

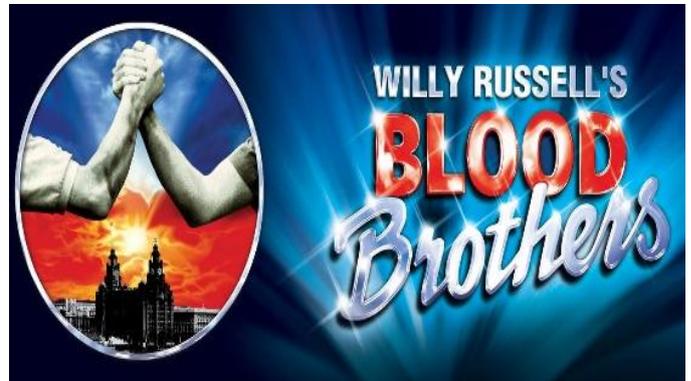
ENGLISH LITERATURE

YEAR 10 MOCK EXAMS

REVISION PACK

Topics: **A Christmas Carol** and **Blood Brothers**

Spend 50 minutes on each section. The exam is 1 hour 45 minutes.



What's in this pack?

- A **summary of the plot** (story) of each text, with quotations and methods
- The **Top Six** things to analyse in each text, including a Grade 9 **Expert Paragraph** for each
- Possible exam questions/topics
- How to structure (plan and write) your answers
- Other places you can look for revision

How can I use this pack?

- **KEY STRATEGY:** Memorise the details from the '**Top Six**' for each text. (If you do this with the Expert Paragraphs, you are guaranteed a strong grade as long as you link them to the topic of the exam question.) You can memorise this by:
 - Focusing on one sentence at a time, use 'look, cover, write, check' repeatedly to get the knowledge into your brain.
 - Take it in turns with someone else to read the information from memory (a sentence at a time) while the other one checks – you could turn this into a game or competition.
 - Creating your own ways to test yourself on the knowledge, e.g. by writing the information but with only the first and last letters from each word, then seeing if you can remember it and checking when you forget. When you remember all of this, increase the challenge by removing more words/letters.
- **Make sure you know the plot (story) of each text and key quotes. You could do this by:**
 - Creating a flashcard for each character with their name on the front, and on the back write down every quotation that links to them. Then keep testing yourself using these flashcards until you remember all of the quotes.
 - Create a quiz on the plot that you can use to test yourself or peers. Focus on things you don't already know!
 - Create a poster for each character or each part of the text (e.g. one for each act/stave) with the key details on it.
- **Practise planning answers on different topics, following the 'How to structure your answer' sheet** (or using the structure you have been taught in class if it is different). Practise writing these up into answers, using the Top Ten / Expert Knowledge when you analyse.

A Christmas Carol plot summary with **textual details** (and methods)

Staff 1

The novella opens by stating that Scrooge's business partner, Jacob Marley, died seven years ago. He and Scrooge are described using the metaphor **'two kindred spirits'**. Scrooge's characterisation is then established: he is a self-isolated and misanthropic miser who is a **'tight-fisted hand at the grindstone'** (metaphor) and **'hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire'** (simile). He carries coldness with him; people avoid him in the streets.

Dickens describes the setting: Scrooge is working in his counting-house (where he counts money) in London on Christmas Eve, with a very small fire. It's so foggy outside that it's dark even though it's only just gone three o'clock. Scrooge's door is open so he can keep his eye on his clerk (office worker), who is wearing a long white comforter (scarf) while copying out letters next to fire even **'smaller'** than Scrooge's. His room is described using the metaphors **'a dismal little cell ... a sort of tank'**.

Scrooge's nephew visits the counting-house **'all in a glow'** and with eyes that **'sparkled'** (light imagery). He wishes his uncle a merry Christmas and invites him to Christmas dinner. Scrooge refuses, with the exclamation **'Humbug!'** and stating he lives in a **'world of fools'** (metaphor) like his nephew who celebrate Christmas even though it costs money. The nephew explains his juxtaposing attitude, using the list that it is **'a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time'** where all people treat each other as metaphorical **'fellow-passengers to the grave'**. Scrooge questions why his nephew got married, as he views love and relationships with contempt. His nephew still wishes a merry Christmas, to Scrooge and the clerk, and leaves.

Two 'portly gentlemen' then enter, collecting money for charity to help those in poverty. They emphasise the suffering of the poor using number, saying **'Many thousands are in want of common necessities'**, yet Scrooge simply asks **'Are there no prisons?'** and **'the union workhouses ... are they still in operation?'** The gentlemen confirm that they unfortunately are, but because these are not Christian places as they are bad for the poor both mentally and physically, they still want to raise money to buy food, drink and things to keep people warm. Scrooge still refuses to donate, saying with prejudice that he **'can't afford to make idle people merry'** and explaining that he already pays taxes to support prisons and workhouses which are created to house the poor. The gentlemen say that many people can't go to these places and many would rather die, to which Scrooge states **'If they would rather die ... they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.'** The gentlemen leave without a donation, and the **'fog and darkness thickened'**, making a bell tower of a church which can usually be seen through a window of Scrooge's counting house become 'invisible'. Some 'ragged men and boys' gather round a fire in the street.

Scrooge complains to his clerk about the fact he has to have the next day (Christmas) off with pay, telling him to arrive early the day after. Scrooge then goes home to his apartment, which is surrounded by fog and frost. It is also gloomy inside, but Scrooge doesn't mind because **'darkness is cheap'**. He lights a small fire to heat some gruel, and sits by it. Shortly after, he notices an old bell start to ring, followed by other bells, and after this the ghost of his dead business partner, Jacob Marley, enters the room. He carries a symbolic chain, made of **'cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds and heavy purses wrought in steel'**. Marley tells Scrooge that every man's spirit must spend time with 'his fellow men, and travel far and wide', and if this does not happen in life, it is forced to after death, to see how it could have 'shared' and 'turned to happiness'. Scrooge is sceptical at first, but asks why Marley wears a chain, to which he replies with the metaphor **'I wear the chain I forged in life ... I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it'**. He says he suffers the metaphorical **'Incessant torture of remorse'**. Scrooge tells Marley that he was a good businessman; Marley replies with the metaphor **'Mankind was my business'**. He warns Scrooge that he will suffer the same fate, with an even heavier chain, but he will have the chance to change through the visits of three spirits.

Staff 2

Scrooge is visited by the Ghost of Christmas Past, which looks simultaneously like a child and an old man, wears white, and has a symbolic **'bright clear jet of light'** beaming from his head. It takes Scrooge to his past, starting with the setting of the village he grew up in, where **'the darkness and the mist had vanished'** and Scrooge's school friends are going home for the Christmas holidays. Scrooge sees himself as a child, left alone in the school, reading by a **'feeble fire'**. The older Scrooge weeps, but is excited when he sees characters from the book, which seem to come to life from his younger self's imagination. Time moves on and the school, which was already dilapidated, decays even further. The room becomes **'a little darker'**. Scrooge is still alone, but no longer reading. His younger sister, Little Fan, enters full of laughter and tells her 'dear brother' that **'Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home's like Heaven!'** and that Scrooge is to return home, which delights him. The spirit speaks of her death and that she had a child, Scrooge's nephew.

Time moves on again to a new setting, Scrooge's days as an apprentice for Fezziwig. Scrooge is overjoyed to see his employer **'alive again!'** as he tells his apprentices to stop working as it is seven o'clock and to prepare the work warehouse for a Christmas ball. For this **'fuel was heaped upon the fire'** and the room is very bright. Fezziwig's employees, neighbours and family members all dance together to music played by an energetic fiddler, and there is plenty of food and drink. The older Scrooge dances along. As the party finishes, Fezziwig is described as **'shaking hands with every person individually'** as they leave. The spirit points out that the party did not cost much, asking whether Fezziwig deserves the praise he receives from his apprentices; Scrooge replies that it is 'impossible to add and count' the power of Fezziwig's 'words and looks', and that **'the happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune'**. Scrooge then wishes he could speak to his clerk.

