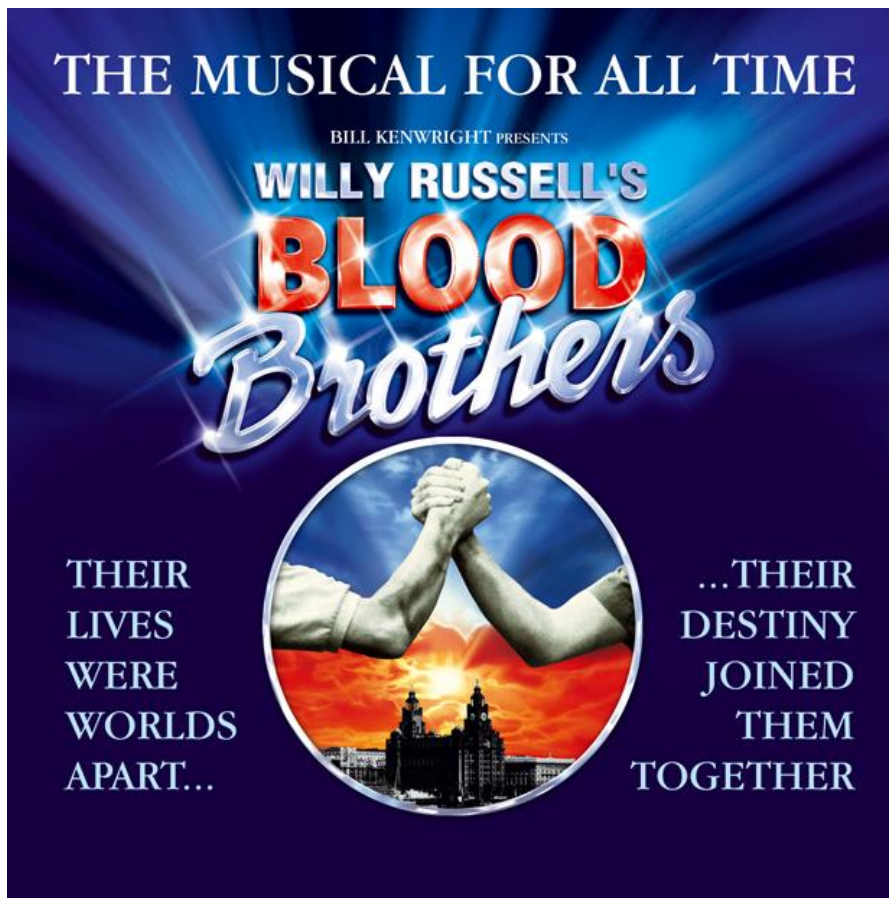


Revision Booklet

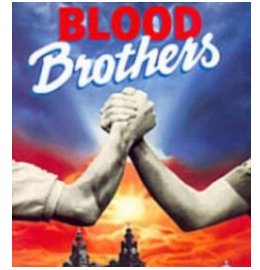
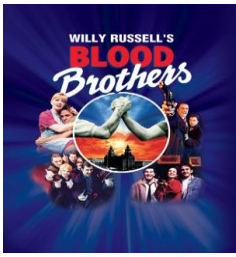


Name:

Blood Brothers

English Literature - Paper 2: Modern Text

Closed book – 45 minutes will be spent on this text for this exam paper



Blood Brothers Context

1. What is the significance of the play's title: Blood Brothers?

.....

2. Where is Liverpool?

.....

3. What qualities are Liverpudlians known for? Which character typifies these qualities?

.....

4. What were the unemployment figures in Liverpool during the 1980s?

.....

5. At what time is Blood Brothers set?

.....

6. Why might Mrs Johnstone's neighbours disapprove of her?

.....

7. Find 5 key facts about education during this time.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

8. What was the name given to manual workers?

.....

9. What type of houses did most working class people live in?

.....

10. What were the conditions of the Council Houses like?

.....

.....

11. Why were 'New' towns created?

.....

12. What was the name of the 'New' town that was created?

.....

13. What effect did uprooting people have?

.....

14. What were the aims of the playwright?

.....

.....

.....

15. Which characters highlight this aim?

.....

