

Year 10/11 – *Blood Brothers*

Eduqas English Literature GCSE: Paper 2

Key vocabulary: Colloquial language · Working class · Middle class · Social exclusion · Superstition · Naive · Stereotype · Motif · Profanity · Foreshadowing · Social criticism · Nature and nurture · Childhood · Debt cycle · Council housing · Public school · Secondary modern school · Factory · 'The Dole'

Why do we teach this unit?

For the Eduqas GCSE in English Literature, students must study one piece of 20th century drama. We continue to select Willy Russell's *Blood Brothers* for this part of the GCSE for several reasons. Firstly, it is a gripping story that students find accessible, and is therefore an ideal text to study at the very beginning of GCSE preparation in Year 10. Secondly, the play has important and relevant things to say about the social class system, allowing students to explore ideas around social exclusion and division, and furthering themes of identity and prejudice that have been established in the Year 9 course, *Identities in Conflict*. In fact, a clear line can be drawn between *Blood Brothers* and the Year 9 text *The Outsiders*, which introduced students to ideas of social class divisions and how this can lead to conflict. Finally, *Blood Brothers* is firmly rooted in the working class experience, which the majority of our students can relate to easily – giving them a greater ability to empathize with the struggles of the central character, Mickey.

About this unit

Teaching is delivered primarily through whole-class reading of the text (students are expected to purchase their own copies of the play through the school, so they annotate them freely). Teachers should seek regular opportunities to engage the class in discussion about key characters, events and themes in the story.

Learning aims

- Use the skill of annotation effectively;
- Explain the narrative of *Blood Brothers*;
- Describe the principal characters in *Blood Brothers*;
- Form and express an opinion on the key characters;
- Reflect on how the play expresses key themes.

Year 10/11 – *Othello*

Eduqas English Literature GCSE: Paper 1

Key vocabulary: Duplicitous · Jealousy · Manipulation · Exploit · Racism · Moor · Shakespearean tragedy · Reputation · Military ranks · Irony · Soliloquy · Aside · Misogyny · Virtuous · Fidelity · Power · Outsider · Vengeance · Justice · Façade · Purity and corruption · Fall from grace

Why do we teach this unit?

It is a National Curriculum requirement that students study at least one Shakespeare play by Shakespeare in the GCSE (KS4) phase. Shakespeare is a key component of literature study at all levels, and we ensure students have the opportunity to experience reading and annotating more than one play during their time with us in order to provide them with a broader understanding of what Shakespeare is about. This experience gives students a firmer footing for studying *Othello* at GCSE.

We have chosen *Othello* because it is a captivating tale of love and jealousy, with a villainy so malevolent it destroys several lives. While Othello is the protagonist, the tragic hero whose actions spurred Iago's desire for vengeance, it is Iago, the sinister, duplicitous puppet-master who captivates audiences as he controls and manipulates everyone around him in a truly Machiavellian manner. In Year 9 one of the reasons students studied *Romeo and Juliet* was to aid them in their analysis of *Othello* as a tragedy as there are interesting parallels to be drawn between the plays, and students will be encouraged to make these connections as they begin studying *Othello* in Year 10.

About this unit

Teaching consists of whole-class reading of the play. Students are required to purchase their own copy of the text in order that they can make annotations as they learn. Key terminology will be introduced and explored during the reading of the play. Students will be encouraged firstly to simply understand and enjoy the story, but will be increasingly required to analyse the effects of Shakespeare's language and to form a critical opinion on key characters and Shakespeare's intentions for these characters; i.e. to what extent can Othello be considered a 'victim' rather than a 'villain'? Students will be taught how to write critical essays exploring such concepts.

Learning aims

- Read Shakespeare with some confidence;
- Use the skill of annotation effectively;
- Explain the narrative of Othello;
- Describe the principal characters in Othello;
- Form and express an opinion on the key characters;
- Reflect on how the play expresses key themes.

Year 11 – A Christmas Carol

Eduqas English Literature GCSE: Paper 2

Key vocabulary: Social responsibility · Social criticism · Redemption · Workhouses · Remorse · The Poor Laws · Miser · Avarice · Poverty · Ignorance · Compassion · Selflessness · Characterization · Semantic field · Pathetic fallacy · Christmas traditions

Why do we teach this unit?

For the Eduqas GCSE in English Literature, students must study one piece of 19th century prose. We choose to teach Charles Dickens' timeless classic *A Christmas Carol* because it is a beautiful story with an inspiring and powerful message about redemption and social responsibility, which we have found to be consistently engaging and challenging across all

ability levels. Dickens' prose is rich and colourful, providing excellent opportunities for analysis of language and characterization, and the themes of social responsibility, charity and compassion provide fertile territory for the exploration of ethics, justice and moral obligation in society.

A Christmas Carol is the last text we study for GCSE, and it serves as an interesting conclusion to the exploration of social class and inequality issues that began with *The Outsiders* in Year 9 and tracked through *Blood Brothers* and several of the poems in the Eduqas anthology.

About this unit

Teaching is delivered primarily through whole-class reading of the text (students are expected to purchase their own copies of the text through the school, so they can annotate them freely). Teachers should seek regular opportunities to engage the class in discussion about key characters, events and themes in the story.

Learning aims

- Read and enjoy a classic piece of 19th century prose;
- Practise analysing language and characterization;
- Practise reading skills – Retrieve, Analyse, Evaluate, Context
- Engage in discussion around key issues raised by the text;
- Understand the socio-historical context of the text and consider Dickens' aims in writing it