Time moves on again, and Scrooge sees his former fiancée, Belle, ending their relationship. Her reason is the metaphor **'Another idol has displaced me ... a golden one'**. Scrooge tries to explain his view that the world is hypocritical as it pretends to condemn greed, while treating poverty badly, which is why he chooses to embrace the pursuit of wealth. Watching and agitated, Scrooge begs the ghost to stop this 'torture', but the spirit forces him to watch the next scene from the past: Belle is now seated by a fire, surrounded by her children, and her husband returns home with Christmas gifts, much to their excitement. After, the younger children go to bed, leaving Belle, her husband and their daughter – who 'leans fondly' on her father – by the fire. Scrooge demands to leave as he becomes very upset when realising this is the life he could have had, and after wrestling with the ghost, presses its extinguisher cap over its head. This covers the ghost, but Scrooge cannot completely cover the light. However, he is returned to his room.

Stave 3

The clock strikes one, but no ghost appears, although Scrooge's bed is brightly lit. Scrooge realises it is coming from the next room, opening the door to see it hung with lots of Christmas greenery and a **'mighty blaze'** roaring in the fire. The Ghost of Christmas Present is there, seated upon a **'throne'** of food and drink. It holds a glowing torch and wears a green robe with white fur that doesn't fully cover his chest, and an **'antique scabbard'** which is rusted and has no sword. He symbolises Christmas spirit, telling Scrooge to **'know me better'**. Scrooge says 'if you have aught to teach me, **let me profit** by it', showing a willingness to learn.

The spirit takes Scrooge into the streets, seeing happy people taking their dinners to be cooked at bakers' shops. The ghost sprinkles his torch over people who argue, and they become happy again – he is symbolically sharing Christmas spirit. He also sprinkles it over the poor's dinners, saying they **'need it most'**, and over the house of Scrooge's clerk who is now named for the first time: Bob Cratchit. Bob lives in a four-roomed house with his wife and six children. One, Peter, is happy as he is wearing his father's shirt to celebrate Christmas. Mrs Cratchit is wearing a repaired dress that she has attached ribbons to. The family work together to set the table and prepare dinner. The oldest daughter, Martha, returns home from work; Mrs Cratchit kisses her and tells her to warm herself by the fire. Bob then returns home from church with his youngest son, Tiny Tim, on his shoulder. Tim has a **'little crutch'** (a symbol of his vulnerability) and an iron frame supporting his limbs; his brother and sister help him to a seat by the fire. The Cratchits then enjoy their Christmas dinner of goose (they would very rarely eat meat) after saying grace, followed by a small, hard Christmas pudding that the whole family share, but they all compliment it. After dinner, they gather around the fire and share hot drinks using **'two tumblers, and a custard cup without a handle'**, which do the job 'as well as golden goblets would have done'. Bob raises a toast to Scrooge, calling his employer 'The founder of the feast'. They all wish each other a merry Christmas, saying 'God bless us', with Tiny Tim stating **'God bless us every one!'** He sits close to his father, who holds his **'withered little hand'** and fears his death. Observing this, Scrooge asks the ghost if Tiny Tim will live. The ghost replies that he sees 'a vacant seat' and 'a crutch without an owner' next year if 'these shadows remain unaltered by the future'. Scrooge begs the spirit to say that Tim will survive, to which the ghost reminds him of his own words: that if Tiny Tim is dying, **'he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population'**. Scrooge hangs his head in shame, and the ghost rebukes him, saying that there are **'millions like this poor man's child'** and criticising Scrooge using the metaphor that he is **'the insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust.'**

The Ghost then takes Scrooge to see other scenes of Christmas Present, starting with three settings where people are isolated but still celebrate Christmas. First is a family of four generations of miners, who spend most of their lives working beneath the surface, yet they are still 'assembled round a **glowing fire**' in their holiday clothes and the oldest of them sings a Christmas song, which the others join in with. The ghost then takes Scrooge to a lighthouse, where two men in it had made a fire and one sings. Further out to sea, Scrooge is then taken to a ship where everyone is humming Christmas tunes and thinking of their loves ones.

The next setting Scrooge is taken to is his nephew's Christmas party, and his name is revealed: Fred. Fred and his extended family of around twenty people are full of laughter, including about Scrooge, although Fred speaks of feeling sorry for his uncle as he 'suffers' due to his miserly ways. After dinner, they gather round the fire, then enjoy music played by Fred's wife on a harp. They play games and drink wine, with Fred raising a glass to his Uncle Scrooge. Invisibly watching, Scrooge silently thanks them, and enjoys the party.

Following these Christmas celebrations, the ghost grows older – as Christmas spirit ends when Christmas is over. Before this, he reveals two children who are clinging to him. They are a boy and girl in extreme poverty, described using the list **'Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish'**. The corruption of their innocence is highlighted in the metaphor **'Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked'** and the ghost tells Scrooge that **'They are Man's'**, emphasising society's responsibility for their condition. He calls them 'Ignorance' and 'Want', as their names symbolise the issues in society that cause their miserable existence. Scrooge asks if they have 'refuge or resource', to which the ghost again replies with Scrooge's own words: **'Are there no prisons? ... Are there no workhouses?'** The bell strikes twelve, and the Ghost of Christmas Present disappears.

Stave 4

A tall, silent phantom approaches Scrooge, 'shrouded in a deep black garment' covering everything but one hand. Scrooge is in fear, but repeats the imperative **'Lead on!'** three times, saying 'The night is waning fast, and it is **precious time** to me, I know.'

This spirit, the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, takes Scrooge to settings in the future (next Christmas), including businessmen talking about a man's funeral. Between laughs and yawns, they discuss what will happen to his money and how cheap the

funeral will be as no-one will go, before deciding they will attend if lunch is provided, laughing again. This is followed by a group of even wealthier businessmen, who Scrooge had always tried to impress. They mention that 'Old Scratch' has died 'at last', before changing the topic to the cold weather and quickly getting on with their day. Scrooge does not realise the dead man being discussed is him.

The ghost then takes Scrooge to an impoverished area of London unfamiliar to Scrooge – a setting that '**reeked with crime, with filth, and misery.**' Within this is a shop where a man named Old Joe buys stolen goods. Three people are selling Scrooge's belongings and laughing: his undertaker has taken a few small items; his charwoman (cleaner) Mrs Dilber sells his sheets, towels and clothes; his laundress sells his bed-curtains and even the shirt that was placed on him for his burial. Mrs Dilber justifies the theft and exploiting Scrooge's death, saying '**Every person has a right to take care of themselves, he always did.**' Scrooge is horrified at this scene but still does not realise he is the dead man – a sign of his ignorance and isolation.

The next setting from the future is Scrooge's deathbed, in his '**dark empty house**' where his body lies '**unwatched, unwept, uncared for**' (triplet). The only life comes from the sound of gnawing rats, and a cat scratching at the door. This is then juxtaposed with the setting of the Cratchit household. Mrs Cratchit and the children are seated quietly around the fire, the mother and daughter sewing clothes for Tiny Tim's funeral. Bob arrives from church and speaks of 'how **green** a place' Tim's burial plot is, trying to stay cheerful for his family before breaking down and crying, repeating '**My little, little child!**' The Cratchits discuss how they will never forget Tim, 'this first parting that there was among us'. Bob goes upstairs and the setting shifts to Tiny Tim's deathbed, in a room that is '**lighted cheerfully**' and 'hung with Christmas'. A chair is close by the bed and there are signs that it has been used. Bob kisses his son's face before returning downstairs 'reconciled to what had happened'.