16. Which characters do you feel most sympathy for in this play? Explain your answers below.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

BLOOD BROTHERS CONTEXT

Liverpool

Liverpool, because of its position on the River Mersey, was a prosperous seaport in the 19th century.

It is a city of many contrasts.

In the 20th century, because of the silting of the river, it was a place of financial depression, which led to unemployment and strikes.

There was a big gap between the rich and the poor.



The People of Liverpool

Liverpudlians are known for their warmth, hospitality and wit.

Liverpool is also famous for its football teams and impact on culture – the Mersey Beat (poetry), the Beatles (music) and playwrights, architects etc.

Mrs Johnstone's wit and warmth typify these qualities.



Unemployment

Unemployment rose in the 1970s and reached 25% in the 1980s.

At the time the play is set, factories were closing down. At the start of act 2, Sammy is already on the dole, and the song 'Take a Letter Miss Jones' illustrates how this rising unemployment adversely affects Mickey's life and tempts him into crime.

Being out of work creates low self-esteem; particularly for traditional men who feel they



Views at the time

Blood Brothers is set in Liverpool, between the 1950s and the 1970s.

At the time, people strongly disapproved of sex before marriage and this is why Mrs Johnstone 'has to' marry quickly.

Divorce was uncommon and this is another reason the neighbours might disapprove of her.

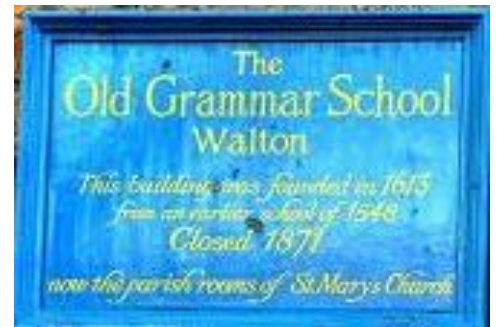


Although the 1945 Education act had made grammar schools free, working class children had to pass the 11+ to gain entry to the grammar schools. The pass mark was kept deliberately high. Few children were allowed the privilege of a grammar school education, and even if they gained a place, there was no guarantee that they would leave with qualifications, as the school leaving age was 15.

Grammar Schools

Pupils at grammar schools studied academic subjects and took O levels. Some went on to take A levels, while others were under pressure from parents to leave school, get a job and bring money into the household.

There were far fewer university places then, so most would go into employment after school.



Secondary Modern Schools

Children who failed the 11+ would go to a secondary modern school to be prepared for life in the trades. Boys would study practical skills like bricklaying, alongside academic work, and girls would learn how to cook. Many of these schools were under-funded.



Qualifications

If pupils were not considered 'bright' they were not allowed to take CSEs. These qualifications were not worth as much as O Levels, taken at grammar school. (GCSEs are much more inclusive) So it was common for children to leave school without any qualifications at all. It was more difficult for them to get on in life.

Poverty

There is a clearly established link 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; things go wrong when he is made redundant, whereas Edward has a much more secure 'white collar' job. Manual workers were called 'blue collar' workers; they were more affected by closure of factories and the scarcity of work connected with the docks.



Council Housing

Council houses were the homes of most working class people in the 1950s and 1960s. The terraced houses had a lot to recommend them, but they were also cramped and lacked inside toilets and bathrooms. They did not have central heating and were heated mostly by coal fires. Their inner city locations were often dirty and there was nowhere for children to play as they rarely had gardens.



'New' Towns

To improve standards of living, the government moved people away from the terraced houses into new council accommodation in the countryside. 'New' towns were created like Skelmersdale, and existing places were developed, like Runcorn and Winsford. Some high rise blocks were built also.



Bright New Day

Mrs Johnstone's family is certainly helped by their move, although not as much as she had hoped.

In many ways, it is already too late for the older children, and the unemployment situation was often worse away from the city.

Also, many missed the people and the amenities that they had known before, and the support network that existed all but vanished. Uprooting people can cause stress and depression.



Willy Russell's Aim

One of the playwright's aims is to show us that there are disadvantages to being poor and working class.

The failure to succeed in life is not because of a lack of ability, but a lack of opportunity. This can clearly be seen in Edward and Mickey.

