



NAME: _____



WILLY RUSSELL'S **BLOOD** *Brothers*



**Component 3, Section A:
Performance and Response
Revision Guide**

What do I need to know about Blood Brothers?



Students should be aware of characteristics of their studied text including **genre, structure, characters, form and style, dialogue and stage directions**. They should understand the **social, historical and cultural contexts** of the text. They should have an awareness of the **theatrical conventions** of the period in which their text was set. They should have considered how meaning is communicated through use of: **performance space and special relationships on stage, relationships between performers and audience, design (set, costume, lighting and sound), actor's vocal and physical interpretation** of character and **performance conventions** including the configuration of the **theatre space**.



Features of a Text

Link the following features of a text to their definition

Acts and Scenes

The spoken text of a play – conversations between characters – is dialogue.

Blocking

The character that is against the Protagonist

Antagonist

The leading character or 'hero' in a play who has to fight against/oppose the ANTAGONIST.

Character

Instructions given by the author about how a play should be staged, when actors should make their entrances and exits and how lines should be delivered.

Dialogue

A speech within a play delivered by a single actor alone on stage

Duologue

A named individual within the play

Flashback

In narratives, this term refers to a secondary plot or storyline.

Monologue

Subdivision between sections of a play. They are then subdivided further

Plot

Part of a scene in a drama which is a scripted conversation between only two characters.

Protagonist

A moment during the action of a play when the natural flow of time is interrupted so that a moment from the past can be presented.

Stage directions

The basic story thread running through a performance/play which gives the reason for the characters' actions.

Subplot

The process of arranging moves to be made by the actors during the play, recorded by stage management in the prompt script.

Theatre Makers

Link the following Theatre Makers to their definition

Actors

Author of the text of a musical / the words of a song

Choreographer

A member of the cast of a musical or play who knows the part of one (sometimes more) of the principal roles and is also in the chorus.

Costume Designer

Responsible for the design and production of everything on stage.

Director

Person (male or female) whose role is to play a character.

Lighting Designer

Professional in charge of the design and plotting of the lights on stage

Lyricist

In charge of backstage calling the cues from the prompt corner and supervising props.

Playwright

Member of the creative team for a show responsible for the clothes worn by the actors throughout the performance..

Set Designer

The author of a play.

Sound Designer

Broadly, the role involves being responsible for the overall artistic vision of a production including characterisation, blocking and design.

Stage Manager

Member of the production team responsible for setting dances and movement sequences during the production.

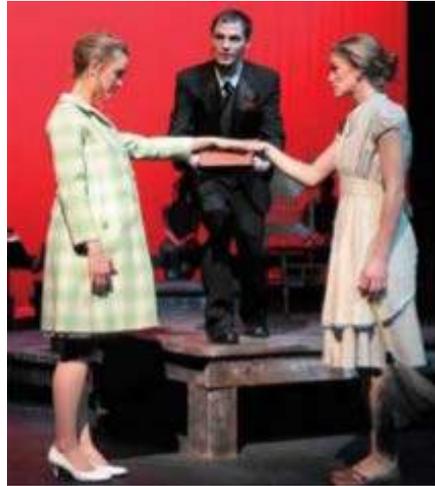
Understudy

Member of the production team who has the responsibility for planning and executing the layout of all sound playback and reinforcement equipment for the show. This role also includes the sourcing of music and sound effects for the production.

Key Themes

Social Class

The contrast between two different social classes forms the heart of the play. The leading characters can be seen to be social stereotypes, presented dramatically in order to emphasise certain important differences in social class. Russell does this to show the unfairness that it results in.



Nature vs. Nurture

The 'nature versus nurture' debate is exemplified through Mickey and Eddie. They are twins and so the difference in the way their lives turn out must be a result of their different upbringings and social positions. Russell uses the concept of twins to persuade us that attitudes in society influence peoples' lives more than their individual efforts at wanting to do well. Russell's play is deliberately objecting to a view of Margaret Thatcher's right wing conservative government, who claimed that everyone who wanted to work hard could be successful.

Education

This theme is linked to social class. Russell shows that wealth brings different educational opportunities and these lead to very different lifestyles. Eddie and Mickey are educated differently. One goes on to university and a successful career in politics, the other takes on a factory job making boxes. Redundancy and lack of opportunity then lead Mickey to crime, drug addiction and depression. Without a better education Russell is saying that Mickey had few options, and so we are asked to see Mickey's mistakes in a sympathetic light.

The effects of education shape the lives of the women in the play too. When Mrs Johnstone loses her husband she falls into poverty, from which her lack of education has provided her with no easy means of escape. She can only acquire unskilled work and has to rely on the State for housing. Compare her with Mrs Lyons who similarly, despite presumably a middle-class education, is not self-reliant. In this case Russell is suggesting perhaps that the traditional lives the women lead have less freedom, even when they are educated.

