

# Year 9 | Drama | Blood Brothers by Willy Russell

## Willy Russell—background info.

Grew up in Liverpool within a working class family. His father worked in a factory and mine. He was annoyed at how people treated the working class and the stereotypes that came with them.

Play set from 1960—1980 in Liverpool, England.

**Key themes:** Nature V's Nurture, social class, superstition, childhood, adolescence.



**Liverpool:** A major port and the centre for trade providing lots of jobs at the docks. During the industrial decline, Liverpool became very vulnerable as the docks were shut and unemployment soared. Some men turned to crime and gangs so that they could support their families.

**Margaret Thatcher** was the Prime Minister in 1979. She reduced the power of the unions and closed many factories which lead to unemployment.

The **Education reform** act in 1944 lead to 'Secondary Modern Schools' and 'Grammar Schools.' Top 20% of children went to the grammar school and learnt academic subjects whilst the secondary modern taught more practical subjects. Wealthy families also sent their children to a private school which was incredibly expensive.

**Working class V's middle class divide.** More opportunities for middle class reflected through education, job opportunities and wealth.

**Skeimersdale**—In 1960 the government began building new towns. These were small, existing towns which were extended. Working class families were re-housed here in the 1960's.

A didactic play	A drama which intends to teach, especially with regard to morals.
Tragedy	An event causes suffering, destruction and distress.
Narrator	The person who gives the spoken account of something.
Foreshadowing	A warning or indication of a future event.
Symbol	A thing that represents or stands for something else.
Motif	A dominant or reoccurring image or idea.
Parallel	Similarities
Contrasts	Differences

## Characters

**Mrs Johnstone**—naïve, loving, maternal, selfless, uneducated, superstitious.

**Mrs Lyons**— Lonely, cold, wealthy, over-protective, anxious, unreasonable.

**Edward**— Friendly, generous, naïve, lacks compassion, restricted, impulsive, sneaky.

**Mickey**—Friendly, excitable, adventurous, sneaky, trapped, victim.

**Sammy**— Aggressive, threatening, anti-social, sarcastic, criminal, hostile.

**Linda**—Kind, compassionate, strong willed, poor, desperate, humorous,.