We must ask ourselves whether this is still true in the 21st century.



Summarise the plot events of 'Blood Brothers' in 100 words:

Summarise the plot events of 'Blood Brothers' in 50 words:

Summarise the plot events of 'Blood Brothers' in 15 words only:

Mrs Johnstone

Appearance:



Key events in the play that link to Mrs Johnstone:

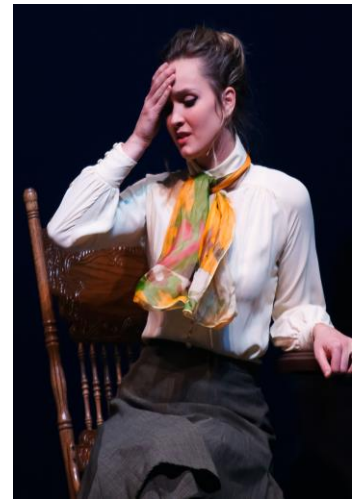
Important quotations which tell us about Mrs Johnstone and her character:

What other characters think of Mrs Johnstone:

Important themes that Mrs Johnstone links to:

Mrs Lyons

Appearance:



Key events in the play that link to Mrs Lyons:

Important quotations which tell us about Mrs Lyons and her character:

What other characters think of Mrs Lyons:

Important themes that Mrs Lyons links to:

Mickey

Appearance:



Key events in the play that link to Mickey:

Important quotations which tell us about Mickey and his character:

What other characters think of Mickey:

Important themes that Mickey links to:

Edward

Appearance:



Key events in the play that link to Edward:

Important quotations which tell us about Edward and his character:

What other characters think of Edward:

Important themes that Edward links to:

Linda

Appearance:



Key events in the play that link to Linda:

Important quotations which tell us about Linda and her character:

What other characters think of Linda:

Important themes that Linda links to:

Sammy

Appearance:

Key events in the play that link to Sammy:

Important quotations which tell us about Sammy and his character:

What other characters think of Sammy:

Important themes that Sammy links to:



Narrator

Appearance:



Key events in the play that link to Narrator:

Important quotations which tell us about the Narrator and his character:

What the audience think about the Narrator:

Important themes that the Narrator links to/messages that he delivers:

Compare Mrs Johnstone and Mrs Lyons

Characteristic	Mother	Mrs Lyons
Appearance		
Money		
Children		
Husband		
Home		
Superstition		
How they speak		

Find the key quotations for the following points in the text:

- Narrator's description on Mrs Johnstone
- Description of Mrs Johnstone
- Mrs Johnstone being poor
- Mrs Lyons wants children
- Mrs Johnstone on superstition
- Mrs Johnstone worries about having two new babies
- Mrs Lyons asks for a baby
- Mrs Johnstone is persuaded by Mrs Lyons
- Mrs Lyons takes the baby
- Mrs Lyons wants Mrs Johnstone to leave
- Mrs Johnstone wants to take the baby
- Mrs Lyons threatens Mrs Johnstone if she tells someone about the pact

- Narrator on superstition
- Mickey looks up to Sammy
- Mickey and Edward meet
- Mickey and Edward become Blood Brothers
- Sammy's description of Edward
- Mrs Johnstone meets Edward
- Mrs Lyons won't let Edward play with Mickey
- Linda is introduced to Edward
- Linda and Mickey tell Edward what to say to the policeman
- Mrs Lyons worries about Edward
- Mrs Johnstone gives Eddie a locket
- Mickey describes Eddie

Blood Brothers

Identifying key

- Eddie describes Mickey
- The Johnstones move away
- Linda loves Mickey
- Mickey loves Linda
- Mickey and Eddie are reunited
- Edward gives Mickey advice about flirting with Linda
- Mrs Lyons confronts Mrs Johnstone
- Narrator describes Mickey, Linda and Eddie growing up
- Edward leaves for university
- Linda is pregnant
- Mickey and Linda get married
- Mickey loses his job
- Mickey agrees to help Sammy
- Mrs Johnstone explains what happened to Mickey