The play is set between the 1960's and 1980's

Historical Context

The play was written in and influenced by the events of the 1980's

1960

'Youth culture' was becoming more evident in the 1960's. Teenagers who enjoyed music, fashion and culture were making themselves heard more and they were often associated with freedom and potential. Teenagers started to believe they had the power to change the future and started to be more involved in protesting the issues they believed in.

Mickey, Edward and Linda's teenage years are represented in a very positive light with a montage of them enjoying themselves at the beach and the rifle range. The Narrator Emphasises how 'Care free' they are at the time

1970

During the 1970's Britain was in a recession and unemployment was becoming a major issue. Britain's traditional industries that had once dominated the work force in our towns and cities (such as coal mining and ship building) were struggling to keep up with competition from abroad.

Mickey finds work in a factory to support his family and works hard there but is soon made redundant. He spends three months looking for work with no luck and is forced to sign on to the dole.

There was a strong class divide in Britain between the working and middle class. Many working class parents found it difficult to afford even basic things such as food, clothes and heating. The Middle class who worked in jobs like accountancy or teaching, were largely unaffected by the industrial decline which strengthened the divide between them and the lower classes.

Edward sees Mickey at Christmas and meets a very different man. The loss of his job has left him angry and powerless. Edward talks about money as if it means nothing and Mickey shows him the harsh reality of a working class life

1980

In 1979 Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister. She made the decision that Britain's traditional industries should be shut down. This had a huge impact on working class communities where a huge amount of men were left unemployed and having to sign on to the dole. This led to an increase in depression and crime rates. One of Thatcher's central political beliefs was that success came to those who chose to work hard.

In Blood Brothers, Russell contradicts Thatcher's view. He shows that money and influential connections are necessary to become successful. Mickey's failure, despite his good character and hard work, is the basis of the tragedy in the drama.

1990

Liverpool was previously a major port which led to it being highly affected by the industrial decline. In the early 1980's Liverpool had one of the highest unemployment rates in the country with some men turning to crime and gangs to support their families. There were also riots on the streets that were fuelled by the men's anger at the decisions being made in government.

Mickey's unemployment prompts him to turn to crime. Once imprisoned for his crime he sinks further into depression.

Social Context



Education

Many middle class parents could afford to send their children to private school, this often led to university and a well paid job. In contrast, for most working class children living in rough areas, the schools were under funded and could not offer the same opportunities. When leaving school they needed to work to support their families and became stuck in the same low paying jobs for life.

Edward goes to university and walks straight into a high paying job on the county council. In contrast Mickey finds work in a factory but is quickly made redundant and forced to sign on to the dole.



Mrs Johnstone is used to 'living life on the never never'. She buys toys and furniture from the Catalogue Man and when she can't pay for them they are taken away. We hear voices of her seven kids complaining about never having anything.

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.

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.

Cultural Context

Pop culture

After the 1950s society went through massive changes. As a result of young people gradually having more money, popular culture (music, TV and film) flourished, becoming accessible to a much wider public. Even the poorest in society, people would have had the chance to go to the cinema or to a club for dancing. Bands like The Beatles (who came from Liverpool) had huge fan bases and their music represented the feeling of being young and free

Mrs Johnstone's love of 'dancing' is a love of escape from her everyday life. She sings about going dancing with Mr Johnstone and how as she grows up and becomes a single mother of seven she misses it.



The working class boys love of playful but 'violent' games, playing at cowboys and gangsters is influenced by films.

Film and Television

The rise of advertising and colour television meant that even children were exposed to things like films, television programs and celebrities in a way they hadn't been before. Young people often imitated characters from film and television.

Marilyn Monroe

Marilyn Monroe was a very famous Hollywood actress. Her image was well known even to people who did not watch her films. She was presented by the media as a kind of 'perfect' fantasy woman and she was shown to live a glamorous and carefree lifestyle. The reality was often very different. She needed anti-depressants and eventually died from an overdose of pills.

Russell uses references to Monroe throughout the play. At each point he refers to a different aspect of her life and public image. Mrs Johnstone enjoys the glamour of Monroe's public image. Later in the play Mickey becomes hooked on anti-depressant 'nerve pills' and this is compared to Monroe's own depression.



Genre

Blood Brothers contains elements of more than one Genre

Musical

A musical is a play in which music, lyrics and dance are used to express emotion and move on the storyline.

Give three examples of how we know that 'Blood Brothers' is a Musical

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Tragedy

A Tragedy is a play dealing with tragic events and having an unhappy ending, especially one concerning the downfall of the main character. It is often clear to the audience from the beginning that it will not end well.

Give three examples of how we know that 'Blood Brothers' is a Tragedy

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Comedy

A Comedy is a play that is intentionally funny either in its characters or its action.