The final setting Scrooge observes with the ghost is a graveyard where the man he saw discussed earlier is buried. It is described as 'a worthy place. Walled in by houses, overrun by grass and **weeds**'. The spirit points down to the grave. Trembling, Scrooge begs to know whether the future he is being shown can be changed. The spirit remains silent, as it has throughout, still pointing. Scrooge then reads his own name on the gravestone and falls to his knees, crying. He clutches at the spirit's robe, and seeks assurance that he can 'change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life', promising he will 'honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future'.

Stave 5

Scrooge wakes in his bed, delighted that his bed-curtains are still there. Energetically, he gets out of bed while praising Marley, Heaven and Christmas time. With his face still wet from sobbing during the spirits' visits, he is now '**glowing**' and describes himself using the similes '**I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man.**' He laughs, shouts in excitement and realises he does not know exactly what day it is, happily describing his lack of knowledge using the metaphor '**I'm quite a baby**'. He hears the church bells ringing and it brings him happiness. He rushes to the window and opens it, finding there is '**no fog, no mist**' and instead '**golden sunlight**'. He holds his head out to enjoy this and the sound of the 'merry bells', before calling down to a boy in the streets, who tells him it is Christmas day. Scrooge pays the boy to collect the '**prize turkey**' from the poulterer's shop, saying he will give him extra money if he can get it within five minutes. Scrooge whispers to himself that he will secretly send it to Bob Cratchit's house, and pays the boy again to take a cab to deliver the turkey to them. All the time, there is repetition describing Scrooge's 'chuckle'.

Scrooge then puts on his best clothes and goes out into the streets, happily exchanging Christmas wishes with everyone. He sees one of the portly gentlemen who he refused to donate to the day before, and feels remorse. He rushes over to him, apologises, and whispers something in his ear, to which the gentleman becomes breathless. Scrooge insists that it includes '**a great many back-payments**' and says the man will be doing him a 'favour' by accepting it, insisting he does not want any thanks except the man visiting him again in future. Scrooge thanks him, before going to church, continuing to walk through the streets (where he enjoys seeing people hurrying around, pats children on the head, and speaks to beggars) and finds that all of this brings him happiness.

The following day, Scrooge goes to his office early. The clock strikes nine and Bob is late for work. When he arrives, he takes off his hat and comforter and begins working quickly. Scrooge pretends he is angry, saying he is 'not going to stand this sort of thing any longer', before jumping up from his stool and telling Bob his is going to raise his salary. At first, Bob thinks Scrooge has gone mad, but Scrooge sincerely wishes him a 'merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year'. He tells Bob that he wants to help him and his family, and will discuss this over mulled wine this afternoon. He uses imperatives, telling Bob to '**Make up the fires**' and to buy another bucket for the coal before he does any more work.

Scrooge remains a changed man, and becomes a metaphorical 'second father' to Tiny Tim, who survives. He does not care that some people laugh at the change in him, because he is glad that his 'own heart laughed' now. Dickens describes how Scrooge keeps Christmas as well as any man alive, and '**May that truly be said of us, and all of us!**' He ends the novella with a reminder of Tiny Tim's refrain: '**God Bless Us, Every One!**'

A Christmas Carol **TOP SIX** for analysis (including Expert Paragraphs)

"Are there no prisons?"

Scrooge in Stave 1 in response to the portly gentlemen's request for a donation to the poor.

Analysis:

- Scrooge's **question**, "Are there no prisons?", demonstrates his lack of concern for the poor and his belief that helping them is not his responsibility.
- The **rhetorical question** exaggerates his misanthropy, suggesting that severe institutions like prisons are suitable for those in need.
- Dickens **uses Scrooge here to** criticise how industrialisation led to a society where people were judged by their economic value, not their humanity.
- By showing Scrooge's callous **characterisation**, Dickens urges readers to reject selfishness and support a more caring and united response to poverty.

Expert Paragraph:

When Scrooge coldly asks the portly gentlemen if there are "no prisons?" to house the destitute, Dickens uses **rhetorical questioning** to expose his **protagonist's** callous attitude towards those in poverty. **The invocation of institutions like prisons and workhouses, central to the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, highlights Victorian society's neglect of its most vulnerable citizens.** Scrooge's indifference to the suffering of others critiques the **dehumanising effects of industrial capitalism, where economic worth determined moral value.** Through this moment, Dickens urges his readers to reject the abandonment of empathy for financial gain, and embrace a more compassionate, communal approach to poverty.

"Shaking hands with every person individually"

In Stave 2, the Ghost of Christmas Past shows Scrooge a memory of his former employer, Fezziwig, who holds a Christmas party for his employees, family and people in the neighbourhood. This moment is from the end of the party when he takes the time to see each of his guests.

Analysis:

- Fezziwig "shaking hands with every person individually" **symbolises** warmth and generosity, showing that he values people, not just profit.
- This moment **contrasts** with Scrooge's cold and isolated nature, making Fezziwig a **foil** to Scrooge.
- Dickens uses Fezziwig's joyful **characterisation** to criticise how industrial capitalism often ignored the human side of business.
- The physical connection, through the **word** "individually", shows the effort Fezziwig makes with each guest, **symbolising** a compassionate approach to leadership, challenging the detached, profit-driven values of Victorian industry.

Expert Paragraph:

The **hyperbolic description** of Fezziwig 'shaking hands with every person individually' emphasises his benevolence and joviality, **juxtaposing** Scrooge's misanthropic demeanour. Constructed as a **foil** to Scrooge, Fezziwig's recognition of each guest to his ball represents **the importance of employers connecting with their communities.** Dickens utilises this joyful scene to critique the dehumanising effects of industrial capitalism, drawing on his personal experiences of Victorian factory life to advocate for human kindness in business. This physical act of connection **symbolises** a more compassionate, almost paternalistic approach to business, contrasting with the detached, profit-driven ethos embodied by Scrooge at the start of the novella.

“two tumblers and a custard-cup without a handle”

In Stave 3, the Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge the Cratchit’s Christmas celebrations. The Cratchits are a family of eight, but have just two tumblers (cups/glasses) and a broken custard cup to share the Christmas drink (after their dinner) that has been warmed over the fire.

Analysis:

- Dickens’ use of **description** “two tumblers and a custard-cup without a handle” highlights how poor they are, but also how they value each other, and are willing to share, emphasising the importance of sharing and togetherness.
- The broken custard-cup acts as a **metaphor** for their life — incomplete in wealth, yet whole in love and strength.
- Dickens emphasises their lack of possessions through the **number** “two” to criticise how industrialisation left hardworking families in poverty, despite their efforts and resilience.
- Dickens celebrates their togetherness and gratitude, showing that true happiness comes from human connection, not material success.

Expert Paragraph:

Dickens’ **description** of the Cratchits’ mismatched and damaged drinking vessels – ‘two tumblers and a custard-cup without a handle’ – highlights their **poverty and resourcefulness**, as they make do with what little they have. The lack of a handle on the custard-cup serves as a subtle **metaphor** for their struggles: **just as the cup is incomplete yet still functional, the Cratchits lack material wealth but remain strong through love and unity.** The specificity of the ‘two tumblers’ emphasises the Cratchits’ value in sharing while reinforcing Dickens’ broader social critique of industrialisation, which left many families in hardship despite their hard work. However, rather than presenting them as pitiable, Dickens celebrates their resilience, showing that **happiness is not dependent on wealth but on human connection and gratitude.**

“the insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust!”

In Stave 3, after Scrooge asks if Tiny Tim will live, the Ghost of Christmas Present attempts to make Scrooge see how his attitudes to and treatment of others is unfair.

