

Themes – Class

Class is something you looked at earlier when comparing the language of Mrs Johnstone & Mrs Lyons. (The Agreement – Mrs Johnstone Mrs Lyons Worksheet).

The Narrator suggest that 'class' could be blamed for 'what came to pass'. (Act One p82). It is clearly one of the key differences in the lived of Mickey and Edward.

There are some very obvious class differences between the two boys when they first meet, aged seven.

Edward speaks in Standard English, using stereotypically middle class language, while working class Mickey uses dialect, slang and swear words, and speaks in a Liverpudlian accent.

Mickey... *if our Sammy gives y' a sweet he's usually weed on it first.*

Edward (exploding in giggles) *Oh, that sounds like super fun.*

Complete the table below with definitions of the underlined text above.

Standard English	
Dialect	
Slang	
Accent	

Also complete the table below in relation to classes.

Upper Class	
Middle Class	
Working Class	

Additional Task: Use the internet to research these classes especially at the time of the play. Gather photos and complete a '**Difference in Class Visual Analysis**' on A3 to back-up your explanations above.

Identify some of the differences of the two boy's lives based on their class and list examples from the play below.

Explore the differences between the twins based on their settings and events that happen to each character?

Edwards's reference to, and Mickey's ignorance of, '*The Dictionary*' (Act One p23) suggests that they and their parents have very different attitudes to books and education. This becomes more apparent when Edward is sent to a private, single-sex boarding school while Mickey goes to the local secondary modern school.

Money is an important element of class: Mr & Mrs Lyons have a great deal of it – they live in a large house and employ a cleaner – while Mrs Johnstone cannot pay the Milkman.

Russell emphasises that the twins' differing social class has more significant consequences than their wealth or their accents or attitudes. The key difference between the twins, which only becomes apparent as they reach adulthood, is the opportunities and choices they have: Edward is able to go to university and become a local councillor; Mickey is at the mercy of his employer – Edward's father. On being redundant, Mickey resorts to crime and is imprisoned. On his release from prison he is unable to cope and so Linda resorts to seeking Edward's help.

The overall impression Russell creates is of a helpless and vulnerable working class at the mercy of, and ultimately reliant on, a largely uncaring middle class.

Check your understanding

Look back at the research you have completed in the last two tasks looking at the twins' differences. Using this information complete the next task to show your understanding. This task requires more thought, try to write at least three to four paragraphs.

Main Task: How does Russell show the differences between Mickey & Edward?

Think about

- What the events and setting of the play suggest about their lives.
- How Russell use their differences to explore key themes and ideas.
- Refer closely to key aspects of context and setting and the implications they have, explain how these contribute to the effect on the audience. How are these themes developed & presented across the play.