Give three examples of how we know that 'Blood Brothers' is a Comedy

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Multi-Rolling

The narrator plays several different characters who are all very negative and unsympathetic towards the protagonists-

- The Milkman- Won't give Mrs Johnstone any milk even though she is pregnant.
- The Gynaecologist- Very abruptly tells her she will have more 'Mouths to feed', playing on her worries.
- The teachers- Both teachers treat the boys badly by humiliating Mickey and threatening to beat Edward.

"Did y' never hear of a mother, so cruel"

"Now y' know the devil's got your number"

The Narrator



Tension

The narrator has a very menacing and threatening manner. He lurks above and on the edge of the scenes and is very judgemental of the characters. He speaks of the devil and superstitions and wears black as if attending the boys funeral. He moves in and out of the scenes and cannot be seen most of the time

Language

The Narrator speaks differently to the other characters on stage using old fashioned sentences and rhyme. This enhances the feeling that he is not really there.

In Act 1 Mrs Johnstone swears on the bible that she will give Mrs Lyons her child. As a director, how would you integrate the narrator into this scene to create a tense atmosphere?

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Characters



Mrs Johnstone

Mrs Johnstone is a single mother who struggles to provide for her many children. She is **loving** and **optimistic** but makes some **irresponsible** decisions due to her **impressionable** and **superstitious** nature.

She gets scared when she see's "Shoes on the Table" and Mrs Lyons exploits her superstitions by making her swear on the bible.

She orders items from catalogues to give her kids a good life but as she is unable to pay for them they get repossessed.

She tells Mrs Lyons that she "loves the bones" of her children and forgives them when they misbehave.

Even though she's been through her husband leaving her, having to give up her child, been moved from her home she stays optimistic "Ey, we'll be alright out here, son"

She fell for her husband when he "gave her the chat" and is manipulated by Mrs Lyons

Voice Key Words

Accent
Pitch
Pace
Articulation
Tone
Projection

List 3 ways Mrs Johnstone might use her voice within Blood Brothers and explain what they show to the audience.

Voice	Justification

Characters



Mrs Lyons

Mrs Lyons is **wealthy** but **unhappy**. Her need for a child causes her to **manipulate** Mrs Johnstone into giving her Edward. Once she becomes a mother she struggles to bond with Edward and hides it by being **over protective** and **insecure**. Her **paranoia** progressively drives her mad

Mrs Lyons is a typical middle class woman of the 60's era. Her husband has a high paying job and she stays at home.

She feels like she has failed as a woman as she is unable to have children. Her home feels empty and feeds her desperation.

She exploits Mrs Johnstone's poverty and superstitions "how can you possibly avoid some of them being put into care?" and when Mrs J threatens to take back Edward she makes up a superstition about twins who meet again will die.

She becomes paranoid about Edward's relationship with the Johnstone's. This causes her to approach Mrs J where her madness peaks as she tries to stab her.

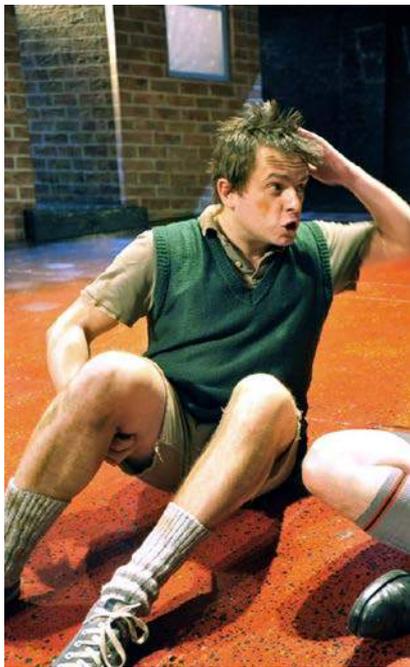
She seeks constant reassurance that she is a good mother from Edward and doesn't let him play out with other children.

Physicality Key Words

Posture
Body Language
Facial Expressions
Tension
Status
Proxemics
Angles

List 3 ways Mrs Lyons might use her physicality within Blood Brothers and explain what they show to the audience.

Physicality	Justification



Characters

Mickey Johnstone

Mickey is the twin Mrs Johnstone keeps. As a child he is very **naughty** but also very **sensitive** and **loving**. Growing up he starts to become **insecure**, particularly around girls. In adulthood he **works hard** at his job so after losing it and being arrested he sinks into **depression**.

Mickey has an emotional breakdown when he is sentenced. He starts to take anti-depressants to solve his low self-esteem and resentment of Eddie.

Mickey is a working class character and gets a low paying job because of his lack of success in education and it's what he's expected to do. When he loses his job he walks the streets for months trying to find another one.

In his monologue Mickey shows how he is influenced by his older brother Sammy "Wee's straight through the letter box". The foreshadows the fact he is later influenced by Sammy to commit a crime

The other children upset Mickey easily and he cries when they chant about dying. He is very close with his mother and notices her emotions.

Although Linda makes her feelings for him very clear he is unable to tell her how he feels. He is also insecure about his intelligence and appearance, covering it up by acting the fool in lessons.