Analysis:

- Dickens uses a **metaphor**, with the Ghost comparing Scrooge to “an insect on the leaf,” showing how out of touch he is with people who live in poverty.
- This **image** of an “insect” makes Scrooge seem small and selfish, judging others while living in comfort himself.
- The **contrast** between the insect’s high position and the low “hungry brothers in the dust” highlights the unfair divide between rich and poor during industrialisation.
- The **word** “brothers” reminds readers that we all share a common humanity, and Dickens criticises those who ignore this duty from a place of privilege.

Expert Paragraph:

The Ghost of Christmas Present delivers a scathing rebuke to Scrooge’s view that the poor should be left to die, comparing him to “the insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust!” This **imagery** exposes Scrooge’s hypocrisy, portraying him as a creature of comfort who benefits from prosperity yet presumes to judge those struggling in poverty. The **juxtaposition** between the insect’s elevated position and its “hungry brothers in the dust” reinforces the economic disparity caused by Victorian industrialisation, emphasising how those in poverty were often malnourished yet marginalised. The **noun** “brothers” suggests kinship and shared humanity, yet Scrooge’s detachment from the poor contradicts this moral duty, reinforcing Dickens’ condemnation of those who propagate prejudice against the impoverished from a position of comfort.

The motif of fire

The **motif of fire** is used throughout the novella to **symbolise** human warmth and compassion. Where there is a large fire, characters show togetherness and kindness with each other. Where there is a small fire, this shows the character as isolated or uncared for.

Analysis:

- Dickens uses **the motif of fire** to **represent** human warmth and compassion, showing how important it is to care for others.
- The size of a character's fire **symbolises** how generous they are — big fires show warmth and goodness, while small ones suggest coldness and selfishness.
- This **contrast** shows how industrial capitalism made people focus more on money than human kindness, leaving many emotionally and physically cold.
- By using fire, Dickens suggests that compassion, not wealth, is what truly lights up a meaningful life.

Expert Paragraph:

Dickens employs the **motif of fire** to **symbolise human warmth and compassion**, contrasting its life-giving glow with the emotional frigidity of those who prioritise wealth over generosity. Fires throughout the novella act as visual markers of benevolence, their intensity reflecting the moral character of those who tend them; for the poor, fire provides comfort despite deprivation, while for the rich, its absence exposes spiritual emptiness. This contrast reinforces Dickens' belief that true wealth lies not in financial accumulation but in kindness, challenging industrial capitalism's reduction of human worth to economic productivity. **By making fire both a literal and metaphorical source of warmth, Dickens urges his readers to embrace altruism as the true means of illumination, showing that those who nurture human connection burn brightly, while those who neglect it are left in the cold.**

Pathetic fallacy (fog as a symbol)

Pathetic fallacy through fog is used throughout the novel to show Scrooge's ignorance and selfishness. At the end of the novella, the fog lifts, which reflects his change.

Analysis:

- Dickens uses **pathetic fallacy** through fog to show how ignorant and closed-off Scrooge is from the world and from other people.
- The **description** of thick, heavy fog reflects Scrooge's selfishness and ignorance, making it hard for him to see the suffering around him.
- Dickens uses the fog to **symbolise** how industrialisation and capitalism have dehumanised society and blocked people's moral vision.
- As Scrooge begins to change, the fog starts to lift, **symbolising** how kindness and connection can clear away ignorance and bring moral understanding.

Expert Paragraph:

Dickens employs **pathetic fallacy** through the persistent presence of **fog, symbolising ignorance, moral blindness, and the barriers that prevent individuals from seeing beyond their own self-interest.** The oppressive fog that smothers Scrooge's world reflects his emotional and ideological isolation, mirroring his **inability to recognise the suffering around him.** Just as the fog distorts and obscures the physical landscape, it also serves as a **metaphor for the way industrialisation and capitalism have clouded Victorian society's moral vision**, reducing human relationships to economic transactions. **However, as Scrooge embarks on his journey of redemption, the fog begins to lift, reinforcing Dickens' belief that moral clarity and human connection can dispel the darkness of ignorance and selfishness.**

Blood Brothers plot summary with **textual details** (and methods)

Act 1

The play begins with the final scene: Mickey and Edward are dead, and Mrs Johnstone is singing **'Tell Me It's Not True'**. The Narrator steps forward and establishes that these are the Johnstone twins, who were separated at birth as one was given away. He invites the audience to judge their mother, Mrs Johnstone, using a metaphor when calling her **'the woman, so cruel, there's a stone in place of her heart'**.

The main action of the play then begins, in the late 1950s. Mrs Johnstone sings *Marilyn Monroe*, a song about how she used to be compared to Marilyn Monroe and went **dancing**. She had seven children with her husband, but he left her for a younger woman while she was pregnant with their eighth, leaving her to raise the children by herself. This aged her: she sings **'By the time I was twenty-five, I looked like forty-two'**. The Milkman then enters, telling her she is behind on her bills and that he will cut off her deliveries. Mrs Johnstone pleads that she needs the milk for her children, and will pay next week as she is about to start a new job. The Milkman says that **'Next week never arrives around here'** (metaphor) and refuses to give any milk. As he leaves, Mrs Johnstone's children can be heard off-stage asking for milk, complaining that they are made fun of at school for being on free dinners, and that they are hungry. Mrs Johnstone sings of the food she will be able to afford once she is working.

The scene shifts to Mrs Lyons' house, where Mrs Johnstone has started work as a cleaner. There is juxtaposition between them, as Mrs Lyons has a large house but cannot have children, which saddens her. Mrs Johnstone talks about loving her job and how it helps the family, so she will even return to work straight after having her next baby. Mrs Lyons places new shoes on the table, shocking Mrs Johnstone. Mrs Lyons laughs but puts them away. The Narrator appears, mentioning superstitions.

In the next scene, Mrs Johnstone is with a gynaecologist, who is listening for the baby's heartbeat. He tells her that she is having twins. Mrs Johnstone then returns to work, and shares with Mrs Lyons how she is worried she won't be able to provide for two new babies as even though she loves all of her children dearly, **'kids can't live on love alone'**. Mrs Lyons then repeats the command **'Give one to me'** in excitement, saying that her husband (who had refused to adopt) is not due back from work until July so he would not realise the plan. Mrs Johnstone and Mrs Lyons then sing *My Child*, where they both imagine the life that one of the twins would have if raised by Mrs Lyons. This would include being well-fed; wearing fashionable clothes; having his own bed; not having to queue for the dole when he grew up; and symbolically, a **'bike with both wheels on'**. This convinces Mrs Johnstone, who wants the best for her children and fears that she would have them taken away if she could not afford to look after them anyway – and Mrs Lyons agrees that Mrs Johnstone can at least still see the child when working. Mrs Lyons makes Mrs Johnstone swear on the Bible that she will not go back on her agreement, and the Narrator again appears to tell the audience that **'a debt is a debt, and must be paid'**.

Mrs Johnstone has the babies, and settles them in a pram. Arriving home, a Catalogue Man and Finance Man confront her as they are repossessing items that she could not keep up the payments for. Mrs Johnstone then sings *Easy Terms*, where she describes **'Living on the never never'** (a metaphor for always buying things on credit). Mrs Lyons enters, reminding Mrs Johnstone of their agreement. Mrs Johnstone says the twins belong together as a pair and asks for a few more days, before allowing Mrs Lyons to take one. Mrs Johnstone then takes the remaining twin into the house, telling her children that the other has **'gone up to heaven'**, where he will be looked after and have anything he wants. The children ask if he will have his own bike, to which Mrs Johnstone replies **'Yeh. With both wheels on'**. The children ask for their own bike and toys (including an air pistol), and Mrs Johnstone says she will look in the catalogue, to their delight.

