

SECTION B- BLOOD BROTHERS

WHAT THE QUESTIONS REQUIRE YOU TO DO

Question 1 – 4 marks (5 minutes)

This question focuses on **design**.

You will be asked to describe your **design ideas** for one of the following:

- A specific **character's costume**
- A **set design** for a place in the play
- A **lighting design**

Question 2 – 8 marks (10 minutes)

This question focuses on **one line from the extract**.

You will be asked to:

- **Describe** how you would use your **vocal** and **physical** skills to perform the line.
- **Explain** the **effects** you want to create for the audience.

Question 3 – 12 marks (15 minutes)

This question focuses on the **shaded part of the extract**.

You will be asked to:

- **Explain** how you would use the **performance space** and **interact with another actor**.
- Keep your answer **focused on creating a specific effect** for the audience, as stated in the question.

Question 4 – 20 marks (25 minutes)

There will be **two questions** — one on **design** and one on **acting**.

👉 **Choose the acting question!**

This question will give you **one character** that you are performing the role of.

You will be asked to:

- **Describe** how you would use your **acting skills** to interpret the character.
- **Explain** why your ideas are **appropriate for the given extract**.
- **Refer to other moments in the play** to show your understanding of the character **throughout the whole play**.

KEY VOCAL SKILLS

- **Tone** - The emotion or attitude in your voice that shows how a character feels (e.g. angry, gentle, fearful).
- **Pitch** - How high or low your voice sounds
- **Pace** - The speed of your speech
- **Volume** - How loud or quiet your voice is
- **Pause** - A deliberate stop in speech
- **Accent** - Reflects where your character is from
- **Articulation** - Speaking clearly so every word can be understood.
- **Emphasis** - Stressing certain words to highlight meaning or emotion.
- **Projection** - Speaking so you can be heard clearly by the whole audience without shouting.
- **Elongate** - Stretching or lengthening certain sounds or words.

KEY PHYSICAL SKILLS

- **Posture** - How you hold your body (e.g. slouched for sadness, upright for pride).
- **Gesture** - Movements of your hands, arms, or body that communicate meaning or emotion.
- **Facial Expression** - How you use your face to show feelings such as anger, fear, happiness, or guilt.
- **Gait** - The way your character walks, which can show personality, mood, or physical condition (e.g. confident stride, dragging feet, limping).
- **Eye Contact** - How and when you look at other characters or the audience
- **Proxemics** - The physical distance between characters
- **Levels** - Using height or stage levels to show power, status, or focus (e.g. standing over someone to show dominance).
- **Energy** - The intensity or strength in your physical performance; high energy shows excitement or anger, low energy shows sadness or weakness.
- **Stillness** - Staying completely still to draw focus or create tension on stage.
- **Interaction** - How you physically respond to other actors through movement, touch, or positioning; helps make relationships believable.

CHARACTERS IN BLOOD BROTHERS

Mickey Johnstone

Background: Working-class twin, raised in poverty by Mrs Johnstone.

Personality: Lively, cheeky, loyal, emotional, but later becomes bitter and broken by hardship.

Childhood: Playful and innocent, full of energy and imagination.

Teenage Years: Begins to notice class differences between him and Edward.

Adulthood: Struggles with unemployment, depression, and the pressures of adulthood.

Relationships: Best friends then rivals with Edward; deeply loves Linda; devoted to his mother.

Symbolism: Represents the working class and how social inequality limits opportunity.

Key Quotes

- "Gis a sweet"
- "Yeh, I know loads of words like that. Y' know, like the 'F' word"
- "Ey, we were born on the same day...that means we can be blood brothers"
- "This means we're blood brothers and that we'll always have to stand by each other"
- "Gis a ciggie"
- "You sound dead funny swearin' in that posh voice"
- "I don't want your money, stuff it"
- "You...you're a dickhead"
- "That was kids stuff Eddie, didn't anyone tell y"
- "Where's me tablets gone Linda?"
- "Leave me alone will y. I cant cope with this"
- "That's why I take them. So I can be invisible"
- "Well, how come you got everything...an' I got nothin'?"
- "It used to be just sweets an' ciggies he gave me"
- "Does my child belong to you as well as everything' else?" "
- "Why didn't you give me away!"
- "I could have been him!"
- "Friends! I could kill you. We were friends weren't we? Blood Brothers wasn't it? Remember?"

Edward Lyons

Background: Mickey's twin, raised in an upper-class family by Mrs Lyons after being secretly given away.

Personality: Polite, well-spoken, kind, naive, and trusting.

Development: Protected and privileged; doesn't understand Mickey's struggles; unintentionally becomes a symbol of class inequality.

Relationships: Sees Mickey as a "blood brother" and Linda as a close friend; unaware of their depth of feeling.