Physicality Key Words

Posture
Body Language
Facial Expressions
Tension
Status
Proxemics
Angles

List 3 ways Mickey might use his physicality within Blood Brothers and explain what they show to the audience.

Physicality	Justification

Characters



Edward Lyons

Edward is the twin that Mrs Johnstone give away. He has had a **privileged** upbringing and is very **polite** with everybody, no matter their **class**. He **rebels** against his mothers strictness but still does what is **expected** of him as a middle class man. Edward can be **naïve** and proves he isn't **loyal** to Mickey.

Although he and Mickey seem like the best of friends, Eddie asks Linda to marry him after Mickey has a go at him and later they have an affair.

After returning from university Eddie show a complete lack of understanding of Mickey's situation by saying he should "draw the dole" and "live like a bohemian".

Mr and Mrs Lyons provide Edward with everything he wants as he's growing up with "all his own toys " and silver trays to take meals on". However, he is happy to share all he has.

Edward is happy to be in either Middle or Working Class environments, adapting his behaviour to suit whoever he is with.

By going to the other side of town when his mother forbids him he shows a rejection of his middle class roots but quickly goes back to them once at university and getting a job on the council.

Voice Key Words

Accent
Pitch
Pace
Articulation
Tone
Projection

List 3 ways Edward might use his voice within Blood Brothers and explain what they show to the audience.

Voice	Justification

Characters



She is not afraid to compete against the boys and stands up for Mickey when he gets emotional.

Linda is constantly telling Mickey she loves him when they are teenagers. However, she still waits for him to make the first move.

Linda

Linda as a young girl is **strong, confident** and **open with her feelings**. However, in contrast, as she grows up she starts to conform to **gender stereotypes**. Linda's **affair** with Edward is a turning point in the play, leading to the dramatic ending

Linda becomes a stereotypical housewife, allowing Mickey actions to dictate what their life will be. Her sole focus is her husband and her child.

Linda loves both Mickey and Edward (in a way) but when she becomes pregnant in this era her decision is made for her.

After Mickey's time in prison and his depression, Eddie represents the freedom of her youth that she has lost.

Sammy 'Wees straight through' the neighbours letter box and burns his school down. His use of a gun during his childhood games foreshadows his future crimes.

As Mickey's father leaves before he is born Sammy is the only male role model he has.

He later robs a bus conductor at knifepoint and shoots a man during the robbery.

Sammy

Mickey looks up to Sammy as a **role model** when they are children. As a child he is incredibly **naughty** and as he grows up his behaviour gets **progressively worse**. Sammy uses his **influence** over Mickey to get him in to trouble but he shows no **loyalty** to him when everything goes wrong.

Sammy persuades Mickey to join in the robbery by reminding him of everything he hasn't got. Sammy is a stereotypical working class youth of this time, turning to crime instead of working hard.

When the robbery goes wrong and Sammy has shot a man he runs out on Mickey.

“Are you soft?”

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“Twins? You’re expecting twins?”

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Dialogue

Identify who says each line and how the line has an impact on the character

“I had it all worked out. We were just getting straight.”

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“So you’re not working. Why is it so important?”

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Music is heard as Mrs Johnstone turns and walks towards us. She is aged thirty but looks more like fifty.

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Mrs Lyons shows the Bible to Mrs Johnstone, who is at first reluctant and then lays her hand on it

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Stage Directions

Explain how the following stage directions are important within their scene

The children rush into the street playing cowboys and Indians; cops and robbers; goodies and baddies

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Mickey appearing from the stalls, a gun held two-handed, to steady his shaking hands and pointed directly at Edward

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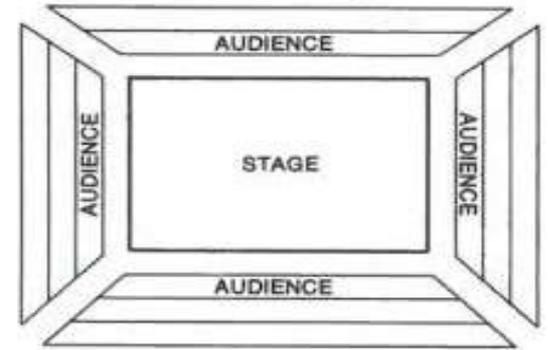
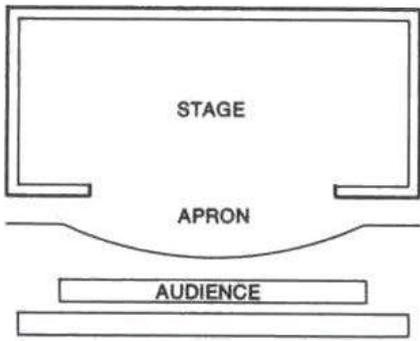
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Types of Staging



Proscenium Arch

The original staging for Blood Brothers. The audience sits in front of the stage, usually in straight rows. The audience views the stage as if looking at the action through a picture frame (the forth wall)

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Negatives for Blood Brothers

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In-the-Round

Theatre in the Round is a form of audience seating layout where the acting area is surrounded on all sides by seating. There are often a number of entrances. Special consideration needs to be given to furniture and scenery as audience sightlines can easily be blocked.