Returning to work, Mrs Johnstone agitates Mrs Lyons by fussing over the child. Mr Lyons is now home, saying how proud he is of the baby and Jennifer (Mrs Lyons). Mrs Johnstone tries to pick up the baby as he cries, but is stopped by Mrs Lyons, who complains to her husband that Mrs Johnstone is not focused on her work. He agrees to give his wife fifty pounds to buy things for the baby, before quickly leaving for a board meeting at work. Mrs Lyons fires Mrs Johnstone, giving her the fifty pounds when Mrs Johnstone says that she needs the job to provide for her family. Mrs Johnstone tries to take the baby, but Mrs Lyons threatens her, saying she committed a crime, accusing her of selling the baby. Mrs Johnstone **'throws'** (stage direction) the money across the room, and reminds Mrs Lyons that she said she could see the child every day. In response, Mrs Lyons plays on Mrs Johnstone's superstitious nature, saying twins secretly parted will **'immediately die'** if they learn that they were once a pair, so Mrs Johnstone revealing the truth will **'kill them'**. She then **'thrusts'** (stage direction) the money back into Mrs Johnstone's hands and walks away. The Narrator appears, singing *Shoes Upon the Table*, which includes references to superstitions and the metaphor **'The devil's got your number'**.

Seven years later, the twin Mrs Johnstone kept (Mickey) is complaining that his older brother Sammy has taken his toy gun, asking **'Why does he rob all me things off me?'** Mrs Johnstone says it's because Mickey is the youngest; the same happened to Sammy when he was the youngest. Mickey tries to tell his mother about games he's been playing (involving cowboys killing Indians) and pretends to shoot her. She barely reacts, giving short replies like **'Hmm'** and not joining in, before telling Mickey to go out and play, but not at the 'rough end' or near the 'big houses in the park' – only where she

can see him. Mickey complains that Sammy gets to go further, then has a soliloquy as he is left alone on the pavement, starting **'I wish I was our Sammy'** and repeating that he is **'nearly eight'** rather than seven. Mickey reveals his annoyance at Sammy stealing and breaking his toys, while admiring his older brother's qualities such as being able to spit accurately from distance and urinating through their neighbour's letterbox. Mickey is jealous of Sammy's freedom to go to bed late and to places that he isn't allowed to, but looks forward to the opportunity to be more like Sammy when he is older.

Edward enters, holding a bag of sweets (prop), and begins talking to Mickey. Barely into their conversation, Mickey commands **"Gis a sweet"**, to which Edward offers the bag and says **'Take as many as you want'**. Mickey is suspicious at first, saying **'Round here if y' ask for a sweet, y' have to ask about, about twenty million times'**, only to never get one anyway. He also says that if Sammy offers a sweet, **'he's usually weed on it first'**. Edward giggles, and then is further impressed at Mickey's use of swearing. After learning each other's names and that they share the same birthday, the two agree to be **'blood brothers'** and that they will always defend and stand by each other. Sammy appears, pointing a gun at them, saying the command **'Give us a sweet'** and telling them he's **'gonna get a real gun soon'** and calling Edward a **'friggin' poshy'**. He then reveals that his pet worms have died again, and he is holding a funeral for them. Mrs Johnstone steps out, telling Sammy and Mickey to go inside and Edward to return home, saying he should never return and commanding him to **'go home before the bogey man gets y'**. As Edward leaves, Mrs Johnstone sings a reprise of *Easy Terms* – a reminder of her debt and inability to keep what she wants.

Edward returns home, greeted by a hug from Mrs Lyons and the gift of a toy gun from Mr Lyons. They play together: Edward pretends to shoot his father and Mr Lyons pretends to die. Mrs Lyons then starts reading a story book to Edward. Mr Lyons joins them on the chair, but gets up as he has to leave for work, saying that Mrs Lyons will read the story when Edward tells him they've not finished. As Mrs Lyons goes to her husband (who promises her he will spend more time with family when he completes a business merger), Edward picks up a dictionary from the bookshelf and asks how to spell 'bogey man'. Mrs Lyons laughs, telling him that it's just a superstition that a **'silly mother'** might say to her children. Mickey rings the doorbell, asking if Edward can come out to play with him as he's got Sammy's catapult. Edward wants to, but Mrs Lyons says it's bedtime and gets Mickey to leave, realising who he is. She tells Edward never to go near where Mickey lives, because **'you're not the same as him'**. Edward says he doesn't understand and that Mickey is his best friend, who he likes more than her. Mrs Lyons protests that she is stopping them playing together out of love, but Edward then calls her **'a fuckoff'**. Mrs Lyons reacts by hitting Edward **'hard and instinctively'** (stage direction), saying **'I don't want you mixing with boys like that! You learn filth from them'** (metaphor) before realising how terrified Edward is and cradling him.

Next, children including Mickey, Sammy and Linda are playing in the street, with Edward in the background in his garden, unnoticed. The children are playing games like gangsters v police, cowboys and Indians, and soldiers (Germans v Americans). They sing *Kids' Game*, in which they repeat that **'if you cross your fingers, and if you count from one to ten, you can get up off the ground again, it doesn't matter, the whole thing's just a game'**. Sammy insists that he 'shot' Mickey dead, and Linda protests that she **'stopped it with the bin lid'**. Mickey swears at Sammy. After the fallout, Mickey reveals to Linda that he has Sammy's air pistol and takes her to call for Edward. They ask him to go to the park to shoot at a Peter Pan statue. Edward fears getting caught by the police at first, but Mickey and Linda pretend that this happens often and they say things like they are called 'Adolph Hitler'. Edward is impressed and sneaks out of the garden, with Mrs Lyons calling after him. The Narrator appears again. Mrs Lyons calls her husband home from work, and demands to move away. Annoyed, he tells her she needs medical help for her 'nerves', before comforting her as she tells him of her fears that she is losing Edward. Mr Lyons places a pair of children's shoes on the table; Mrs Lyons sweeps them away. The Narrator appears.

Mickey, Linda and Edward are in the park. Linda keeps hitting the target with the gun, creating a **'ping'**, whereas the boys miss. Linda suggests they throw stones through windows. Just as they are about to, the Policeman approaches. Edward calls himself 'Adolph Hitler' and laughs, while Mickey and Linda pretend not to know him – all three end up crying. The Policeman goes to Mrs Johnstone's house and confronts her, saying Mickey **'was about to commit a serious crime'** and threatening her with court. He is patronising, calling her **'love'** and **'Missis'**; Mrs Johnstone only nods, saying nothing. The Policeman goes to the Lyons' house and speaks to Mr Lyons. The Policeman has removed his helmet and is holding a **'glass of Scotch'** (prop). In juxtaposition with his speech to Mrs Johnstone, he calls Mr Lyons **'sir'** and says that Edward's actions were **'more of a prank, really'**, suggesting Mr Lyons docks his pocket money. The Policeman's speech is hesitant and full of fillers like **'er'**, as he recommends that Mr Lyons doesn't let Edward **'mix with the likes of them'**, before jokingly referring to Edward as 'Adolph'. After the Policeman leaves, Mr Lyons asks Edward about moving to the countryside; Edward wants to stay, but the decision is made to leave. Edward goes to say goodbye to Mickey at the Johnstone house, and Mrs Johnstone gives him a locket containing a picture of Mickey and herself. Edward gives Mickey a small parcel as a leaving present: it is Edward's toy gun.

Shortly after, Edward is at his new home. Mrs Lyons seems much happier, but Edward is not. He tells his mother not to look at a magpie, which she calls a **'stupid superstition'**. Edward says it's not because Mickey told him, then goes inside to read. On different sides of the stage, Mickey and Edward both sing *My Friend*, where they admire each other's qualities. Mickey sings about Edward sharing sweets, knowing words, wearing clean clothes, talking properly and being good at 'sums and history'. Edward sings about Mickey swearing, making him laugh, telling stories, kicking balls, climbing trees and running around with dirty knees. The light fades on Edward, leaving Mickey alone. However, Mrs Johnstone appears with a letter,

before singing *Bright New Day* as it contains the news that they are being rehoused by the council to the countryside. The Milkman, Policeman and neighbours are happy at the Johnstones leaving, but the family are delighted. Mrs Johnstone **dances**, including with a picture of the Pope. At the end of the act, they are happy and have moved house.

