RAISING ACHIEVEMENT · BLOOD BROTHERS · DRILL 1

Blood brothers

Mickey and Edward

Today: how Russell presents the boys' oath at seven

25 minutes

Do Now

Know

1. In which year was Willy Russell born, and where?
2. Which twin does Mrs Johnstone keep, and which does she give away?
3. What is Mickey's full name?
4. Which of Mickey's brothers is nearly ten when Mickey is seven?
5. What is an oath?

Do Now: answers

Know

1. In which year was Willy Russell born, and where?
   1947, in Whiston, just outside Liverpool

2. Which twin does Mrs Johnstone keep, and which does she give away?
   She keeps Mickey and gives Edward to Mrs Lyons

3. What is Mickey's full name?
   Michael Johnstone

4. Which of Mickey's brothers is nearly ten when Mickey is seven?
   Sammy

5. What is an oath?
   A serious promise, sometimes sworn on something holy

Focus reminder

Know

What the essay question asks you to do

There is no extract. Plan from memory, using short quotations you know by heart.

Track both boys: at seven, at fourteen and as adults.

Write “Russell presents Mickey as…” or “Russell presents Edward as…”. The twins are his creations.

Say why: what does Russell want the audience to think about class and life chances?

Act One: the blood-brother oath

Read

Willy Russell · Act One, Mickey and Edward meet at seven. Our guide: read it in your own copy.

Mickey is seven, nearly eight, and bored. A boy from up by the park arrives. The stage direction says “He is bright and forthcoming”. Edward shares his sweets and tells Mickey to “Take as many as you want”. He is thrilled by Mickey’s swearing. The boys find they share a birthday, 18 July. Mickey says “we can be blood brothers”, cuts both their hands with his penknife, and they swear the oath. Find the line Edward repeats. Then remember what the audience already knows from the prologue.