Positives for Blood Brothers

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Negatives for Blood Brothers

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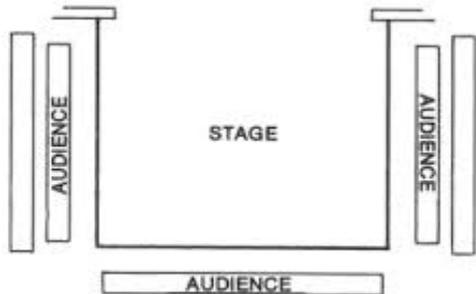
The stage is a rectangle and the audience directly face the stage from each of the three sides.

Positives for Blood Brothers

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Negatives for Blood Brothers

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Black Box

A Black Box Theatre is a simple, open space consisting of four walls, a floor, and a ceiling that are all painted black. It is a bare room with a movable seating area, a movable stage, and a flexible lighting system.

Positives for Blood Brothers

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Negatives for Blood Brothers

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Traverse

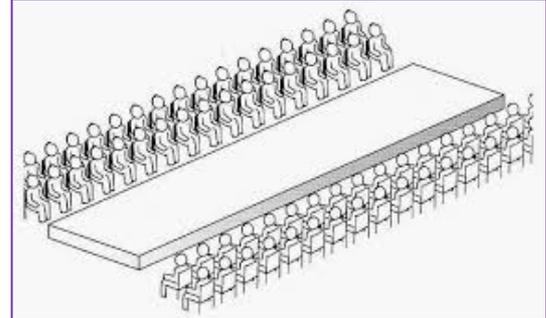
The acting area is down the middle of the space. The audience sits facing the acting area from two sides.

Positives for Blood Brothers

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Negatives for Blood Brothers

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Set

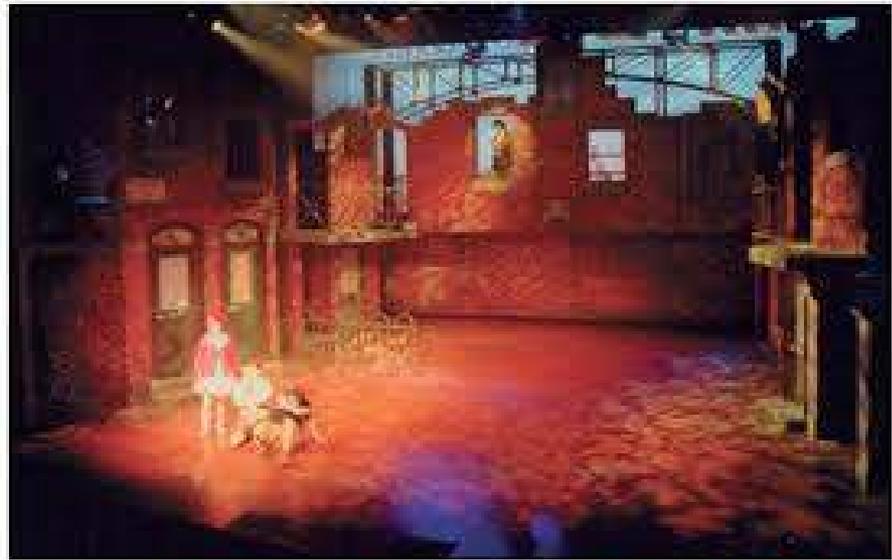
Semiotics are the symbols that can be contained within the design elements (set, lighting, sound, costume and props)

Non-Naturalistic set
Set may not be true to life but is more symbolic.

Composite set
A stage setting where several locations are represented in the same space and isolated or highlighted by lighting each area separately.

Adaptable Set
Adaptable sets can change quickly to show different locations.

Which set would you choose for 'Blood Brothers' and why?
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As a designer, how would you show the Social, Cultural and Historical context within the set design?
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When designing a set you should think about how it will fit into the chosen performance space, the entrances/exits, using different levels, how to show the social, cultural and historical context and how the set will adapt to different scenes.

Choose a performance space and within the box above design a set for Blood Brothers. Label each element with a justification.