Act 2

Happy in their new home, Mrs Johnstone sings about being compared to **Marilyn Monroe** by the Milkman (who she now goes **dancing** with) and a Judge (who also wants to take her **dancing**, after telling Sammy off for burning the school down). Mickey is now fourteen. On the other side of the stage, Mrs Lyons is **dancing** the waltz with Edward, who is awkward and complains about never seeing girls his age as he is now at an all-boys' boarding school, where he is now returning to as it's the end of the holidays. Mrs Johnstone is also getting Mickey to go to school, and he joins Linda at the bus stop. They get on the bus with Sammy, who is heading out to **'the dole'**. On the bus, Sammy insists on buying a school child's ticket, claiming he is also fourteen. The Conductor challenges him and tells the driver to go to the police station, which angers Sammy. He tells the Conductor to **'Fuck off'** then **'Move!'** and **'Give me the bag'** (of money) as he produces a knife (prop). He runs away, chased by police. Linda warns Mickey not to become like Sammy.

The scene changes to Edward's school, where he is confronted by a teacher who says that he has heard Edward could go to **'Oxbridge'** (Oxford or Cambridge university) but demands that he hands over his locket because it is a boys' school. After the teacher threatens to punish Edward further, asking if he should be 'flogged', Edward tells him **'You can do exactly as you choose Sir. You can take a flying fuck at a rolling doughnut! But you shall not take my locket!'** Edward is then suspended. This is juxtaposed with a scene at Mickey's Secondary Modern school, where the teacher asks him a question about the diet of an Amazon tribe. Mickey has not been listening, to the annoyance of the teacher, who says he won't be able to get a job. Mickey complains that the lesson is boring and argues that knowing the answer won't help him to get a job unless it's in an African restaurant, making the class laugh. The teacher sends him out, then Linda as she defends Mickey. After this, Mrs Lyons is shocked to find Edward is suspended, and sees the locket. Edward refuses to tell her where he got it, saying it's a secret and going to his room. The Narrator appears.

Walking across fields with Mickey, Linda sees a boy in the distance and talks about him being attractive (not realising it is Edward) to make Mickey jealous. She runs out of patience and leaves. Mickey and Edward, seeing each other from afar, then sing *That Guy*, again envying each other's qualities. They sing about each other's appearance, while Mickey wishes he knew the 'right words' like Edward, and Edward wishes he knew girls like Mickey. As they approach each other, Mickey uses the command **'Gis a ciggie'**, mirroring their first meeting. They recognise one another, and Edward tries to advise Mickey on what to say to Linda. They agree to go to the cinema to watch adult-themed films, helped by Mrs Johnstone who lends Mickey a pound. After the twins leave, Mrs Lyons appears, accusing Mrs Johnstone of deliberately following her, and mentioning the locket. She offers Mrs Johnstone **'thousands'** to leave, which Mrs Johnstone refuses. Mrs Lyons then resorts to grabbing a kitchen knife (prop) and trying to stab Mrs Johnstone, who manages to take the knife and move away, calling Mrs Lyons **'mad'** (echoed by children off-stage, who call her the **'mad woman living on the hill'**). Mrs Lyons repeatedly calls Mrs Johnstone a **'witch'**.

Edward and Mickey return from the cinema and see Linda. They run away from a Policeman. This turns into a montage of them growing up, with the Narrator mentioning their age at each point during scenes at places like a fairground, where there is a freeze-frame where Linda is caught between the boys in **'a game of piggy-in-the-middle'**. During this, the Narrator refers to the teenagers as **'Lambs in spring'** (metaphor) and later mentions **'broken bottles in the sand'** (symbolism) before repeating **'And only if...'** at the start of several sentences, ending with **'And only if we could stop and be forever, just eighteen'**.

Edward is about to leave for university. He hints at his feelings to Linda in the song *That Guy*, but encourages her and Mickey to get together, which they do. Mickey says he will do **'loads of overtime'** before Christmas so he can pay for a party when Edward is back. In the next scene, Mickey tells Mrs Johnstone that Linda is pregnant, and they arrange a wedding. Mickey then rushes to work, only to find he is being made redundant (losing his job) at the factory due to the recession, revealed through the song *Take a Letter Miss Jones* (while Mickey and Linda's wedding is played out on the other side of the split stage). In this, Mr Lyons (the employer) sings **'I'm afraid it's just another sign of the times'** (metaphor). Mickey is described by people in the dole queue as **'walkin' round in circles'** looking for a new job.

Edward returns for Christmas, telling Mickey about all his new friends and the parties he has been to. Mickey's responses are short and blunt, and he insults Edward while telling him that he would **'crawl back to that job for half the pay and double the hours'**, even though he hated it, as it **'seems like it was paradise'** (metaphor) now he's unemployed. Edward tries to cheer Mickey up but is ignorant to Mickey's situation. He asks the rhetorical question **'why is a job so important?'** and says **'If I couldn't get a job I'd just say, sod it and draw the dole, live like a bohemian'**. Mickey criticises Edward for his lack of understanding and says he is **'still a kid'**, in contrast to himself: **'while no one was looking I grew up.'** He tells Edward to leave him before he hits him.

There is another split stage with two scenes playing out at the same time. On one side is Edward meeting Linda and confessing his love for her, and Linda tells him that she and Mickey got married while he was away at university, and she is

pregnant. On the other side of the stage is Sammy persuading Mickey to act as an armed look-out during a robbery. He insists that the guns won't be used, and it'll earn Mickey fifty pounds, which he can use to take Linda out rather than having **'Nothin', like me mam'**. Mickey is reluctant but takes this chance as an opportunity to have money, and tells Linda he is taking her out **dancing** and for a meal. Linda realises that Sammy is involved and tries to plead with Mickey, but he leaves and tells her to get ready for eight. The Narrator enters, saying **'The dealer's dealt the cards, and he won't take them back'** – a metaphor for the irreversible turning point as Mickey chooses crime as a way to make money.

The robbery takes place, and the cashier at the petrol station sets off the alarm. Sammy reacts by shooting him, and runs back to the house with Mickey. The Narrator appears again, repeating lines from the earlier song *Kids' Game* such as **'And maybe, if you counted to ten and kept your fingers crossed / It would all be just a game and then no one would have lost.'** This is part of the mirroring that occurs here, as Mickey and Sammy also use similar lines to those during their games as children, but now the gun, shooting and crime are real. Sammy hides the gun under the floorboard and runs out the back, to be caught by policemen. Mickey remains inside, crying as Linda puts her arms around him, and is arrested. As he leaves the house, Linda says **'But I've ironed him a shirt'**, emphasising her character arc: she is now focused on her domestic role as a stereotypical 1970s woman looking after the household.

Mrs Johnstone appears to sing about the consequences: Mickey is sentenced to seven years in prison, leaving him mentally shattered. She sings **'It seems like jail's sent him off the rails, just like Marilyn Monroe'** (motif) and that he now **'treats his ills with daily pills, just like Marilyn Monroe'** to **'stop his mind from dancing'**. When Linda visits Mickey, and when he returns home after his release from prison (which is early for good behaviour), she tries to persuade him to stop taking the antidepressants, supported by Mrs Johnstone. She arranges for Mickey to get a job and also finds a house, both helped by Edward as she has secretly contacted him – he can help as he is now a councillor. Mickey still insists on taking his pills, saying that not taking them has led to him **'shakin' an' sweating so much I couldn't even work'** when Linda tries to hide them from him. Mickey also realises that Linda has contacted Edward to help with the job and house, which harms Mickey's pride: **'It used to be just sweets an' ciggies he gave me, because I had none of me own. Now it's a job and a house.'** Linda still refuses to hand over the pills at first, telling Mickey she loves him but **'When you take those things, Mickey, I can't even see you'**. Mickey replies **'That's why I take them. So I can be invisible.'** and Linda silently hands them over.

