*“Unless we wish to stand in the gutter, hailing a black cab like a common **navvy**, I should call for my limousine”*: a British term for a laborer who performs heavy manual work. It comes from the term “navigator”, which was used for workers building the navigation canals in the late 18th century.

*“**Richard’s the most heavy-handed pilot since Pontius**”*: a play on words for Pontius Pilate (pronounced like “pilot”), the official who presided over the trial of Jesus.

Corporeal mortification: Rooted in Catholicism, it’s the voluntary practice of physical suffering to subdue sinful desires.

Sir Christopher Wren: an architect born in 1632, best known for designing St. Paul’s Cathedral in London.



Laurence Olivier: an English actor and director, often considered one of the 20th century’s greatest actors.

Voltaire: the pen name of Francois-Marie Arouet, who was a famous French writer known for his criticism of Christianity. Born in 1694.

Principia Mathematica: a three-volume work on the foundations of mathematics, published in the early 1900s.

De Motu Corporum in Gyrum: Latin for “on the motion of bodies in an orbit”; the title of a manuscript by Isaac Newton in which he wrote about important mathematical derivations, including centripetal force.

THE CRYPTEX AND THE REAL INVENTIONS OF LEONARDO DA VINCI

Did Leonardo Da Vinci really invent a cryptex? *The Da Vinci Code* contains many instances where fiction and history blend together—and attributing the invention of the cryptex, a vault containing a scroll, secured by a combination lock (much like a bicycle lock), is one such example of fiction.

The idea for a mechanism resembling a cryptex came long before Da Vinci's birth in 1452—drawings of combination locks date back to the 12th century, and there is no evidence that Da Vinci dreamed up any kind of self-destruct mechanism like the one described in the play that uses vinegar to dissolve the papyrus scroll.

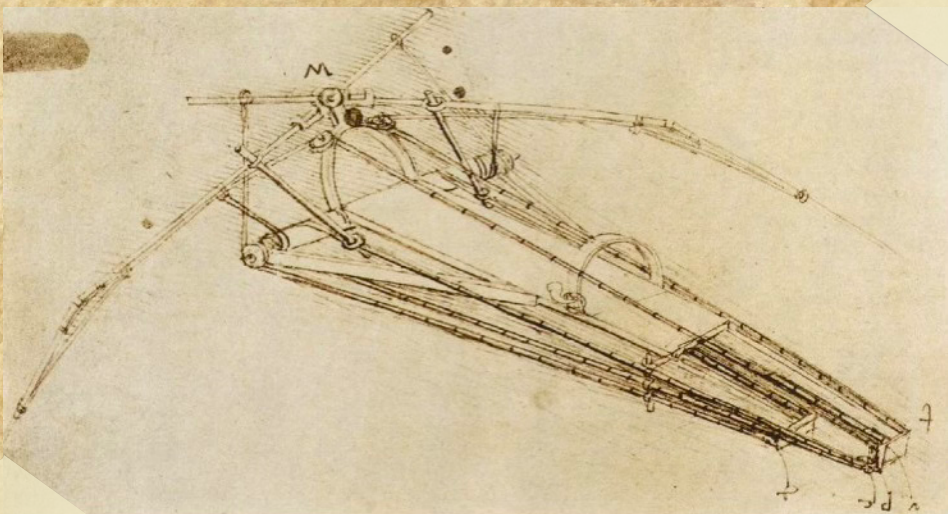
Da Vinci may not have invented the cryptex, but he certainly conceived some remarkable inventions, many of which were far ahead of their time. What's more, references within the play to Da Vinci's mirror writing are rooted in fact. Da Vinci was very concerned with protecting the secrets of his inventions and designs, and his mirror writing was one way he kept those secrets.



A PARACHUTE:

Da Vinci was fascinated by flight and wanted to find ways for humans to spend time in the skies. This invention, which closely resembles a modern-day parachute, was Da Vinci's idea to allow people to jump from tall structures and land without getting hurt. In 2000, a British skydiver by the name of Adrian Nicholas actually built Da Vinci's parachute design, then tested it by jumping out of a hot-air balloon 10,000 feet above the ground. While he did deploy a conventional parachute shortly before landing, he reported that he descended smoothly via Da Vinci's design for over 5 minutes.