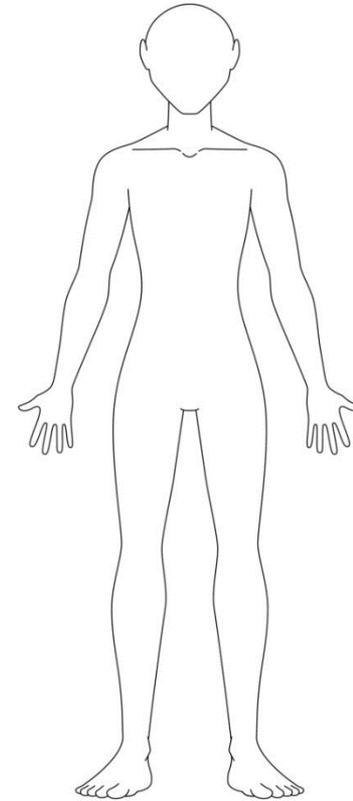
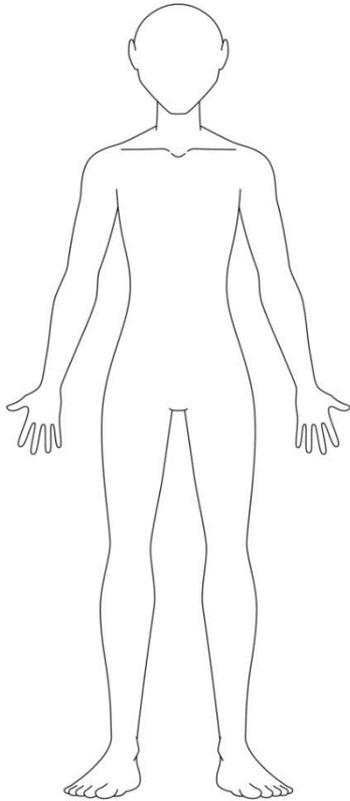
Think about-

- Demands of your performance space
- Entrances/exits
- Levels
- Social, Cultural and Historical Context
- Adaptability

Costume

Semiotics

Design and label costumes for two contrasting characters from 'Blood Brothers'



When designing a costume you must make sure you label your design labelling the meaning of the semiotics you have created.

Costume design is important to show the audience the **personality, class** and **status** of a character. It can also help to show the **time period** and **location** that the play is set in.

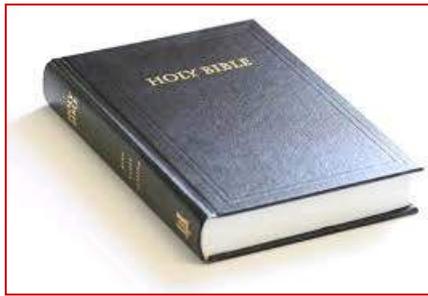
Don't forget to think about colour, material, make up, hair, shoes etc. Costume design is all about the little details.

Props

Semiotics



Mrs Johnstone gives Edward the locket to show her regret for leaving him and her continued love. That's why it has such a major effect on Mrs Lyons when she see's him wearing it.



The bible is important to Mrs Johnstone as a religious woman. When she has to swear on the bible she knows it means she can't take it back as she is superstitious. Mrs Lyons knows this too and takes advantage of it.



Edward shares his sweets with Mickey and we see the difference between their classes as Mickey sees sweets as a luxury and Edward is happy to give them away. Later in the play Mickey becomes addicted to anti-depressants and see's them as the only thing that can make him better.

What do the toy gun and real gun symbolise to the audience throughout the play?

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Russell uses props as symbols throughout the play. Many props even change later in the play to show the change in the characters as they grow older



Section B – Live Theatre Evaluation

Learner Resource 1 – Live theatre evaluation, pre-show tips and questions

1. Look around the auditorium or space you are in. Is it small and intimate; large and impersonal; how might you describe it?

2. If there are boxes either side of the stage, why are the most expensive seats in the house the ones that often have the worst view?

3. What is on the stage and what clues are there already about the story, genre, budget, technical aspects, symbolism and atmosphere?

Lesson Element – Evaluating the work of others

Learner Resource 2 – Live theatre evaluation notes

Name:

Not like this...	...like this!
The actor had an angry facial expression.	The actor signified that she was angry by tensing her facial muscles.
The lighting designer used dark light to make it scary.	The lighting designer used low key lighting and shadows to create an atmosphere of mystery.
The physical theatre was really fast and they had obviously rehearsed a lot.	The physical theatre was very effective because the performers were so precise in the movements and had excellent timing.

Complete this **before** you watch the performance. Information to complete this first section will be on the show's website or in the programme.

Name of the performance	
Theatre or location	
Date	
Director(s)	
Theatre company	
Lighting designer(s)	
Sound designer(s)	
Set designer(s)	

Choreographer	
Composer	
Principal cast - role	Performer

Before the performance begins, sketch out what you can see on stage. Label everything. Include notes about colours, textures, fabrics, props, scenery, lighting, sound, symbolism and, if there are any, actors already on stage and what they are doing.

Complete these sections **after** the performance. You can make some notes in the interval if you like, but don't make notes during the performance.

Describe your favourite performance by an actor. Refer to his or her use of facial expression, gesture, movement, use of space, status, connection to the ensemble and the audience. How did they have an impact on you?

Describe how lighting was used. Refer to colours, intensity, special effects like gobos and projections and contrasts. Was lighting used to create realism and/or symbolism? How did light create atmosphere, tension or create an emotional impact?

