

How is the relationship between Mr & Mrs Lyons presented in the extract and in the play as a whole?

MR LYONS (*good naturedly*): Yes . . . yes I am, aren't I Edward? I'm proud of Jennifer, too.

MR LYONS *beams at his wife who can hardly raise a smile.*

MRS JOHNSTONE: Ah . . . he's lovely. (*She coos into the cot.*) Ah look, he wants to be picked up, I'll just . . .

MRS LYONS: No, no, Mrs Johnstone. He's fine. He doesn't want to be picked up.

MRS JOHNSTONE: Ah, but look he's gonna cry . . .

MRS LYONS: If he needs picking up, I shall pick him up. All right?

MRS JOHNSTONE: Well, I just thought, I'm sorry I . . .

MRS LYONS: Yes. Erm, has the bathroom been done? Time is getting on.

MRS JOHNSTONE: Oh. Yeh, yeh . . .

MRS JOHNSTONE *exits.*

MR LYONS: Darling. Don't be hard on the woman. She only wanted to hold the baby. All women like to hold babies, don't they?

MRS LYONS: I don't want her to hold the baby, Richard. She's . . . I don't want the baby to catch anything. Babies catch things very easily, Richard.

MR LYONS: All right, all right, you know best.

MRS LYONS: You don't see her as much as I do. She's always fussing over him; any opportunity and she's cooing and cuddling as if she were his mother. She's always bothering him, Richard, always. Since the baby arrived she ignores most of her work. (*She is about to cry.*)

MR LYONS: Come on, come on . . . It's all right Jennifer. You're just a little . . . it's this depression thing that happens after a woman's had a . . .

MRS LYONS: I'm not depressed Richard; it's just that she makes me feel . . . Richard, I think she should go.

MR LYONS: And what will you do for help in the house?

MRS LYONS: I'll find somebody else. I'll find somebody who doesn't spend all day fussing over the baby.

MR LYONS (*glancing at his watch*): Oh well, I suppose you know best. The house is your domain. Look, Jen, I've got a board meeting. I really must dash.

MRS LYONS: Richard, can you let me have some cash?

MR LYONS: Of course.

MRS LYONS: I need about fifty pounds.

MR LYONS: My God, what for?

MRS LYONS: I've got lots of things to buy for the baby, I've got the nursery to sort out . . .

MR LYONS: All right, all right, here. (*He hands her the money.*)

MR LYONS *exits.*

How is Linda presented in this extract
and in the play as a whole?

MICKEY, EDDIE and LINDA are standing in line, taking it in turns to fire the air pistol. MICKEY takes aim and fires.

LINDA (with glee): Missed.

EDWARD loads and fires.

Missed!

LINDA takes the gun and fires. We hear a metallic ping. She beams a satisfied smile at MICKEY who ignores it and reloads, fires. The routine is repeated with exactly the same outcome until

MICKEY (taking the gun): We're not playin' with the gun no more. (He puts it away.)

LINDA: Ah, why?

MICKEY: It gets broke if y' use it too much.

EDWARD: What are we going to do now, Mickey?

MICKEY: I dunno.

LINDA: I do.

MICKEY: What?

LINDA: Let's throw some stones through them windows.

MICKEY (brightening): Ooh, I dare y' Linda, I dare y'.

LINDA (bending for a stone): Well, I will. I'm not scared, either. Are you Eddie?

EDWARD: Erm . . . well . . . erm . . .

LINDA: He is look. Eddie's scared.

MICKEY: No, he isn't! Are y', Eddie?

EDWARD (stoically): No . . . I'm not. I'm not scared at all, actually.

LINDA: Right, when I count to three we all throw together. One, two, three . . .

Bored and petulant, MICKEY sits and shoots an imaginary Sammy.

EDWARD, also aged 'seven' appears. He is bright and forthcoming.

EDWARD: Hello.

MICKEY (*suspiciously*): Hello.

EDWARD: I've seen you before.

MICKEY: Where?

EDWARD: You were playing with some other boys near my house.

MICKEY: Do you live up in the park?

EDWARD: Yes. Are you going to come and play up there again?

MICKEY: No. I would do but I'm not allowed.

EDWARD: Why?

MICKEY: 'Cos me mam says.

EDWARD: Well, my mummy doesn't allow me to play down here actually.

MICKEY: 'Gis a sweet.

EDWARD: All right. (*He offers a bag from his pocket.*)

MICKEY (*shocked*): What?

EDWARD: Here.

MICKEY (*trying to work out the catch. Suspiciously taking one*): Can I have another one. For our Sammy?

EDWARD: Yes, of course. Take as many as you want.

MICKEY (*taking a handful*): Are you soft?