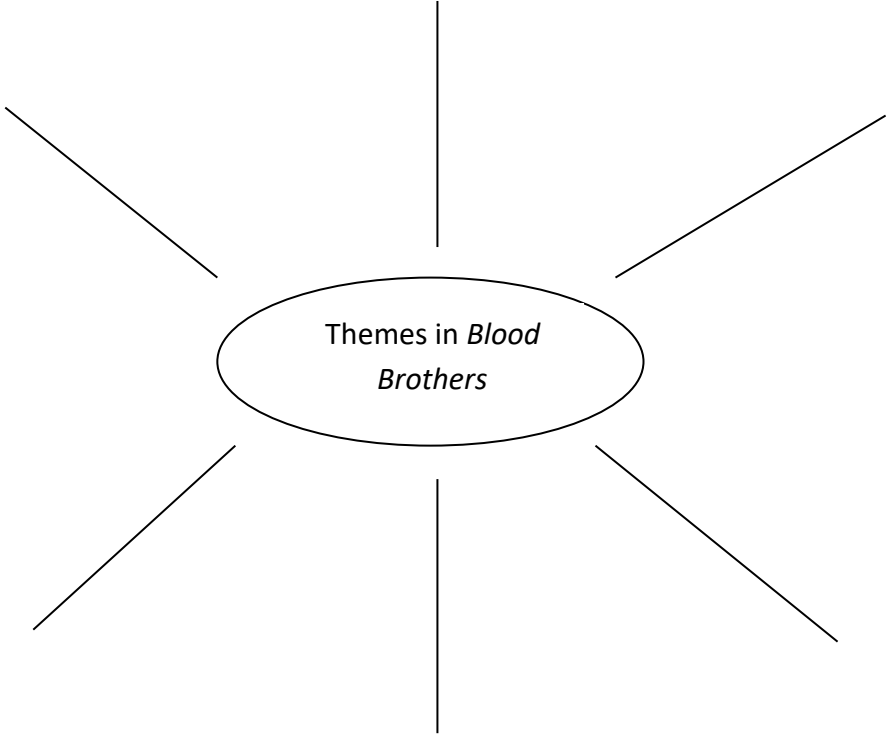
- Mickey starts taking pills
- Linda hides Mickey's tablets
- Narrator describes Mickey
- Mickey threatens to kill Eddie
- Mrs Johnstone tells Edward and Mickey they are brothers
- Narrator questions the audience
- Mrs Johnstone is upset by Edward and Mickey's death