Describe the use of sound, soundscapes and sound effects. Refer to recorded sound or sound made by voices or live instruments. How did sound create atmosphere, tension or create an emotional impact?

Describe the use of costumes. Refer colours, textures, fabrics and design. How did costumes signify characters, status and era? How did costumes allude to context and the director's intention?

Also, consider hair, make-up, masks and other visual factors linked to the actors.

Describe the scenery, set dressing, cloths, backdrops and other design elements of this nature. Refer to colours, materials, shapes and style. How did the set link to the genre? How did performers use the set effectively? Was scenery realistic and/or symbolic, and what were the connotations? How effectively did it signify era, context or create an atmosphere?

Describe a key moment in the production which you found engaging. Refer to the elements in previous sections: sound, light, costume, set design and acting. Describe what you saw and evaluate why it was effective. Also consider how the ensemble used the space and how elements worked together, such as light and sound or costume and characterisation.

Learner Resource 3 – How to write a perfect paragraph

Point

The opening single sentence of your paragraph should tell the reader exactly what you are about to say. The reader should be able to know the subject of the paragraph and your broad conclusion.

Example: Music was used to signify Christopher’s discomfort and to help the audience appreciate his point of view.

Evidence

This section should describe what you saw and heard. It will be concise and detailed as well as using the correct theatre terminology. It will refer to the point in the performance or narrative about which you are describing, but will not waffle on about the plot.

Example: In Act II, when Christopher arrived in London, he was confronted by a place and people that confused and frightened him. As with other, similar, moments in the production, Christopher’s anxiety was signified by loud, intrusive, electronic music. The music worked in conjunction with bright, flashing lights, similar to a rave, and the ensemble arrived, moving in fast, jarring patterns, causing Christopher to have to weave and dodge in panic.

Evaluation

Having described the details of what you saw you get to the important part. Your evaluation should address questions like these:

- To what extent was this aspect or example effective? Was it highly effective or did it lack the impact it was aiming for?
- What was the impact it had on you and others in the audience? How did it achieve this impact?
- Why was it effective or, on the other hand, why did it fail to be effective?
- How well did it communicate the overall intention of the performance.

Example: The music effectively communicated Christopher’s mental state at that moment because the speed and volume of the music symbolised how overwhelmed he was. Also, the fact that it was electronic music, as opposed to something more organic, seemed to signify alienation on his part, or the plastic, mechanised nature of the world around him as he saw it. With the lights flashing, as they had done so shockingly at the very opening of the play, the moment became immersive for the audience too. This was especially impactful because, despite the action taking place behind the proscenium arch, the light and sound allowed us in the auditorium to experience something of Christopher’s thought process, in a way that approached a kind of total theatre. The movements of the ensemble contributed to this sense of Christopher’s alienation, as they became an impersonal, inhuman chorus, which he could neither communicate with nor find a way through.

Example questions for section B – Although this is not an exhaustive list of questions you are likely to be asked to focus on one of these key areas. It is important you know what is meant by each of the terms in **BOLD** to enable the best chance of success

- Evaluate the **visual impact** a live production had on you as an audience member.
- Evaluate the impact that the **characterisation** of an actor from the live production had on you as an audience member.
- Evaluate how an actor's **vocal skills** in a live production have impacted the audience
- Evaluate how an actor's **physical skills** in a live production have impacted the audience
- Evaluate how the live productions **genre** impacted you as an audience member.
- Evaluate how the live productions **style** impacted you as an audience member.
- Evaluate how the **technical aspects** within the live performance impacted you as an audience member.
- Evaluate the impact **Costume** within a live production had on you as an audience member
- Evaluate the impact **Lighting** within a live production had on you as an audience member
- Evaluate the impact **Sound** within a live production had on you as an audience member
- Evaluate the **opening scene** of the live production and its impact on the audience
- Evaluate the **final scene** of the live production and its impact on the audience
- Evaluate a **key scene** of the live production and its impact on the audience
- Evaluate how the choices in **staging** impacted the audience of the live production
- Evaluate the **semiotics** of a live production and their impact on the audience

Key terminology / area of focus	Examples of what I might include when discussing their IMPACT
Visual	<i>e.g. Set, Lighting, Costume, Actor's physical skills, Props, Hair and Makeup</i>
Characterisation	
Vocal skills	
Physical skills	
Genre	
Style	
Technical aspects	

Costume	
Lighting	
Sound	
Opening scene	
Key scene	
Final scene	
Semiotics	

SAMPLE ANSWER 'Crouch, Touch, Pause, Engage', XXXX Theatre, Month Year**Question: Evaluate the visual impact of the performance you saw.**

We went to see 'Crouch, Touch, Pause, Engage', a live production, and the visual techniques and staging were very unique and thought-provoking. The staging that was used was almost in the round, with the audience on three sides, and tiered seating. The performers were very good at communicating to the audience and managed to stand at certain angles so that everybody could see and understand what was happening in the scene and there was a lot of direct audience address used with direct eye contact, so that, as an audience, we could feel engaged and as if we were part of the play too.