Symbolism: Represents the middle/upper class - same blood, but very different life outcomes.

Key Quotes

- "Don't you know what a dictionary is?"
- "Is that your mummy?"
- "Mickey says smashing things. We're blood brothers aren't we Mickey?"
- "Mummy, how do you spell bogey man?"
- "If you loved me you'd let me go out with Mickey" "You're a fuckoff!"
- "You shall not take my locket!"
- "Mummy...you silly old thing. That's not me. That's Mickey"
- "You're looking very well Mrs Johnstone"
- "It's just a secret, everybody has secrets, don't you have secrets?"
- "Come on then, before my Ma sees me. She's off her beam, my Ma"
- "If I was him I'd bring you flowers and ask you to dance"
- "If I was Mickey. I would have asked you years ago"
- "I've got money, plenty of it"
- "I haven't been to so many parties in my life" "Mickey? Well shag the vicar"
- "Pissed off. You say smashing things don't you?" "Are you feeling better now, Mummy?"
- "I'm going away to tomorrow...to University"
- "Why...why is a job so important?"
- "I thought we were Blood Brothers"
- "Mickey I don't know what she told you but Linda and I are just friends"

CHARACTERS IN BLOOD BROTHERS

Mrs Johnstone

Background: Working-class single mother of many children; kind but poor.

Personality: Loving, warm, superstitious, resilient.

Development: Forced into giving up one twin due to poverty; haunted by guilt.

Symbolism: Represents the struggles of the working-class mother and the impact of social systems.

Key Quotes

- "Oh God, Mrs Lyons, never put new shoes on a table...You never know what'll happen"
- "I start a job next week. I'll have money comin' in an' I'll be able to pay y'"
- "Havin' babies, it's like clockwork to me"
- "I'm not superstitious"
- "With one more baby we could have managed"
- "The Welfare have already been on to me"
- "Don't you ever go up there. Do you hear me?"
- "But I work the way I've always worked"
- "What will I do? How are we gonna live without me job?"
- "If I'm goin, I'm taking my son with me"
- "Go home before the bogey man gets y'"
- "But keep it a secret eh, Eddie? Just our secret, between you an' me"
- "Would you like a picture of Mickey, to take with you"
- "Do you still keep that locket I gave y'?"
- "I don't want your money, I've made a life out here"
- "You've bought me off once before"
- "Mickey. Don't shoot Eddie. He's your brother. You had a twin brother."



Mrs Lyons

Background: Wealthy, lonely woman unable to have children.

Personality: Possessive, manipulative, paranoid.

Journey: At first seems kind and caring but manipulates Mrs Johnstone into giving her a baby. She becomes unstable and controlling as guilt consumes her. Always neat and composed early on, but appearance unravels as her mental state deteriorates.

Symbolism: Shows how privilege doesn't equal happiness; explores themes of nature vs nurture.

Key Quotes

- "Hello Mrs Johnstone, how are you? Is the job working out all right for you?"
- "I believe that an adopted child can become one's own"
- "It's a pretty house isn't it. It's a pity it's so big"
- "Already you've been threatened by the Welfare People"
- "Mrs J, nobody must ever know. Therefore, we have to have an agreement"
- "They say that if either twin learns that he was once a pair, they shall both immediately die"
- "You swore on the bible"
- "You won't tell anyone about this, Mrs Johnstone, because if you do, you will kill them"
- "I'm not depressed Richard"
- "It's your work. Your work has deteriorated"
- "Oh no you're not. Edward is my son. Mine".
- "There's nothing wrong with my nerves. It's just this place"
- "Where did you get that locket from Edward?"
- "I'm talking about thousands if you want it."
- "Wherever I go you'll be just behind me. Unless I can make you go..."
- "I curse the day I met you. You ruined me" - "I curse you. Witch!"

CHARACTERS IN BLOOD BROTHERS

Linda

Background: Grows up with Mickey and Edward; becomes a link between the twins.

Personality: Loyal, confident, kind, grounded, and caring.

Development: Starts carefree; later becomes a wife and mother worn down by struggle, poverty and responsibility. She loves both Mickey and Edward but in different ways.

Symbolism: Represents women trapped by class and circumstance; love and loyalty in a cruel system.

Key Quotes

- "Leave him alone"
- "An listen Mickey, if y dead, there's no school is there"
- "Lets throw some stones through them windows"
- "You stay where y are Mickey. You've done nothing"
- "He'll get put away for this you know Mickey"
- "Y better hadn't, or I wont be in love with you anymore"
- "I don't care who knows. I just love you. I love you"
- "Oh leave him alone you. Y big worm"
- "Take no notice Mickey, I love you".
- "Mickey...Mickey, I'm stuck. Me foots stuck honest"
- "Have we come all this way just to look at the bleedin estate. Mickey were fourteen"
- "You. I give up with you Mickey Johnstone. Im off. You get on my bleedin nerves."
- "I suppose I always...loved you, in a way"
- "Didn't Mickey tell y? We got married two weeks before you came home and I'm expecting a baby"
- "Mickey you don't need your tablets!"
- "Is that it then? Are y gonna stay on them forever?"
- "An what about what I need? I need you. I love you"

Sammy Johnstone

Background: Mickey's older brother, also raised by Mrs Johnstone in a working-class household.

