

# Year 7 Drama

## Knowledge Booklet

### Play: 'Blood Brothers'

by Willy Russell

### Technique: Realism

Name:

Class:



## **Year 7 Drama**

### **Blood Brothers**

In this unit, students will learn an excerpt from the play 'Blood Brothers' by Willie Russell; they will focus on creating a performance of a duologue between the characters Mickey and Eddie, and how to portray a realistic seven year old.

Students will be introduced to Konstantin Stanislavski's 'Given Circumstance', as well as the Three Key Features of Characterisation: voice, movement and physicality to support students in creating a realistic performance.

### **Big Questions**

1. What is the storyline of the play 'Blood Brothers'?
2. Who is Konstantin Stanislavski and why did he create realism?
3. How do we develop a realistic performance using Given Circumstance and the Key Features of Characterisation?
4. How do we refine and improve a realistic performance?
5. How can we evaluate a realism performance?

### **Homework**

1. Homework 1 - Context research: answers questions based on Historical, Social and Cultural context for 'Blood Brothers'

**To be completed by lesson 2** \_\_\_\_\_

2. Homework 2 - Write a diary entry for your character based on the meeting scene

**To be completed by lesson 4** \_\_\_\_\_

3. Homework 3 - Ensure lines are learnt for your assessment

**To be completed by Assessment Lesson** \_\_\_\_\_

# Knowledge Organiser - Blood Brothers

## PLAY CONTEXT

*Blood Brothers* is a musical with book, lyrics, and music by Willy Russell. The story is a contemporary one focused on nature versus nurture, revolving around fraternal twins Mickey and Eddie, who were separated at birth, one being raised in a wealthy family, the other in a poor family. The different environments take the twins to opposite ends of the social spectrum, one becoming a councillor, and the other unemployed and in prison. They both fall in love with the same girl, causing a rift in their friendship and leading to the tragic death of both brothers.

## CHARACTERS

### **The Narrator**

Throughout the play breaks the '[fourth wall](#)' to help the story progress and act as a moral compass. He also plays other characters at various points, including: Policeman, Milkman, Judge, Finance Man, Catalogue Man and Bus Conductor.

### **Mrs Johnstone**

The Lyons' cleaner who single-handedly supports her seven (later eight) children. Mother of Mickey and Eddie.

### **Mrs Jennifer Lyons**

The employer of Mrs Johnstone. Mrs Lyons convinces Mrs Johnstone to give her one of her twin sons to raise as her own. (Eddie)

### **Edward 'Eddie' Lyons**

Mickey's twin brother who was given away by Mrs Johnstone, and brought up by Mrs Lyons; he becomes blood brothers with Mickey (his actual brother).

### **Michael 'Mickey' Johnstone,**

The youngest Johnstone child who is kept by his mother; he becomes blood brothers with Eddie (his actual brother).

### **Sammy Johnstone**

The elder brother of Mickey, who fell out of a window as a child resulting in having a metal plate in his head and commits many crimes.

### **Linda**

A childhood friend of Mickey and Eddie and later Mickey's wife.

### **Mr Richard Lyons**

Mrs Lyons's husband, who is unaware of Edward's true parentage.

### **Miss Jones**

Mr Lyons's secretary, who is fired from the firm as a result of the recession.

### **Donna Marie Johnstone**

One of the elder Johnstone children, who was looking after Sammy when they were little and he fell out of a window; by Act II, she is married with three children.

### **Darren Wayne Johnstone**

The eldest Johnstone child.

# Knowledge Organiser - Blood Brothers

Mrs Johnstone has been left a single mother with 5 children and is expecting twins. She lives in a council house and struggles to pay the bills.



The boys finally meet when they are 7.

They become best friends and blood brothers

Mrs Johnstone works for Mrs Lyons, a well off woman who cannot have children. Mrs Lyons asks Mrs Johnston to give her one of the twins when they are born



The boys get separated as Mrs Lyons moves to the country.