After Mickey leaves for work, Linda hesitantly moves to the phone. The Narrator says **'There's a girl inside the woman / Who's waiting to get free / She's washed a million dishes / She's always making tea'**. Linda then calls Edward, and they meet up. In the background, Mrs Johnstone sings *Light Romance*, describing the relationship between Linda and Edward as unplanned and **'nothing cruel'**, but that they are **'just two fools'** who **'grasp at half a chance'** before they **'dance as friends, then stand apart, as the music ends'**. Meanwhile, Mrs Lyons turns Mickey around and points out Linda and Edward to him. By the end of the song, Mickey is hammering on his door and calling for Linda, before running to Mrs Johnstone's house and getting the gun Sammy used earlier from under the floorboard. He runs through the town, chased by Mrs Johnstone, as the music builds and the Narrator repeats **'There's a mad man'** and singing that **'The devil's got your number'** which he is calling today. Mrs Johnstone tells Linda about Mickey having a gun, and Linda rushes them to the Town Hall, where Edward works.

At the Town Hall, Edward is in the middle of a speech. Mickey enters, telling Edward he has stopped taking the pills and walking up to him. He accuses Edward of taking the **'one thing I had left – Linda'** from him. Mickey also asks the rhetorical question **'How come you got everything... an' I got nothin'?'** and reminds Edward that they were supposed to be friends and 'blood brothers'. Mickey also suggests that his daughter might be Edward's, which Edward denies. Armed police enter the Town Hall, telling 'Michael' to put the gun down. Mickey says he doesn't even know if the gun is loaded, and that **'I thought I was gonna shoot y'. But I can't even do that'**. Mrs Johnstone pleads with Mickey not to shoot, but he holds his gun in place while telling her to go away. Mrs Johnstone then reveals the truth: that Edward is Mickey's twin brother, and she gave him way. Mickey is **'almost uncontrollable with rage'** (stage direction) and screams **'I could have been him!'** As he does this, he waves the gun at Edward, which then **'explodes'** and kills Edward. As Mickey screams 'No', four police open fire on him. Linda runs down the aisle of the Town Hall, and the light begins to fade.

Watching, the Narrator asks the audience two rhetorical questions: **'And do we blame superstition for what came to pass? Or could it be what we, the English, have come to know as class?'** Mrs Johnstone sings **'Tell me it's not true'**, mirroring the opening scene, pleading **'Say it's just a show'** and wishing that **'it's only a game'**. The curtain falls.

Blood Brothers **TOP SIX** for analysis (including Expert Paragraphs)

Symbolism of 'a bike with both wheels on'

Mrs Johnstone mentions this when she imagines the better life her child would have if raised by Mrs Lyons.

Analysis:

- Mrs Johnstone's dream of her child owning "a bike with both wheels on" **symbolises** the struggles of working-class families.
- The bike **represents** how ordinary possessions for middle-class children seem like luxuries to working class people like the Johnstones.
- The idea of the Johnstones owning a broken bike also works as a **metaphor**: just as it cannot move, Russell shows how difficult it is for people in poverty to gain social mobility.
- Through this, Russell criticises Thatcherite Britain by suggesting that hard work alone cannot overcome inequality.

Expert Paragraph:

Mrs Johnstone's dream of her child owning "a bike with both wheels on" if raised by the Lyons family, illustrates how social inequality impacts upon the life experiences of children lower in the class hierarchy. After giving Edward away, her other children ask if their sibling will own such a bike in "heaven", conveying how **material possessions that are commonplace in middle-class families seem like Elysian luxuries to the economically deprived**. The Johnstones' lack of such a bike is also used **symbolically** by Russell to represent the dearth of opportunities for the Johnstones to achieve social mobility: **just as a bike without both wheels cannot move no matter how hard one pedals, those in poverty at times of recession are unable to elevate their status in a society that is not truly meritocratic**. By doing this, Russell criticises the Thatcherite attitude that hard work brings success regardless of one's background.

Prop: the bag of sweets

Edward shares a bag of sweets with Mickey when they meet for the first time.

Analysis:

- The **prop** of the bag of sweets **symbolises** the privileges of the middle class, as Edward can give them away easily.
- For Mickey, the sweets **represent** a rare luxury, showing how poverty makes small treats feel more valuable.
- Mickey's **imperative** "Gis a sweet" highlights **how poverty forces him, and other working class children like him, to be more direct and opportunistic**.
- Through this, Russell criticises class inequality by emphasising **how wealth shapes children's attitudes from an early age**.

Expert Paragraph:

The **bag of sweets** in Blood Brothers **symbolises** the **privileges of the middle class**, as Edward can afford to share them without a second thought, while Mickey, from a working-class background, views them as a rare luxury. Mickey's **imperative** "Gis a sweet" **reflects the opportunistic behaviour that poverty enforces**, as those with fewer resources must take chances where they arise, often resorting to informal or direct means to access what others take for granted. This moment subtly reinforces Russell's Marxist critique, demonstrating how **wealth disparity creates fundamentally different attitudes towards material goods**, even in childhood. By using such a small but telling **prop**, Russell encapsulates the vast divide between Mickey and Edward's worlds, **foreshadowing** the broader inequalities that will later dictate their fates.

Prop: the Policeman's glass of Scotch

The Policeman drinks a glass of Scotch with Mr Lyons after the children have been caught misbehaving. This happens after we see him at Mrs Johnstone's door, treating her harshly.

Analysis:

- The **prop** of the glass of Scotch **symbolises** the privileges of the wealthy, as the Policeman is relaxed around Mr Lyons and treats him with respect.
- This **contrasts** with his earlier contempt for Mrs Johnstone, highlighting how the poor are always treated more harshly, particularly by authority figures.
- The casual gesture of drinking Scotch **represents** how inequality is normalised within society.
- Through this, Russell criticises a justice system that protects the rich while punishing the poor.

Expert Paragraph:

The **prop** of the **glass of Scotch**, which the Policeman holds while speaking to Mr Lyons, **emphasises the inherent classist bias in law enforcement, favouring the wealthy**. Russell **juxtaposes** this with the Policeman's contempt for Mrs Johnstone in the previous scene, reinforcing the idea that **privilege affords protection while poverty incurs punishment**. The casual nature of the gesture underscores that this inequality is normalised, embedded within societal structures. By highlighting these double standards, Russell critiques a system where social mobility is obstructed, and exposes how **the justice system upholds class disparity**.

"It's just another sign of the times"

Mr Lyons says this when making his workers redundant.

"If I couldn't get a job I'd just say, sod it"

Edward says this to Mickey after Mickey has lost his job at the factory.

Analysis:

- By calling Mickey's redundancy "just another sign of the times", Mr Lyons shows his ignorance of the real struggles of unemployment.
- Later, when Edward says "If I couldn't get a job I'd just say, sod it", Russell again shows how the middle class can dismiss the impact of recession.
- Both characters use the **adverb** "just", which trivialises the struggles of the working class.
- By using this **mirroring**, Russell criticises how these ignorant attitudes are passed down through generations, which perpetuates the cycle of poverty.