Themes in The Play

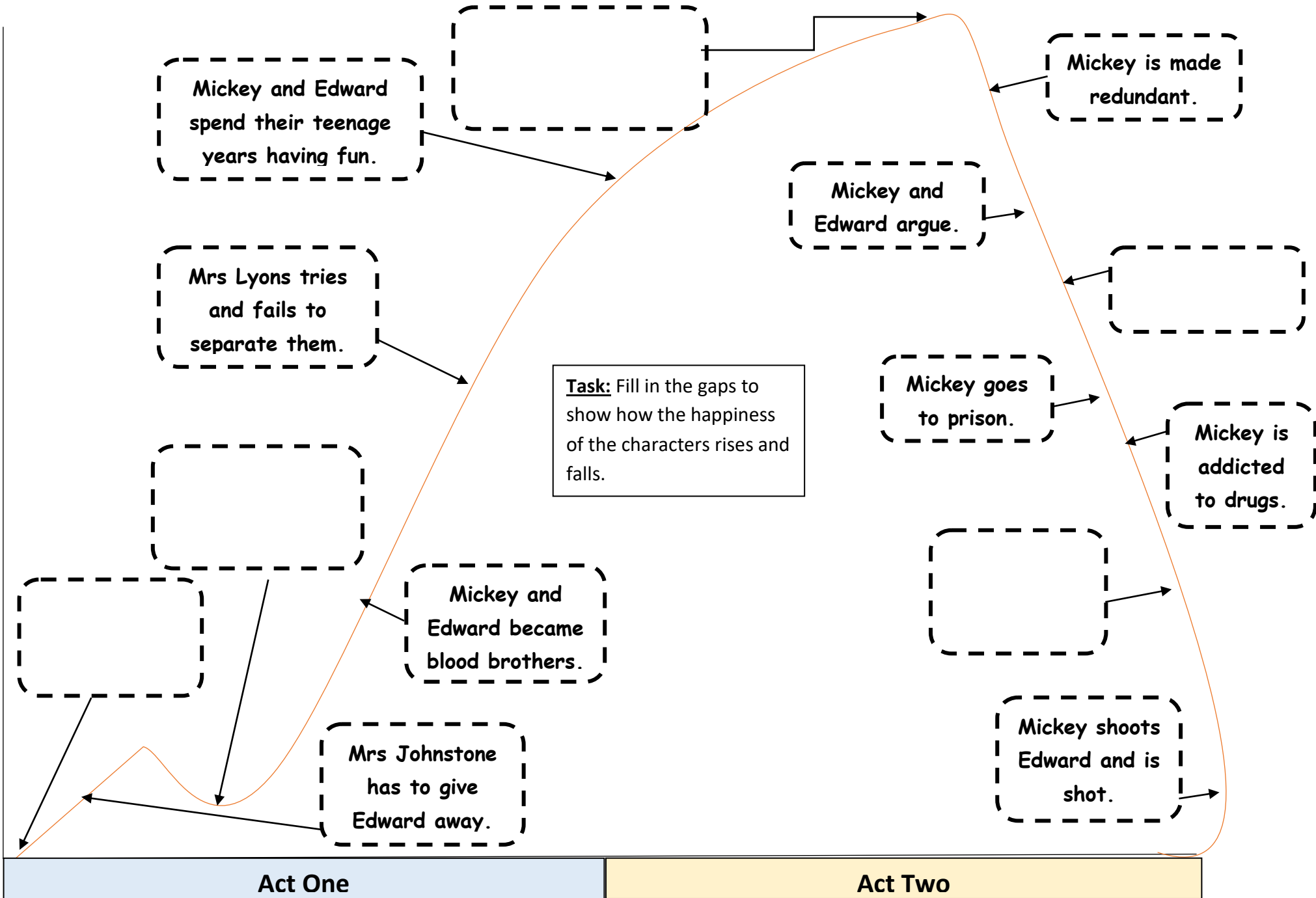
Complete the mind map on the following page to show the themes from 'Blood Brothers'.

You should try to include:

- **Theme**
- **Key quotations which link to theme**
- **Characters/relationships which suggest theme**
- **Events which link to the theme**