For years they are separated but then Mrs Johnstone moves and the boys are reunited

Mrs Johnstone knows her child will lead a better life and agrees. The women swear on the bible and they believe that if the boys discover the truth they will both die.



Mickey and Eddie both fall in love with their friend Linda



Eddie goes to university and Mickey struggles to get a good job. Mickey marries Linda but continues to struggle with money



Mickey turns to crime and serves time in jail. When out of prison he then starts to believe that Linda and Eddie are having an affair



Mickey goes to the office where Eddie works with a gun. Mrs Johnstone follows and tells the boys the truth, they are brothers. As she does Mickey shoots Eddie and a policeman shoots Mickey. Both boys lie dead.





## Key Words and Definitions

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**Duologue:** Duo (meaning two) + logue (meaning to speak) = two people speaking

**Circumstance:** A situation one finds oneself in

**Annotations:** notes made to give meaning (very helpful to do in scripts during rehearsal, noting use of voice, movement, physicality, etc)

**Forum Theatre:** a rehearsal technique used to improve scenes with everyone taking a directorial role

Genre	Explanation	Leading Practitioners & Companies	Technique this term
Realism	A type of drama performance which seeks to replicate real life. The actors use a variety of techniques created by Stanislavski which help them act as realistic as possible. The actors want the audience to believe they are the actual characters	Konstantin Stanislavski	<b>GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCE:</b> Information given by the playwright within the play—character name, age, family, friends, where they are, etc.

### Key Features of Characterisation:

#### Voice

**Tone** - Harsh/Soft. **Pitch** - High/Low. **Pace** - Fast/Slow.

**Projection** - Loud/Whisper/Shouting. **Pause** - Short/Long

#### Movement

**Gestures** - point at someone/off stage/to an object.

**Hands** - arms out, clench fists, hands up, folding arms, etc.

**Size** - Large/Small. **Moving** - Walking/Crawling/Jumping/Skipping

#### Physicality

**Body posture** - Upright/Hunched. **Pace** - Fast/Slow. **Levels** - High/Low.

**Control** - Balance/Loss of balance.

**Precision** - Movements add meaning to the dialogue.

## Duologue Script

*MICKEY, a seven year old boy, pretends to be a cowboy riding on a horse.*

*EDWARD, also aged seven appears. He is bright and forthcoming, holding a small paper bag of sweeties.*

**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

*EDWARD looks in his sweetie bag to take one out. MICKEY sees the bag, holds his hand out, and demands one.*

**MICKEY:** 'Gis a sweet!

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

**MICKEY:** *(shocked)* Y'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:** *(in shock)* Are you soft?

**EDWARD:** I don't think so.

## Duologue Script

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

**EDWARD:** What?

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

**EDWARD:** *(joins Mickey on the floor)* 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. He's got a plate in his head!

**EDWARD:** *(horrified)* A plate?! In his head?!

**MICKEY:** Yeh. When he was little, me Mam was at work an' our Donna Mane was supposed to be lookin' after him but he fell out the window an' broke his head. So they took him to the hospital an' put a plate in his head.

**EDWARD:** A plate. A dinner plate?

**MICKEY:** I don't think so, 'cos our Sammy's head's not really that big. I think it must have been one of them little plates that you have bread off.