EDWARD: I don't think so.

MICKEY: Round here if y' ask for a sweet, y' have to ask about, about twenty million times. An' y' know what?

EDWARD (*sitting beside MICKEY*): What?

MICKEY: They still don't bleedin' give y' one. Sometimes our Sammy does but y' have to be dead careful if our Sammy gives y' a sweet.

EDWARD: Why?

MICKEY: 'Cos, if our Sammy gives y' a sweet he's usually weed on it first.

EDWARD (*exploding in giggles*): Oh, that sounds like super fun.

MICKEY: It is. If y' our Sammy.

EDWARD: Do you want to come and play?

MICKEY: I might do. But I'm not playin' now 'cos I'm pissed off.

EDWARD (*awed*): Pissed off. You say smashing things don't you? Do you know any more words like that?

MICKEY: Yeh. Yeh, I know loads of words like that. Y' know, like the 'F' word.

EDWARD (*clueless*): Pardon?

MICKEY: The 'F' word.

EDWARD *is still puzzled. MICKEY looks round to check that he cannot be overheard, then whispers the word to EDWARD. The two of them immediately wriggle and giggle with glee.*

EDWARD: What does it mean?

MICKEY: I don't know. It sounds good though, doesn't it?

EDWARD: Fantastic. When I get home I'll look it up in the dictionary.

MICKEY: In the what?

EDWARD: The dictionary. Don't you know what a dictionary is?

MICKEY: 'Course I do. . . . It's a, it's a thingy innit?

EDWARD: A book which explains the meaning of words.

How is the character Edward (or Mickey) presented in this extract and the play as a whole?

How is Social Class presented in this
extract and in the play as a whole?

The POLICEMAN goes to confront MRS JOHNSTONE.

POLICEMAN: And he was about to commit a serious crime, love. Now, do you understand that? You don't wanna end up in court again, do y'?

MRS JOHNSTONE *shakes her head.*

Well, that's what's gonna happen if I have any more trouble from one of yours. I warned you last time, didn't I, Mrs Johnstone, about your Sammy?

MRS JOHNSTONE *nods.*

Well, there'll be no more bloody warnings from now on. Either you keep them in order, Missis, or it'll be the courts for you, or worse, won't it?

MRS JOHNSTONE *nods.*

Yes, it will.

As the POLICEMAN turns and goes towards the LYON's house music is heard.

MRS JOHNSTONE (*singing*): Maybe some day

We'll move away

And start all over again

In some new place

Where they don't know my face

And nobody's heard of my name

Where we can begin again

Feel we can win an' then . . .

Maybe . . .

The music tails off as we see the POLICEMAN confronting MR LYONS. The POLICEMAN has removed his helmet and holds a glass of scotch. EDWARD is there.

POLICEMAN: An' er, as I say, it was more of a prank, really, Mr Lyons. I'd just dock his pocket money if I was you. (*Laughs.*) But, one thing I would say, if y' don't mind me sayin', is well, I'm not sure I'd let him mix with the likes of them in the future. Make sure he keeps with his own kind, Mr Lyons. Well, er, thanks for the drink, sir. All the best now. He's a good lad, aren't you Adolph? Goodnight, sir. (*He replaces his helmet.*)
The POLICEMAN leaves.

How to answer the source based question:

Remember, your answer to the source based question **must cover the whole novel or play, as well as detail from the extract.**

You should spend **about 45 minutes** on the whole question. This includes reading, thinking, making notes and writing your response. Do not spend too long on the extract part of the question!

Here is a small section from the play:

Edward: Why... why is a job so important? If I couldn't get a job I'd just say, sod it and draw the dole, live like a bohemian, tilt my hat to the world and say 'screw you'. So you're not working. Why is it so important?

Mickey: You don't understand anything do y'? I don't wear a hat that I could tilt at the world.

Edward: Look...come on...I've got money, plenty of it. I'm back. Let's get Linda and celebrate. Look, look, money, lots of it, have some.....

Mickey: No. I don't want your money, stuff it. Eddie, just do me a favour and piss off Will y'?

Edward: I thought, I thought we always stuck together. I thought we wereblood brothers.

Mickey: That was kids' stuff, Eddie. But I suppose you are a kid, aren't ya?

Write about the relationship between Mickey and Edward and how it is presented throughout the play.

TOP TIP:

To do this well you will need a good understanding of how the relationship develops. You should try to write about the first time the boys meet each other in the play, the very last time they are together and perhaps 3 other important times that they impact upon each other. The short extract here is one time that they impact upon each other.

WHAT A GOOD ONE LOOKS LIKE:

In this extract we see the relationship between the boys beginning to break down. Edward's carefree attitude to life does not mirror how Mickey feels. Mickey has recently lost his job.