While the idea that Da Vinci invented the cryptex is an example of historical fiction, he was a talented anatomist, mathematician, geologist, engineer, zoologist, and inventor with boundless curiosity about the world around him. In addition to his famous paintings including the *Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper*, Da Vinci recorded his discoveries and sketched his inventions on thousands of sheets of paper. Some of Da Vinci's inventions included:



THE ORNITHOPTER:

The ornithopter was Da Vinci's idea for a pedal-powered flying machine that had "wings" covered in a membrane-like material. As he conceived it, the operator would stand vertically or lie horizontally and use the pedals and a series of levers to take flight.



A DIVING SUIT:

In response to military invasion, Da Vinci began to come up with inventions that would protect cities and their people from incoming threats. One idea was a diving suit, made from leather and complete with glass goggles and hose, which would lead to air tanks floating on the surface of the water that would, at least in theory, allow soldiers to walk on the sea floor and sabotage enemy ships from below.

SOURCES



The German
Spy Museum



Da Vinci Under
Lock-and-Key



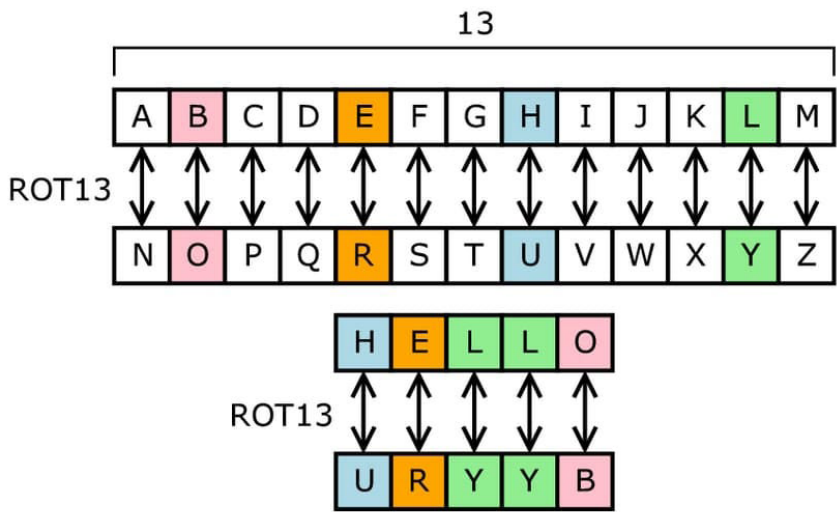
10 of Leonardo da Vinci's
Most Important Inventions



Leonardo da Vinci's
Diving Suit

CREATE A CAESAR CIPHER AND CRACK THE CODE!

The Da Vinci Code involves a series of clues, puzzles, and codes. Try your hand at cryptography and create a secret message using codes!



INTRODUCTION

If you need to send a secret message to a friend, how could you prevent other people from reading it? One way is to encrypt the message, or use a secret code that only you and your friend know. Try this activity to learn how to create your own “Caesar cipher,” a popular type of code that is easy to learn.

BACKGROUND

Cryptography is the study of writing or solving secret codes that are used for secure communication. Historically, codes have been used by politicians, spies, and countries at war to prevent their enemies from knowing what they’re up to. Many of the earliest codes, or “ciphers,” like the one you will create in this project, were easy to create by hand. However, modern cryptography is essential in computer science for keeping everything from emails to bank account information secure.

One of the earliest and most widely known ciphers is the Caesar Cipher, named after Julius Caesar. It is a simple form of a “substitution cipher” where you replace each letter of the alphabet with another letter by shifting the whole alphabet a certain number of letters (wrapping around to the beginning once you reach the end). For example, if you shift each letter by 3 spaces, then the alphabet looks like this:

PLAIN: ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
CIPHER: XYZABCDEFHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVW

So, when you write your message, the letter “A” gets replaced with “X”, “B” gets replaced with “Y”, and so on. For example, the word “hello” becomes:

PLAIN: HELLO
CIPHER: EBIIL

In order to decode your message, you need to share the “key” (the number 3) with your friend first. After that, you can send messages that are written in cipher, so other people can’t read them!