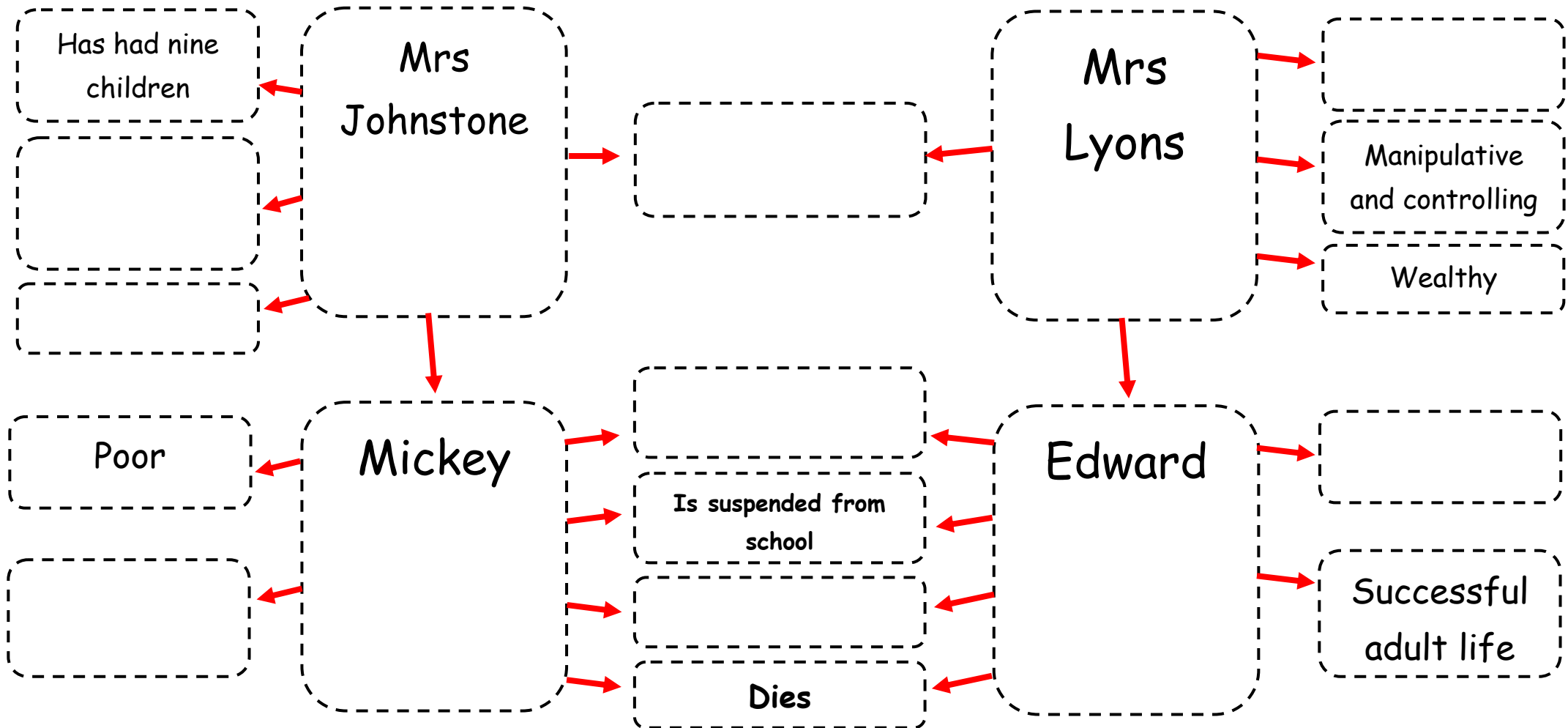
Chance of a happy ending



Parallels and Contrasts

The plot of *Blood Brothers* and its impact on an audience is strengthened through the web of parallels and contrasts created by Willy Russell. **Parallels** encourage the audience to compare characters. **Contrasts** emphasise their very significant differences.

Task: fill in the missing boxes - parallels are in the centre; contrasts are around the edges.



Practice Exam Questions (AQA)

Section A: Modern prose or drama

You will be expected to answer **one** question from this section on Blood Brothers.

01 How is the character 'Mrs Johnstone' portrayed in the play 'Blood Brothers'?

Write about

- how Mrs Johnstone's behaves and her values and attitudes
- how Russell presents her situation

02 How does Willy Russell explore the themes of class and society in the play 'Blood Brothers'?

Write about

- how Russell presents differences between social classes
- how Russell explores some of these differences

03 How does Russell present some of the differences between social classes in Blood Brothers?

Write about:

- how Russell presents some of these differences
- how Russell explores differences between social classes in the play.

04 How does Russell present attitudes towards education in Blood Brothers?

Write about:

- what some of the attitudes towards education are
- how Russell presents some of these attitudes by the ways he writes.

Key tasks to help you revise:

1. Read the play again. Only reading the play once is not enough and will not secure you a high grade.
2. Create revision flash cards or a quiz with key quotations from across the text – choose quotations that link to key characters.
3. Create theme linked mind maps – link themes in the text to key quotations and explore how the theme develops across the play.
4. Create explode the quotation key cards to help you remember details about the – language (denotations and connotations), meaning, effect and structure of the key quotations that you have exploded.
5. Summarise the text – create a 100 word summary – reduce to 50 words – reduce to 15 key words and then link these key words to quotations.
6. Write a timeline of events across the text and chart whether the tension is high/medium/low and explain how this links to key events/themes/characters.
7. Create character profiles with key quotations for the protagonists and for all the other characters in the text.
8. Make quizzes to test your knowledge of the text. Quiz a friend and revise together.
9. Get a revision guide and make mind maps based on the material within it. Ask you teacher for guidance as to which revision guide will suit your exam board.
10. Read the play again. Then read it again.