

Y9 Knowledge Organiser: Blood Brothers

Assessment Week: Choice of two essay questions. Closed book. 1 hour to plan and write.

Play overview: The play Blood Brothers is a social experiment where identical twins are separated at birth and lead entirely different lives as a consequence of the social class that they are raised in. Russell highlights the injustice and inequality in society; the British class system allows those who are in the middle class to have an advantage, whereas the working class have less opportunities.

Key Characters:	Writer's Methods:	Key Themes:	History:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs Johnstone • Mickey • Sammy • Linda • Mrs Lyons • Edward • The Narrator • Mr Lyons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prologue • Foreshadowing and Dramatic Irony • Parallel scenes – policeman, school, sweets/cigarettes • The use of songs and humour • The Narrator – omniscient character, conscience figure, could be a voice for Russell (Greek tragic chorus) • Symbolism – Marilyn Monroe/Guns • Cyclical Structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social class • Family • Love • Superstition • Violence • Friendship • Jealousy • Secrecy 	<p>Thatcher was Prime Minister and believed that 'success came to those who worked hard.' She took the decision not to support Liverpool in hard times.</p> <p>The economic recession, high unemployment. Rehousing – during 1950s, lots of families were rehoused to 'new towns' from poverty-stricken, city centre slums.</p>

Key Quotes

<p>"a mother, so cruel, there's a stone in place of her heart" Prologue, the narrator invites the audience to 'judge' the working class character and leads us to initially dislike her. Mrs Johnstone; motherhood.</p>	<p>"Do we blame superstition for what came to pass? Or could it be what we, the English, have come to know as class?" The narrator poses this question at the end which could be Russell's voice. Superstition; Social class.</p>
<p>"They say I should put some of them into care. But I won't. I love the bones of every one of them." Mrs Johnstone is a victim of her social class. Family; love; social class.</p>	<p>"If my child was raised in a palace like this one." Mrs Johnstone; Mrs Lyons; Social Class</p>
<p>"You do know what they say about twins, secretly parted..." Mrs Lyons; manipulation; superstition</p>	<p>"You never, ever learn, that nothing's yours on easy terms." Mrs Johnstone's hardships</p>
<p>"You gave your child away" Mrs Lyons; Manipulation</p>	<p>"You're already being threatened by the welfare" Mrs Lyons; Manipulation; Mrs J's hardships</p>
<p>"a debt is a debt, and must be paid" Narrator, persistent reminder of mothers' deal</p>	<p>"Do you wanna be my blood brother, Eddie? ...<i>Producing a pen knife</i>. It hurts y'know." Mickey to Eddie, violence; childhood; secrets.</p>
<p>"pissed off" / "you say smashing things... I will look them up in the dictionary" Mickey; Edward; Social class; Childhood; Education. Characters juxtapose one another with their language, world views and understanding.</p>	<p>"The whole thing's just a game." Childhood; Violence, lower classes socialised around violence and not taught responsibility</p>
<p>"Peter Pan. We always shoot at that..." Linda; Childhood; Violence. Loss of childhood by shooting symbol of eternal childhood.</p>	<p>"It was more of a prank, really." Vs. "He was about to commit a serious crime." Prejudice; social class.</p>
<p>"Oh Bright New Day, we're moving away. We're starting all over again." Mrs J, final positive scene end of Act 1</p>	<p>"Talk of Oxbridge." Vs. "Just how the hell do you hope to get a job..."</p>
<p>"And who'd dare tell the lambs in spring what fate the later seasons bring" Narrator, fate; ominously foreshadowing ending</p>	<p>"I wish that I could be like... that guy." Mickey and Eddie; social class and envy, foreshadows ending</p>
<p>"I'd spend it. I'd buy more junk and trash; that's all. I don't want your money. I've made a life out here" Mrs J to Mrs L</p>	<p>"I curse the day I met you. Witch. (<i>suddenly pointing</i>) I curse you. Witch!" Mrs Lyons to Mrs J, mental deterioration; superstition</p>
<p>"workin' overtime" / "I go away to university tomorrow" – the boys' lives start to diverge when they reach 18</p>	<p>"I grew up. An' you didn't, because you didn't need to" – Mickey to Edward. Social class – Eddie is privileged and can remain young and carefree</p>
<p>"It's just another sign of the times." Mr Lyons, social class</p>	<p>"I'd crawl back to that job for half the pay and double the hours." Mickey, desperation and downfall</p>
<p>"Look at y', Mickey. What have y' got?" – Sammy to Mickey – manipulation due to Mickey's low self-esteem.</p>	<p>"His mind's gone dancing." "Treats his ills with daily pills." Mickey – downfall, mental deterioration, symbol of dancing shifted from freedom and happiness to distress and loss</p>
<p>"That's why I take [anti-depressants]. So I can be invisible." Mickey – downfall, mental deterioration</p>	<p>"There's a girl inside the woman waiting to get free." Linda ; isolation, working class women trapped in cycle like Mrs J</p>
<p>"There's a mad man" Narrator about Mickey after affair is revealed, mental deterioration, bad omen</p>	<p>"Mickey. Don't shoot Eddie. He's brother... I couldn't afford to keep both of you." Mrs J – superstition revealed</p>
<p>"You! Why didn't you give me away... <i>almost uncontrollable with rage</i>. I could have been him." Mickey – building violence, foreshadowing murder, social class envy</p>	<p>"Tell me it's not true. Say it's just a story." Mrs J mourning death of twins</p>