Expert Paragraph:

When Edward says "If I couldn't get a job I'd just say, sod it", his benevolent intentions are undermined by **his ignorance to the consequences of unemployment** for Mickey, who relies on a stable income to support his working-class family. Russell highlights how **the destructive influence of recession can be dismissed by those who are not on the brink of destitution, as they are unable to empathise with the hardships of others with lower social status**. This **mirrors** Mr Lyons earlier declaring Mickey's redundancy "just another sign of the times". Both Edward and his father's trivial use of the **adverb** "just" reveal how **the cycle of poverty is perpetuated due to the intergenerational conditioning of the more privileged members of society**.

The motif of superstition

This is used throughout the play, often mentioned by the Narrator. It represents the idea that characters' lives are controlled.

Analysis:

- Russell uses the **motif** of superstition throughout the play, such as “shoes upon the table”, to **symbolise** that forces seem to control the characters' lives.
- These beliefs affect how characters in both classes behave, suggesting that their fate is inescapable.
- The Narrator's final **rhetorical question** asks whether superstition or class is really to blame for the tragedy, to make the audience realise that the class system has determined the characters' fates.
- Through this, Russell criticises how class inequality works in the same way as superstition, trapping people and taking away their agency.

Expert Paragraph:

Russell employs the recurring **motif** of superstition, such as ominous references to ‘shoes upon the table’, to **symbolise** that **irrational forces seem to determine the characters' lives**. These beliefs function as a controlling mechanism, shaping behaviour across classes and **suggesting that fate is inescapable, regardless of individual choices**. This culminates in the Narrator **breaking the fourth wall** in the play's closing scene, posing a **rhetorical question** to prompt the audience to consider whether superstition or class is truly to ‘blame’ for the tragic **climax** of the narrative. By connecting the self-fulfilling prophecies of superstition with the deaths of the protagonists, **Russell provokes the cathartic realisation that the rigid class system reinforces cultural narratives that ultimately strip citizens of agency**.

The motif of dancing

We see the characters dance throughout the play, usually during moments of happiness.

Analysis:

- Russell uses the **motif** of dancing to **symbolise** the transience of freedom and joy as the characters' happiness is only temporary, just like the short length of a dance.
- In Act 1, Mrs Johnstone “dances” to work, **representing** her brief hope of escaping poverty.
- Later, the **line** “no more dancing” reflects how Mickey loses his freedom and joy due to unemployment and poor mental health.
- Through this, Russell criticises how the working class are denied not only money but also lasting happiness and freedom.

Expert Paragraph:

Russell employs the **motif** of dancing to **symbolise** **freedom and joy; however, dancing is only a transient expression of happiness, representing the illusory nature of this hope of escape from societal and economic pressures**. In Act 1, Mrs. Johnstone ‘dances’ on the way to work, reflecting her optimism in escaping financial hardship through finding employment. However, just as this is a fleeting escape from reality for Mrs Johnstone, this lightheartedness is absent in the later stages of the play as Mickey's struggles with unemployment and mental health strip him of any sense of spontaneity or joy. There is ‘**no more dancing**’ in his adulthood, illustrating how **the working class is systemically deprived not just of financial stability, but also of emotional and personal freedom**.

POSSIBLE EXAM QUESTIONS / TOPICS

Anything related to the texts could come up, based on an important character or theme.

Whatever does come up, remember:

- You **must** write about **both the extract and the rest of the novel** when answering the task on ‘A Christmas Carol’.
- Everything in **A Christmas Carol** links back to Dickens criticising social inequality and injustice in Victorian society, and the lack of empathy shown towards the poor.

High-level summary of Dickens’ intentions:

Dickens critiques the dehumanising effects of industrialisation, highlighting how the perpetual pursuit of wealth creates a lack of empathy. He illustrates how this results in an ignorant society where poverty is inescapable yet viewed with contempt, and emphasises the urgent need for social responsibility and altruism to tackle this injustice.

- There are **two** choices for the Blood Brothers question. **ONLY ANSWER ONE!** (Whichever you can do the best analysis for.)
- Everything in Blood Brothers links back to the injustice of society, particularly due to the social class system.

High-level summary of Russell’s intentions:

Russell critiques how the class system is a force of determinism in society, highlighting how it perpetuates disparity between those born into deprivation and those born into privilege. He illustrates how the rigidity of this unjust hierarchy influences opportunities, identity and relationships.

Possible topics for exam questions

These are not the only things that could be in the question, but give you an idea of what a topic might be.

| A Christmas Carol | Blood Brothers |
|--|--|
| <p>Something to do with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scrooge’s attitudes (possibly to something, e.g. the poor / Christmas / togetherness / society)• Family (e.g. <i>the importance of family</i>) or something similar like togetherness / relationships• Christmas (e.g. <i>the importance of Christmas time</i>)• The Cratchits (and what they show about poverty / family / society)• Scrooge’s relationships with others• Scrooge’s change / what he learns (possibly focused more on the spirits and their effects on him) | <p>Something to do with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The effects of different family lives / upbringings• Unfairness in society• Influences on attitudes / behaviour• Difficulties faced by women• How far characters lack control over their lives• How far Mickey / Edward is lucky / unlucky• The role of the Narrator• Mickey growing up• The use of the mothers to show ideas about money• Characters’ hopes and dreams |

HOW DO I STRUCTURE AN ANSWER?

STEP 1: READING THE QUESTION, EXTRACT & THINKING

- First, read the task. Pick out the topic – what do you have to write about?
- For *A Christmas Carol*, then read the extract. Annotate (label) it with methods that link to the topic, and their meanings.
- Then think about the rest of the text, writing down what you remember about other quotes/methods that link to the topic.
- When you have done the above, decide what you think the writer wants to show about the topic and plan your answer (step 2).

STEP 2: PLANNING

Plan your answer following the structure below:

Paragraph 1 - Introduction: What the writer shows overall about the topic of the task, and why (link it to the writer's intentions).

Paragraph 2 - Analysis: One way the writer shows their idea(s) in the text. Analyse their methods.

Paragraph 3 - Analysis: Another way the writer shows their idea(s) in the text. Analyse their methods.

Paragraph 4 - Analysis: A final way the writer shows their idea(s) in the text. Analyse their methods.

Paragraph 5 - Conclusion: Sum up what the writer has shown about the topic.

*For 'A Christmas Carol', at least one body paragraph (2/3/4) must be on the **extract**, and at least one must be on the **text as a whole**. One of them could be on a key method used throughout the text, e.g. a motif.*

Each body paragraph (2-4) must include analysis of the writer's methods.

STEP 3: WRITING YOUR ANSWER

Follow your planned structure to write your answer.

Paragraphs 2-4, where you do your analysis, are most important. These must include:

- Names of methods the writer uses (e.g. word, metaphor, symbol, juxtaposition, motif, imagery).
- Examples of these methods in the extract/whole text
- Analysis of precise meanings of words (or other choices) in as much detail as you can
→ Keep explaining why the writer does this!
- Constant links to the topic
- Constant use of the writer's name

**PRACTISE PLANNING ESSAY ANSWERS ON DIFFERENT POSSIBLE TOPICS (ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE).
EVEN WITHOUT EXTRACTS, THIS WILL HELP YOU TO PREPARE AND GET YOU THINKING ABOUT METHODS
IN THE NOVEL / PLAY.**

Write up the answers in full if you have time, or parts of them.

WHERE ELSE CAN I FIND REVISION RESOURCES?

The key things you need are all in this pack. However, you might also want to check these out:

YouTube Videos

There are videos by a range of YouTubers on various topics linked to this exam. These include the channels below:

- Mr Salles Teaches English
- Mr Bruff
- DystopiaJunkie

Revision Guides

Online guides like SparkNotes can be useful.

Printed revision books by **York Notes** are quite detailed, or you can use **Snap Revision** books for quicker revision tasks – these can be provided by teachers upon request.

Other revision guides are available – just check they link to AQA GCSE English Literature (8702).

Model Answers

There are some available on the KS4 Student SharePoint. Teachers can also provide them upon request.