**EDWARD:** A side plate?

**MICKEY:** No, it's on the top.

**EDWARD:** And . . . and can you see the shape of it, in his head?

**MICKEY:** I suppose, I suppose if y' looked under his hair.

**EDWARD:** You know the most smashing things *(pauses, thinking)* will you be my best friend?

**MICKEY:** Yeh!

**EDWARD:** What's your name?

**MICKEY:** Michael Johnstone. But everyone calls me Mickey. What's yours?

## Duologue Script

**EDWARD:** Edward Lyons.

**MICKEY:** Do they call y' Eddie?

**EDWARD:** No.

**MICKEY:** Well, I will.

**EDWARD:** Will you?

**MICKEY:** Yeh. How old are y' Eddie?

**EDWARD:** Seven.

**MICKEY:** *(rises onto knees, looking over Eddie)* I'm older than you. I'm nearly eight.

**EDWARD:** *(raises on knees to see eye-to-eye)* Well, I'm nearly eight, really.

**MICKEY:** When's your birthday?

**EDWARD:** July the eighteenth.

*A pause descends. MICKEY's eyes are wide.*

**MICKEY:** So is mine.

**EDWARD:** Is it? Really?

**MICKEY:** Ey! we were born on the same day... that means we can be blood brothers.  
*(Mickey accidentally spits as he says)* Do you wanna be my blood brother?

**EDWARD:** *(wipes face)* Yes, please.

**MICKEY:** *(producing a penknife)* It hurts y' know. *(He puts a nick in his hand.)* Now, give us yours.

*MICKEY puts a nick in EDWARD's hand. They join hands.*

**MICKEY:** This means we're blood brothers. Repeat after me. I will always defend me brother!

**EDWARD:** I will always defend my brother

**MICKEY:** And stand by him!

**EDWARD:** And stand by him

**MICKEY:** And share all my sweets with him!



# Homework 1—Context Research: Historical

Note: 'Blood Brothers' covers three decades: 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

## Historical Context

What various key events happened in each decade? (*find news articles to help you!*)

### 1950s

### 1960s

### 1970s

# Homework 1—Context Research: Social and Cultural

Note: 'Blood Brothers' covers three decades: 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

## Social and Cultural Context

Where is 'Blood Brothers' set? \_\_\_\_\_

What was life like in this place in each decade?

### 1950s

### 1960s

### 1970s

What film and song was popular at the time of each decade *(have a watch/listen on youtube to a film/song you find for each decade!)*

### 1950s

Film: \_\_\_\_\_

Song: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1960s

Film: \_\_\_\_\_

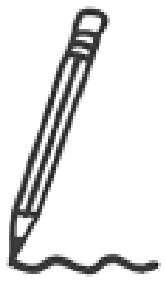
Song: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1970s

Film: \_\_\_\_\_

Song: \_\_\_\_\_

## Homework 2—Diary Entry



dear diary

## Sample Assessment—Performance Evaluation Response

**Strengths—what went well: (voice, movement, physicality; use your Given Circumstance knowledge to give evidence to your answer)**

*To successfully portray Mickey, I ensured the pace of my voice was quick midway through the duologue when Mickey is at his most excitable, especially when he talked about his brother, Sammy, breaking his head and having a metal plate put in. I attempted this in one breath; since Mickey is a seven year old, he would be eager to get his story out, especially since he is the youngest of 6 children where his voice would get lost to the older siblings.*

*My choice of physicality was effective in showing a clear social difference between Mickey and Eddie, whereby I would slouch when I sat on the floor, and my partner playing Eddie would sit with a straight back. Using this simple choice in physicality identifies that Mickey is from a lower class background and Eddie as upper class.*

**Weaknesses—what would I do differently next time:**

*Should I perform this duologue again, I would change the way I used movement at the beginning of the duologue, where I would use more of the space on my imaginary horse. I felt I was a little self-conscious during this and played my galloping too safely, which defeats the character's personality of being loud, brash, and invested in his imaginary world. Mickey would not care about what he looked like.*

## Notes Section



## Wider Reading/Watching

**Performances of Mickey's Monologue and Mickey and Eddie's Meeting Scene:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-81K7aKlg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TFwU9AudUo>

**'Blood Brothers' Website**

<http://www.bloodbrothersmusical.com/>

**Willy Russell – Playwright**

<http://www.willyrussell.com/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willy\\_Russell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willy_Russell)

**Konstantin Stanislavski—Practitioner**

<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/guides/zxn4mp3/revision/1>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konstantin\\_Stanislovski](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konstantin_Stanislovski)

<https://heatheractingwork.wordpress.com/2012/12/20/emotion-memory/>

