

BLOOD BROTHERS

WILLY RUSSELL



MICKEY AND EDWARD

**L.O. A01, 2 & 3: TO DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF
CHARACTER**

EXPLORE THE THEME OF CHILDHOOD



STARTER ACTIVITY

- **WRITE A SHORT PARAGRAPH EXPLAINING HOW MICKEY AND EDWARD WERE BROUGHT UP DIFFERENTLY.**

SOCIAL CLASS

- In this country, class affects how people are able to live their lives and the situations they are in.
- In 'Blood Brothers' Mrs Johnstone lives in a poor end of Liverpool, struggling to bring up eight children on her own and is forced to give one away to keep the others clothed and fed well enough, whereas Mrs Lyons lives in a large house, very comfortably in a nice part of the city, she wants children but is unable to have any, even though she is rich.

7 YEARS LATER

- Micky and Eddie meet again.
- Russell sets up an immediate contrast between the two characters.
- Look at the extract carefully and pick out the differences and similarities between the pair – use a venn diagram to organise your ideas and find quotations to back up your points

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*.

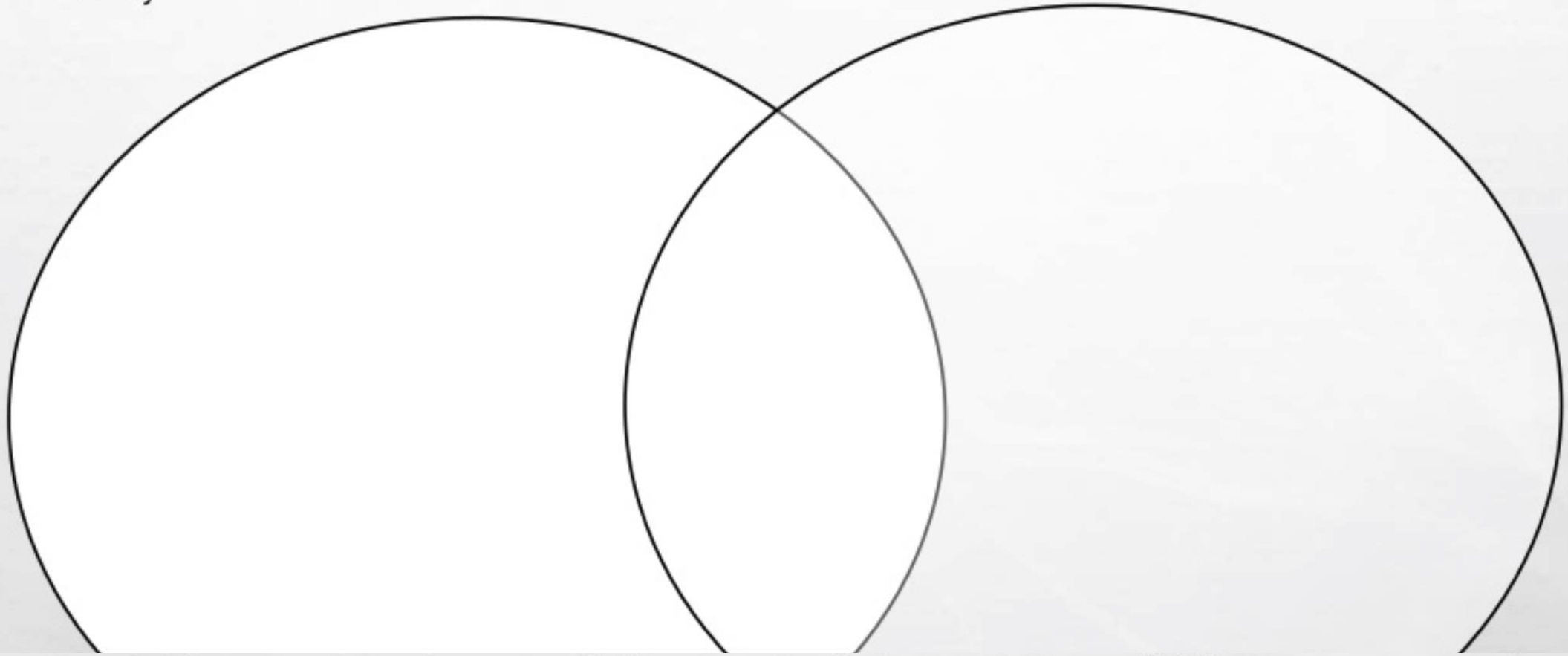
EDWARD: What does it mean?

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

28-29

Mickey

Edward



Look at the extract carefully and pick out the differences and similarities between the pair – use a venn diagram to organise your ideas and find quotations to back up your points

EDWARD: Why?

MICKEY: It's 'cos he's got a plate in his head.

EDWARD: A plate. In his head?

MICKEY: Yeh. When he was little, me Mam was at work an' our Donna Marie 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.

How does this highlight the difference in the boys home lives?

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CHILDHOOD

- Through Russell's depiction of childhood in Blood Brothers, we witness two brothers experience very different upbringings.
- Eddie seems to have suffered from a lack of childhood, as even when we first meet him as a child, he is very adult in his mannerisms and is polite and contained.
- We sense that Mrs Lyons has been overprotective and has not allowed her young son to interact with other children in messy, noisy childhood games. So it is with awe that Eddie learns from Mickey who is totally untamed.

CHILDHOOD: A TIME OF INNOCENCE

- CHILDHOOD IS MOSTLY PRESENTED AS A CAREFREE PART OF LIFE. RUSSELL USES RECURRING IMAGERY OF THINGS LIKE SHARING SWEETS AND GETTING UP TO MISCHIEF.
- CHILDHOOD GAMES DON'T HAVE CONSEQUENCES.
- INNOCENCE CAN BE A SOURCE OF COMEDY.
- CHILDREN'S INNOCENCE ACTS AS A REMINDER OF ADULT PROBLEMS.
- **HOW IS CHILDHOOD NOT COMPLETELY CAREFREE?**

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.

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What does the fact that both boys believe Sammy has a piece of crockery in his head tell us about them? How does it link to Edward asking Mickey to be his best friend?

KIDS' GAME

37-41

Annotate the song considering the following points:

- How are the themes of death and fate brought into the games the children are playing?
- How does this contrast with the theme of childhood and innocence?
- What is the writers purpose?

CONSOLIDATION

- Write a paragraph analysing Russell's use of the theme of childhood.
- Why does he include these scenes?
- How do they link to the context of the play? Consider the contrast in class between the brothers and the links to death and fate seen in both the scene between Edward, Mickey and Sammy and the games the children play.