Personality: Rebellious, mischievous, confident, and later violent.

Journey: Always in trouble. Teenage years begins to commit petty crimes; often leads Mickey into bad behaviour. Adulthood turns to serious crime and ends up influencing Mickey's downfall.

Symbolism: Represents the effects of poverty and lack of opportunity. Shows how the cycle of crime traps working-class men. Plays with toy guns as a child - foreshadows the final tragedy.

Key Quotes

- "Give us a sweet"
- "Y' little robbin get"
- "I'm gonna get a real gun soon. Im gonna get an air gun"
- "He's a friggin poshy"
- "I'm not defraudin no one"
- "Fuck off! (He produces a knife). Now move you, move. Give me the bag!"
- "Look at y Mickey. What have y got?Nothin. Like me mam."
- "Where y taking y tart for New Year? Nowhere."
- "We don't use the shooters. They're just frighteners"
- "Fifty quid Mickey. Fifty quid for an hours work".
- "Don't piss about with me pal...I said give"
- "Move, I've got to get this hid"

Narrator

Role: A constant presence who reminds the audience that fate and superstition control events.

Style: Breaks the fourth wall, adds tension and moral weight.

Symbolism: Represents destiny, guilt, and the inevitability of tragedy.

CHARACTERS IN BLOOD BROTHERS

Mr Lyons

Background: Edward's father; wealthy, middle-class businessman.

Personality: Distant, practical, and often emotionally detached. He focuses on work and reputation.

Journey: Absent for much of Edward's life, leaving Mrs Lyons lonely and paranoid. His absence allows Mrs Lyons' paranoia to grow unchecked. Represents authority and stability, but also emotional emptiness.

Symbolism: Represents the upper-class male figure – successful but emotionally cold. Highlights the contrast between financial security and emotional fulfilment. Offers Edward opportunities that Mickey never receives, showing class privilege.

Key Quotes

- "Darling. Don't be hard on the woman. She only wanted to hold the baby"
- "It's alright Jennifer. You're just a little...it's the depression thing that happens after a woman's had a..."
- "You know best. The house is your domain."
- "Look Jen, I've got a board meeting I really must dash"
- "If we complete this the firm will run itself and I'll have plenty of time to spend with you both"
- "Ask mummy. Darling, I'll see you later now"
- "For God's sake Jennifer!. I told you on the phone he'll just be out playing somewhere."
- "For Christs sake. You bring me home from work in the middle of the day just to say you haven't seen him for an hour"
- "Perhaps we should be talking about getting you something for your nerves"
- "Frightened of what woman?"
- "Well Edward...do you like it here?"

HISTORICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Time period: Set between the 1950s–1980s in Liverpool, England.

Economic background: Liverpool faced high unemployment, factory closures, and poverty, especially among working-class families after World War II and during the Thatcher era.

Class divide: There was a big gap between the rich and the poor. Working-class people struggled to survive while the middle class had comfort and opportunity.

Education and opportunity: Working-class children often left school early for low-paid jobs; middle-class children went to university. This fuels the contrast between Mickey and Eddie.

Housing relocation: Many Liverpool families were moved from city slums to new housing estates in the countryside – reflected in Mrs Johnstone's move.

Stigma and judgment: Society often looked down on the poor or single mothers, creating shame and isolation. This is shown through Mrs Johnstone's situation.

Gender roles: Traditional expectations meant men worked while women raised families. Mrs Johnstone's struggle reflects how hard life was for single mothers.

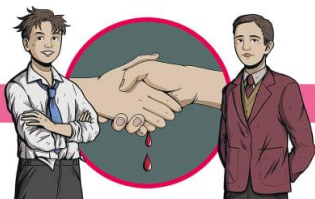
Marilyn Monroe motif: Mrs Johnstone idolises Marilyn Monroe, symbolising her dreams of glamour, love, and escape from hardship. As her life worsens, Monroe's image of beauty, fame, and tragic downfall reflects Mrs Johnstone's own loss of hope.



