

# CONTENTS

## PART ONE: GETTING STARTED

Preparing for assessment.....	5
How to use your York Notes Workbook.....	6

## PART TWO: PLOT AND ACTION

Act One, Part 1.....	8
Act One, Part 2.....	10
Act One, Part 3.....	12
Act One, Part 4.....	14
Act One, Part 5.....	16
Act One, Part 6.....	18
Act One, Part 7.....	20
Act One, Part 8.....	22
Act Two, Part 1.....	24
Act Two, Part 2.....	26
Act Two, Part 3.....	28
Act Two, Part 4.....	30
Act Two, Part 5.....	32
Act Two, Part 6.....	34
Act Two, Part 7.....	36
Practice task.....	38

## PART THREE: CHARACTERS

Who's who?.....	39
Mrs Johnstone.....	40
Mickey.....	41
Edward.....	42
Mrs Lyons.....	43
Mr Lyons.....	44

Linda.....	45
Sammy.....	46
Narrator.....	47
Minor characters.....	48
Practice task.....	49

## PART FOUR: THEMES, CONTEXTS AND SETTINGS

Themes.....	50
Contexts.....	54
Settings.....	56
Practice task.....	58

## PART FIVE: FORM, STRUCTURE AND LANGUAGE

Form.....	59
Structure.....	60
Language.....	62
Practice task.....	65

## PART SIX: PROGRESS BOOSTER

Writing skills.....	66
Making inferences and interpretations.....	68
Writing about context.....	69
Structure and linking of paragraphs.....	70
Spelling, punctuation and grammar.....	72
Tackling exam tasks.....	74
Sample answers.....	76
Further questions.....	79

Answers.....	80
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## PART TWO: PLOT AND ACTION

## Act One, Part 1: The story begins (pp. 5–8)

QUICK TEST 1 Which of these statements about this section are **TRUE** and which are **FALSE**?

Write 'T' or 'F' in the boxes:

- a) The stage directions say that Mrs Johnstone looks older than she is.
- b) The deaths of Mickey and Edward in the opening scene tell us that *Blood Brothers* is a tragedy.
- c) Mrs Johnstone has five children and is pregnant again.
- d) The Milkman is sympathetic to Mrs Johnstone's situation.
- e) Mrs Johnstone is feeling excited about starting her new job.
- f) Mrs Johnstone enjoys going dancing.
- g) Mrs Johnstone's children are well fed.

THINKING MORE DEEPLY 2 Write **one** or **two** sentences in response to each of these questions:

- a) What do we learn about Mr Johnstone from Mrs Johnstone's song?

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- b) Why is Mrs Johnstone's new job so important to her?

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- c) What impression do we get of the Johnstone children?

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## EXAM PREPARATION: WRITING ABOUT MRS JOHNSTONE

A01



Reread Mrs Johnstone's song from 'Once I had a husband' to 'They go ...' (pp. 5–6) and 'When I bring home the dough' to 'And we'll go dancing ...' (pp. 7–8).

Question: How does Mrs Johnstone's song help you understand her character and situation?

Think about:

- The events that lead her to her current situation
- Mrs Johnstone's feelings about her life and her hopes for the future

3 Complete this table:

Point/detail	Evidence	Effect or explanation
1: Mrs Johnstone allowed her heart to rule her head when she met her husband.	'You know the sort of chap, I met him at a dance and how he came on with the chat.'	Her informal tone indicates a happy-go-lucky attitude; she knew he wasn't to be trusted but she was flattered by his 'chat'. This makes us question her judgement.
2. She is regretful about the life she and her children have ended up with.		
3. She is confident that her situation will improve.		

4 Write up **point 1** into a **paragraph** below, in your own words. Remember to include what you infer from the evidence, or the writer's effects.

.....

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5 Now, choose **one** of your **other points** and write it out as another paragraph here:

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PROGRESS LOG [tick the correct box]

Needs more work Getting there Under control

## PART SIX: PROGRESS BOOSTER

## Writing skills

A01

- 1 How well can you express your ideas about *Blood Brothers*? Look at this grid and tick the level you think you are currently at:

Level	How you respond	What your spelling, punctuation and grammar are like	Tick
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You analyse the effect of specific words and phrases very closely (i.e. 'zooming in' on them and exploring their meaning).</li> <li>You select quotations very carefully and you embed them fluently in your sentences.</li> <li>You are persuasive and convincing in the points you make, often coming up with original ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You use a wide range of specialist terms (words like 'imagery'), excellent punctuation, accurate spelling and grammar.</li> </ul>	
Mid/Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You analyse some parts of the text closely, but not all the time.</li> <li>You support what you say with evidence and quotations, but sometimes your writing could be more fluent to read.</li> <li>You make relevant comments on the text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You use a good range of specialist terms, and generally accurate punctuation, spelling and grammar.</li> </ul>	
Lower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You comment on some words and phrases but often you do not develop your ideas.</li> <li>You sometimes use quotations to back up what you say but they are not always well chosen.</li> <li>You mention the effect of certain words and phrases but these are not always relevant to the task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You do not have a very wide range of specialist terms, but you use reasonably accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	

## SELECTING AND USING QUOTATIONS

- 2 Read these two samples from students' responses to a question about Mickey. Decide which of the three levels they fit best, i.e. **lower (L)**, **mid (M)** or **high (H)**.

**Student A:** *Mickey doesn't care about Linda's worries. He says, 'Linda!' aggressively when she hides his tablets. He also demands them from her when he says, 'Now give', which makes it clear that he wants them back and she has no choice.*

Level?  Why? .....

**Student B:** *Willy Russell presents Mickey's frustrations with Linda hiding his tablets through a series of short imperatives. By structuring Mickey's dialogue like this it is clear he is ordering, not asking, Linda to return his tablets, and from his two-word sentence, 'Now give' at the end of his speech we can deduce that he strongly believes in what he is saying and is commanding her into action.*

Level?  Why? .....

## ZOOMING IN – YOUR TURN!

Here is the first part of another student response. The student has picked a good quotation but hasn't 'zoomed in' on any particular words or phrases:

*When Mrs Lyons is trying to persuade Mrs Johnstone to give up one of her unborn twins, she comments, 'Surely, it's better to give one child to me', which shows she is manipulative.*

- 3 Pick out one of the **words** or **phrases** the student has quoted and write a further sentence to complete the explanation:

The word/phrase '.....' suggests that .....

## EXPLAINING IDEAS

You need to be precise about the way Russell gets ideas across. This can be done by varying your use of verbs (not just using 'says' or 'means').

- 4 Read this paragraph from a **mid-level** response to a question about Edward's relationship with his mother, Mrs Lyons. Circle all the **verbs** that are repeated in the student's writing (not in the quotation):

*The playwright shows us the distance between Edward and Mrs Lyons when Edward refuses to say how he came to own the locket. 'I can't tell you that, Ma. I've explained, it's a secret'. This not only says that there is a lack of trust between mother and son, and shows that Edward is a determined young man, it also says he is happy to keep secrets from those he loves.*

- 5 Now choose some of the words in the bank below to replace your circled ones:

suggests implies tells us presents signals asks indicates  
demonstrates recognises comprehends reveals conveys

- 6 Rewrite your **high-level** version of the paragraph in full below. Remember to mention the **author by name** to show you understand that he is **making choices** in how he presents characters, themes and events.

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PROGRESS LOG [tick the correct box]

Needs more work

Getting there

Under control