Edward: Look...come on...I've got money, plenty of it.
Mickey: No. I don't want your money, stuff it.

Mickey is feeling the pressure of providing for a family without an income. He now knows that his lack of education and ambition mean that he will always struggle to find a good job. Edward's carefree attitude to money is hard for Mickey to take, he realises that he and Edward lead very different lives.

Mickey refers to the idea of them being 'Blood Brothers' as 'kid's stuff' We are reminded of the time when the boys shared Edward's sweets and later his cigarettes. Since then, Mickey has had to grow up and has responsibilities. While Edward points out that they are 'they are the same age' we see that it is only Mickey

who has had to grow up, whereas Edward has the luxury of remaining a 'kid'. It is Edward's lack of understanding concerning the reality of Mickey's circumstances which frustrates Mickey. Ultimately, their social class seems to be something that divides them.

WHAT MAKES THIS RESPONSE GOOD?

English Literature Exam

Typical question patterns include these:

Section A Extracts: 20 minutes = 10 marks

- With close reference to the extract, show how ----- creates mood and atmosphere here.
- Look closely at how ----- speaks and behaves here. How does it affect your feelings towards him/her?
- Look closely at how ----- speaks and behaves here. What does it reveal of his/her state of mind?
- How does ----- suggest -----'s feelings in this extract?
- Look closely at how ----- and ----- speak and behave here. What does it reveal about their relationship?
- Look closely at how ----- speaks and behaves here. What impressions would an audience receive of his/her character?
- Look closely at how ----- speaks and behaves here. How might it affect an audience's feelings towards him/her?

Section B Essays: 40 minutes worth 20 marks (choice of 2 questions)

Character (N.B. There is always at least one character based question on each text)

- Write about the relationship between ----- and ----- and how it is presented.
- What do you think of ----- and the way s/he is presented to the reader?
- Imagine you are ----- . At the end of the novel/play, you think back over its events. Write down your thoughts and feelings. Remember how ----- would speak when you write your answer.
- In your opinion, who or what had the greatest influence on -----? Support your answer with detailed reference to the text.
- Show how ----- is affected by -----.
- To what extent is it possible to feel sympathy for -----? Remember to support your answer with detailed reference to the text.
- How is the character of ----- important to the novel/play as a whole?
- Show how and why the character of ----- changes throughout the novel/play.
- To what extent (is someone responsible, etc.)
- Give advice to the actor playing ----- on how s/he should present the character to an audience.

Theme based questions,

- How does ----- present the theme of ----- in -----?

Questions focusing on the title

- Why do you think ----- called the novel/play -----?
- To what extent do you find ----- an effective title for the novel/play?

Questions focusing on specific incidents and their importance,

- How is ----- important to the novel/play as a whole?

'Blood Brothers' Sample Example Questions to plan for:

Character

Write about the relationship between Mickey and Edward and how it is presented.

Write about the relationship between Mrs Johnstone and Mrs Lyons and how it is presented.

Write about the relationship between Linda and Eddie and how it is presented.

Write about the relationship between Linda and Mickey and how it is presented.

Write about the relationship between Mickey and Mrs Johnstone and how it is presented

Write about the relationship between Edward and Mrs Johnstone and how it is presented

Imagine you are Linda/Mrs Johnstone/Mrs Lyons. At the end of the novel, you think back over its events. Write down your thoughts and feelings. Remember how she would speak when you write your answer.

To what extent is it possible to feel sympathy for Mrs Johnstone/Mrs Lyons/Edward/Mickey/Linda? Remember to support your answer with detailed reference to the text.

Show how and why the character of Mrs Johnstone/Mrs Lyons/Edward/Mickey/Linda changes throughout the play.

Theme based questions

- How does Willy Russell present the theme of _____ in 'Blood Brothers'?
 - Childhood/Growing up
 - Class (e.g. How does Russell present the theme of social class?)
 - Gender
 - Violence/guns
 - Superstition
 - Dreams
 - Family
 - Love
 - Loyalty.
 - Blame (e.g. who is most to blame for the deaths of Mickey and Edward?)

Questions focusing on the title

- Why do you think Willy Russell called the play 'Blood Brothers'?
- To what extent do you find 'Blood Brothers' an effective title for the novel?

Question focusing on performance

- Give advice to the actor playing _____ on how s/he should present the character to an audience.
- How do the songs in Blood Brothers contribute to the audience's appreciation of the play?
- Describe how you would design the set used for a 'Blood Brothers' performance.
- How does Willy Russell make the ending of the play from when Linda telephones Eddie, dramatic and moving for an audience?