Multi-rolling was used all the way throughout the play, they showed that Gareth (the main character) was being played by someone else, by passing on a rugby ball to the new actor, so that we could tell that Gareth was the one whom was holding the rugby ball. It may have taken me a while to work out what they rugby ball signified (as it did for many others) however once I did everything became a lot clearer for me. A very powerful point in the production for me was used with the aid of lighting – which was very effective. The scene was the moment before two people were commit suicide and before this moment, the lighting hadn't changed, however just as the characters supposedly died, the lights dramatically all went off, and when they did come back on, the characters were gone – leaving us as an audience feeling rather confused and apprehensive as for what was to come next. Not many props were used, however there were a few for comedy purposes and the outer-edge of the stage was lined with benches which were frequently used for different things, such as chairs, tables and beds – making it a minimalistic set. At some points, the actors would not have a part in a certain scene, so they would sit at the side of the stage and look dis-engaged, however I think that it would have looked better and been more effective, if they had gone off-stage during these parts as they were going out of character and it looked un-professional. I also think that whilst some of the performers were talking, the others lacked reaction and looked more as if they were thinking about what they were doing next. They needed to use facial expressions more in response to the other performers comments or actions. However, when the performers were talking, they used big hand gestures and facial expressions so that we could see their state of mind and have a clear indication of how they felt. As the performance used multi-rolling, the girls had to perform as boys – sometimes, and this was indicated with a slight change of costume (usually a rugby t-shirt) and a deepening of the voice with a more 'manly' gestures and stance. This was done well, as an audience

member I always knew when they were performing as a male. Something that I think could have made the performance even more effective and interesting is if freeze frames and thought tracking was used, as the play is a very emotional and thought centered one, so if we could have seen and heard how the characters were thinking and feeling at certain points then we could have gotten a better understanding of them and felt more sympathetic towards their situation. Overall, they play was very different to anything I have ever seen, and I felt very involved as an audience member. The characters movement was defined and lighted was used very well at certain points.

EXAMINER COMMENTARY The candidate has offered a very strong response to the question with some pertinent impacts discussed from both a positive and negative perspective. Within their evaluation, they refer in some depth to the impacts on them as an audience member, with several specific references to the production. The candidate reveals a detailed and confident understanding of the visual elements in the production. They show how these elements impacted on them as an audience member and clearly discuss the visual aspects of the production with some detailed reference to technical concepts. The examples they offer to justify the aspects they discuss are rooted in the performance. The candidate also highlights a personal and revealing commentary towards the use of semiotics. They demonstrate some distinction between the actor and the character and there is a perceptive interpretation of the deeper meaning of the production. At times, the candidate shows a clear insight into the impact this had on the audience which is exemplified by a developed knowledge and understanding of the production process. This is also demonstrated by the candidate's use of specialist drama and theatre terminology which they use with confidence throughout their response. In general, the candidate displays a skilful understanding of how the meaning of the production is communicated to the audience which they exemplify by demonstrating a clear, relevant and well-developed line of reasoning.

It is pleasing to see that the candidate has offered relevant evaluation, which they discuss from both a negative and positive perspective in relation to the impact on themselves and the audience. The potential examples given are specific, however some of their examples lack the detail and justification required to secure a top mark. To gain additional marks, the candidate needs to enhance their response by providing clearer and more detailed examples of key moments from the

production, especially in relation to key technical aspects. This would help them to demonstrate a deeper knowledge and understanding of the production in its entirety and specifically enhance their understanding of the audience impact.

To achieve a top mark in the top band, candidates need to show a highly developed understanding of the visual impact of the production on them as an audience member. Although clear impacts are discussed, at times, they are not always specific or detailed in respect of key issues or moments from the production. For example, the candidate demonstrates an accomplished insight into the use of lighting, covering a multitude of potential impacts. However, their discussion of proxemics is not as detailed or as clear. The candidate also fails to discuss in detail the key aspects of the overall style of the performance, especially in relation to the use of staging. They do suggest how these elements have enhanced/detracted from the potential impact, with some reference to moments in the production. They do not justify this in the detail which these key elements require to achieve full marks. The use of specialist drama and theatre terminology is used with confidence by the candidate and they clearly have a developed knowledge and understanding of specialist language. However, their use of such is not highly developed and is sometimes not integrated throughout their response. For example, there is no acknowledgement or reference to the use of 'Epic Theatre' techniques/style or use of terms such as 'Breaking the Forth Wall', 'Proxemics/Semiotics'. The candidate has missed several opportunities to demonstrate key relevant specialist terminology throughout their response. This is exemplified by the candidate's overall understanding of how meaning is communicated to an audience in a live performance, which they consistently demonstrate in a sound, but not highly developed manner.