

Key Vocabulary

Subtext – An underlying meaning or theme in a conversation or piece of writing.

Dramatic Climax – It's the highest point of action before the plot is resolved, usually late in the play.

Character Motivation – The reason behind an action.

Dramatic Convention – The specific actions or techniques that an actor or director uses.

Theme – Explored through the text and subtext.

Tragicomedy – A play containing elements of both comedy and tragedy.

Socio-political – Combining social and political factors.

AUDIENCE
(house)Down
stageUp
stage

DSL Down Stage Left	DSC Down Stage Center	DSR Down Stage Right
CSL Center Stage Left	CS Center Stage	CSR Center Stage Right
USL Up Stage Left	USC Up Stage Center	USR Up Stage Right

Onstage
Offstage

Always Remember



Blood Brothers is **set** in the 1960's



You will answer four questions on the play

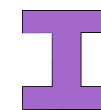


Research the props, setting and costumes from the time to help make your answers accurate

Look carefully where the extract comes in the play, remember you have the full script to help you



When answering a question as if in role as that character always use 'I' instead of the character's name, it shows you have read the question



Always read the question more than once before you begin your answer



Always highlight the key points/ instructions in the question to make sure you don't miss anything



Always check/ re read your response to make sure you answered all the question, it makes sense and you have backed up all your ideas with examples

Social Context

After the appointment of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 to the role of prime minister the manufacturing industry suffered. She sold off many publically owned companies and closed down many coal mines. The result of this was a short term economic downturn and a huge increase in unemployment. The working class areas of the North West were most affected. Russell shows the effects of this in the play through Mickey's unemployment; poverty struggles; an increase in crime and a demand for better housing.

Cultural Context

Reference to Marilyn Monroe is consistent within the play and refers to the 'perfect' image and fantasy woman everyone viewed her as. Throughout the play Mrs Johnstone longs for a life like hers and the public image she portrayed. In reality Monroe died of a pill overdose which compares with Mickey's addiction to anti-depressants later in the play. Popular culture became more accessible (ie film, music, tv) in the 1950's and is seen as a way to escape for the Johnstone family through dancing and games.

Historical Context

There is a clear link at this time between poverty and under-achievement at school. Edward is sent to a private, fee paying boarding school and will take O levels, A levels and go on to university. Mickey leaves school and goes into employment and in the end is made redundant. Manual workers like Mickey were much more affected by the closure of factories and the scarcity of work. Terraced council housing was popular with most working class families but they were cramped and lacked central heating. They were often located in the inner city and were dirty. Willy Russell's aim is to show that there are disadvantages to being poor and working class. The failure to succeed is down to lack of opportunity not ability.

Themes



Social class
Love
Superstition
Friendship
Poverty & Debt
Nature Vs Nurture

Theatrical Conventions



Narration
Set changes in clear view
Contrasting locations on same stage
Chorus
Songs
Spoken Dialogue
'Token' props
Musical Interludes
Direct Address