PLOT SUMMARY-BLOOD BROTHERS

Act One

The Narrator introduces the twins and gives an overview of the story. We see a preview of the play's final moments- Mickey and Edward both die. Mrs Johnstone sings about how her husband left her with seven children and she can't afford to feed them. Mrs Johnstone goes to clean at Mrs Lyons' house. Mrs Lyons reveals that she and her husband can't have children. Mrs Johnstone finds out she is pregnant with twins. Mrs Lyons persuades her to give her one of the babies. The babies are born. Debt collectors repossess Mrs Johnstone's belongings. Mrs Lyons takes one of the babies. Mrs Lyons fires Mrs Johnstone and tells her that both boys will die if they ever find out they are twins. When the twins are seven, Mickey and Edward meet near Mickey's house. They bond immediately. Mrs Johnstone is horrified when she realises who Mickey's new friend is. She tells Edward to leave and not to come back. Mickey goes to see Edward but Mrs Lyons sends him away. Edward is angry and uses swear words he learnt from Mickey. Mrs Lyons hits him. Edward sneaks out to play with Mickey and Linda. Mrs Lyons tells her husband that they need to move away, but he's unconvinced. Soon afterwards, a policeman catches Edward, Mickey and Linda misbehaving, which persuades Mr Lyons to move his family. Edward goes to Mrs Johnstone's house upset about moving. She gives him a locket with a picture of her and Mickey in it. The Johnstones find out that they're being moved to Skelmersdale.



Act Two

The Johnstones are happier in Skelmersdale. When Edward is fourteen, he is suspended from his boarding school because of the locket. Mickey and Linda are also suspended from school. Mickey and Edward meet aged 14 and recognise each other. They renew their friendship. Mrs Lyons sees the boys together. She tries to bribe Mrs Johnstone to move away. When she refuses, Mrs Lyons tries to attack her with a knife. Mickey, Edward and Linda meet and the play moves through scenes in which they age from fourteen to eighteen. Edward reveals his love for Linda but then encourages Mickey to ask her out. Edward leaves for university. Mickey and Linda get married because Linda is pregnant. Mickey loses his job and has to go on the dole. Edward comes home from university. Mickey resents him and they fall out. Edward asks Linda to marry him. Linda admits she has feelings for him but tells him she's married to Mickey. Sammy persuades Mickey to act as a lookout for a robbery but it goes wrong and Sammy shoots the petrol station attendant. Mickey's sentenced to seven years in prison. He becomes depressed and is put on pills. Mickey is released early but he is still depressed. Linda begs him to stop taking the pills. Linda gets them a new house and a job for Mickey. Mickey knows that Edward, who is now a local councillor, is responsible for both. Linda and Edward kiss. Meanwhile, Mickey stops taking his pills. Mrs Lyons shows Mickey that Edward and Linda are together. Mickey takes Sammy's gun and goes to confront Edward at the Town Hall. Mrs Johnstone tells the boys they are brothers. Mickey loses control and shoots Edward. The police shoots Mickey in response.

KEY THEMES IN BLOOD BROTHERS

Class and Social Inequality

Willy Russell shows how class determines people's futures. Mickey and Edward are twins but grow up in completely different worlds. Mickey in poverty and Edward in privilege. Their lives highlight the unfairness of the class system: Mickey struggles with unemployment and prison, while Edward succeeds through education and wealth.

Nature vs Nurture

The play questions whether identity comes from birth (nature) or upbringing (nurture). The twins are genetically identical but shaped by their environments. Edward becomes polite and confident, Mickey becomes insecure and frustrated. Their differences show how upbringing and opportunity shape behaviour and chances in life.

Fate and Superstition

Superstition and fate control the story from the start. Mrs Johnstone's belief in bad luck allows Mrs Lyons to manipulate her. The Narrator constantly reminds the audience that tragedy is unavoidable-the twins' deaths are destined. This gives the play a sense of inevitability, as if no one can escape their fate.

Love and Relationships

Love appears in different forms: Mrs Johnstone's unconditional love as a mother, Mrs Lyons' possessive love for Edward, and Linda's romantic love for Mickey and Edward. Each relationship is damaged by class, lies, and circumstance. Russell shows how love can bring comfort but also pain and destruction.

Friendship and Brotherhood

Mickey and Edward's bond shows the purity of childhood friendship. They call themselves "blood brothers" before knowing they're real twins. Their friendship represents innocence, but as they grow, class differences tear them apart. By the end, their brotherhood turns into jealousy and tragedy.

Women and Motherhood

The women carry the emotional burden of the story. Mrs Johnstone sacrifices her child out of love; Mrs Lyons' desire for motherhood drives her to madness; Linda's life is shaped by the men around her. The play shows how women are often trapped by poverty and expectation but remain strong and caring.

Violence and Tragedy

Violence runs throughout the play, from the boys' childhood games with toy guns to the fatal final scene. It reflects how poverty, anger, and desperation lead to real danger. The tragic ending shows how social systems, not individuals, are to blame for destruction and death.