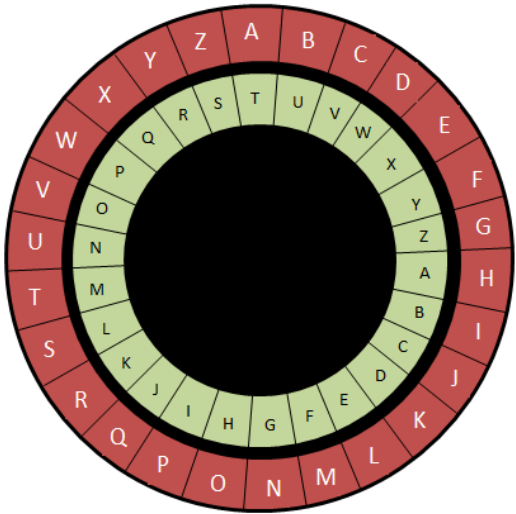
MATERIALS:

- Pencil and paper
- At least one other person

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Explain the concept of a Caesar cipher to a friend, or have them read the background section of this activity.
2. Write down the alphabet from A to Z.
3. Pick a number from 1 to 25 (if you use 26, you will just wind up with the original alphabet). This number is your key.
4. Shift the entire alphabet by the number you picked and write it down below your original alphabet (as shown in the Background section).
5. Pick a message to write to your friend. It might be easiest to start out with a simple message (like a single word or phrase) before you try longer sentences or paragraphs.
6. Write down your encoded message using your shifted alphabet. If it helps, write down your plain-text message first, then encode it one letter at a time (like the “hello” example in the background). Just make sure the piece of paper you give your friend only has the encoded message!
7. Give your friend the encoded message and tell them the key (don’t write the key down – that’s like writing down your computer password, a big security no-no!).
8. See if your friend can decrypt your message. If it helps for the first try, let them work backward using the original and shifted alphabets you wrote down. Using the example from the background, the letter “x” becomes “a”, “y” becomes “b”, and so on.

Caesar Shift Cipher Wheel
Set for a 19 position “T” shift.



SOURCE

(Source: Ben Finio, PhD, Science Buddies)



RESOURCES AND SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Learn More About *The DaVinci Code* and Its Themes.

READ:

The DaVinci Code, by Dan Brown

Other novels by Dan Brown (not a complete list)

- *The Secret of Secrets*
- *Origin*
- *The Lost Symbol*
- *Angels and Demons*



Cracking
The Da Vinci Code |
Discover Magazine



The Da Vinci Code and Louvre museum: 10 key works - PARISCityVISION



Mapping the Story of *The Da Vinci Code*



Leonardo Da Vinci: Facts, Paintings & Inventions | HISTORY



The real Da Vinci code, and the world's oldest poison arrows | Science | AAAS



Pictorial Guide to the Story - Langdon's World Visual Companion



So, You Want to Be a Cryptographer - Bruce Schneier



Crypto 101 - free course



Cipher Types | American Cryptogram Association



Leonardo Da Vinci's Disciplines | Studies in Art, Science and Anatomy | Leonardo da Vinci | Ken Burns | PBS



Smarthistory - Leonardo Da Vinci, "Vitruvian Man"



Mona Lisa: The History of the World's Most Famous Painting | Leonardo Da Vinci | Ken Burns | PBS



Activities: Older Kids / Adults at the National Cryptologic Museum on Virmuze

LISTEN:



The Real Da Vinci Code - The Rest Is History - Apple Podcasts



The Da Vinci Code - Podcast Episodes & Archives



Unconvinced by *The Da Vinci Code* - Podcast Series - FamilyLife® - A Cru Ministry



Escape This Podcast | Escape This Podcast

WATCH:

The DaVinci Code (film) — 2006



Beyond *The Da Vinci Code* - The History Channel



The Science of Codes: An Intro to Cryptography - SciShow



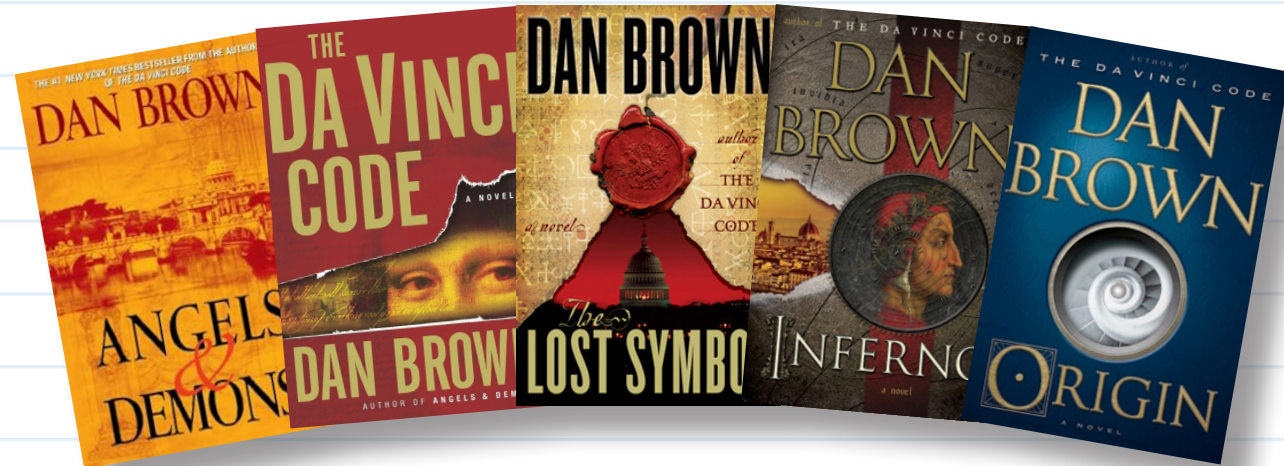
Cracking the Uncrackable Code - Great Big Story



Decoding Da Vinci - Full Documentary - NOVA/PBS



The Da Vinci Code Phenomenon - 60 Minutes Australia



POST-SHOW QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. What would you do to protect a secret?
2. How do you think Sophie’s life will change now that she knows her genealogy?
3. Why do you think the Opus Dei wants to keep the secret Landon uncovers? Why do you think the Priory of Scion wants to keep it a secret?
4. How does this interpretation of Christianity differ from what you have learned about in your place of worship? In the media? At home?
5. Do you believe that all the symbols Langdon found were put in the art intentionally? Why or why not?
6. Who is your favorite artist? Do they use symbols in their work? What does their art say to you?
7. Who was DaVinci? Create a visual presentation that showcases some of his most famous work.
8. Emojis are a type of symbol. Look at your texts and identify the symbols you use the most. As a class, graph which emojis are the most prevalent. Discuss the meaning of the emojis. Do you all agree they mean the same thing?
9. This play is a work of fiction based on real art works and religious beliefs. Research one aspect of this play that interests you and create a chart that shows which aspects are fiction and which are non-fiction.
10. Make a piece of art that contains a secret message. Be sure to include recognizable symbols. Create a classroom gallery for the art pieces and have each student try to discover the messages of their classmates.
11. *The DaVinci Code* focuses on symbols from Western European Christianity. Research symbols from other religions or geographic regions of the world. What symbols are the same? Do they mean the same things? What symbols represent the following:
 - Faith
 - Deception
 - Evil
 - Love
 - Knowledge
12. Semiotics is the study of signs. Learn about the classes you would need to take to become a semiotics professor.
13. Write down all the symbols you are wearing today. Don’t forget jewelry, logos, and tattoos.

14. Write a scene following the last one in the play. What do you think happens next?
15. Design a map that shows where Langdon travels throughout the play. Add images of buildings and artwork at the appropriate locations.
16. Create a set design that can transition quickly from one location to the next.
17. How would you show the art that appears in the play?
18. **Write a review:** A well-rounded review includes your opinion of the theatrical aspects—scenery, lights, costumes, sound, direction, acting—as well as your impressions of the script and the impact of the story and/or themes and the overall production. What moments made an impression? How do the elements of scenery, costumes, lighting, and sound work with the actors’ performances of the text to tell the story? What ideas or themes did the play make you think about? How did it make you feel? Did you notice the reactions of the audience as a whole? Would you recommend this play to others? Why or why not? **To share your reviews with others, send to: education@irtlive.com**