

GCSE Drama Component 1 Exam Revision

Physical & Vocal Skills

VOCAL	PHYSICAL	EFFECTS
Volume	Facial expression	To create comedy
Pitch	Body language	To build tension
Pace	Build	To gain sympathy
Pause	Gesture	To shock the audience
Tone	Gait	To build pace
Accent	Posture	To give the line a certain meaning/emphasis
Emphasis	Stillness	To create a XXXX mood and atmosphere
Inflection	Pace	To create intrigue
Intonation	Agility	To give form to subtext

Use of Space & Interaction

USE OF SPACE

- Stage positions (centre stage, downstage left, etc.)
- Proximity to the audience
- Use of furniture and other items of the set
- Use of props
- Use of levels
- Using a large or small area of the stage
- Communicating status through use of space

INTERACTION

- Use of eye contact and its withdrawal
- Staring, glancing, glaring, etc. at your partner
- Physical contact with your partner
- Use of proxemics, moving towards and away from your partner
- Physical & vocal skills (directed at your partner – this is important for it to count as interaction!)
- Effects on your partner, e.g. to intimidate them

SCH Context, summary

SOCIAL, CULTURAL and HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- **Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister**
 - Working class communities, especially in the north suffered mass unemployment
 - Demise of Trade Unions
 - Thatcher “opportunities for those who work hard”, Russell’s play contradicts this theory.
- **Nature versus nurture**
 - Mickey is working class and has minimal opportunity and limited wealth.
 - Edward is middle class and has plentiful opportunity and is financially well off.
- **Cinema/films**
 - Mickey loves to play cowboys/ shooting games. Cowboy films very popular in 60s.
 - Marilyn Monroe / Mrs J comparison.
- **Council estates in Liverpool**
 - Back to back terraced housing
 - Some terraced housing had back gardens
 - Generally no front gardens
- **Superstition and Religion**
 - Mrs Johnstone may well be Catholic (popular faith in Liverpool/lots of children). Mention of the Pope (Catholic leader)
 - Mrs J swears on the bible and believes in superstitions, e.g. new shoes on the table.
- **Liverpool Culture**
 - Two football teams: Liverpool and Everton
 - The Beatles and other musicians
 - Historical city with famous docks
 - The liver bird, a symbol of the city



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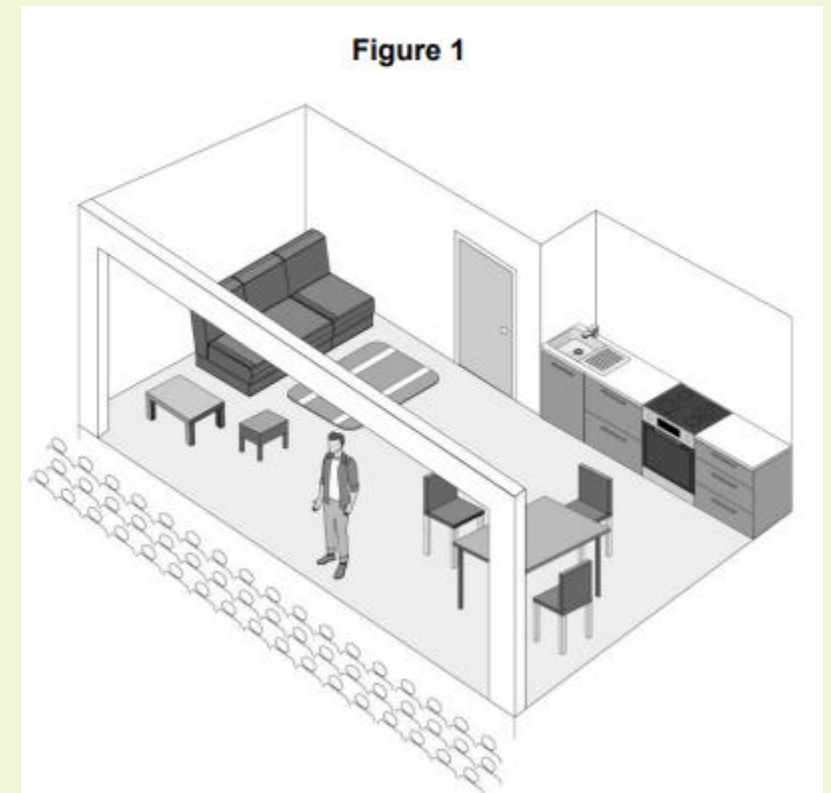
Blood Brothers

SECTION A – MULTIPLE CHOICE

Multiple Choice

The multiple choice section will follow a similar structure to below:

- 1. In which type of performance do the audience follow the actors to different performance areas?**
 - A. Theatre in the round
 - B. Traverse
 - C. Promenade ✓
- 2. Who is responsible for the overall artistic vision of a production?**
 - A. The Director ✓
 - B. The Lead Actor
 - C. The Theatre Manager
- 3. What type of staging is shown in Figure 1?**
 - A. Traverse
 - B. Proscenium Arch ✓
 - C. Thrust
- 4. What is the stage position of the actor in Figure 1?**
 - A. Downstage centre ✓
 - B. Centre stage
 - C. Upstage right





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Blood Brothers

SECTION B - 4 MARK QUESTION

4 mark question

You are designing a COSTUME for EDWARD to wear in a performance of this extract. The costume must reflect the context of 'Blood Brothers', set in a Liverpudlian community in the 1960s. Describe your design ideas for the costume.

- ▶ **The 4 mark question requires you to do the following:**
- ▶ **Design and describe a suitable costume for one character.**
- ▶ **Know the appropriate to the location and era.**
- ▶ **Include hair and makeup in your answer.**
- ▶ **Your ideas must be relevant to the character and to the extract.**

A model answer

You are designing a COSTUME for EDWARD to wear in a performance of this extract.

The costume must reflect the context of 'Blood Brothers', set in a Liverpudlian community in the 1960s.

Describe your design ideas for the costume.

Edward would be wearing a neat, crisp white shirt tucked into smart, grey trousers, symbolizing his more privileged background compared to Mickey. Over this, he would wear a dark blue jacket that is ironed and clean, further emphasizing that he is from a middle class family. On his feet, he would have polished black, lace-up shoes. To complete the look, he would have slightly blushed cheeks, neatly side parted hair that is lightly gelled down to create a shine, again showing his privileged and well kempt upbringing. The overall look would mirror the neat, tidy and middle class setting of the Lyons' house that this extract takes place in. His over all costume, hair and makeup would be a reflection of his upbringing and social status.



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Blood Brothers

SECTION B - 8 MARK QUESTION

Typical Question Structure

- ▶ The 8 mark question ALWAYS follows the structure below.
- ▶ You are performing the role of XXXXXX.
Describe how you would use your vocal and physical skills to perform the line below and explain the effects you want to create.
'XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX'
- ▶ The parts that say 'XXXX' are the parts that will change from exam to exam.

Question Structure

- ▶ **The 8 mark question is asking you to do two things:**
- ▶ **(1) Describe vocal AND physical skills that will bring the line to life.**
- ▶ **(2) Describe effects that you want to create.**
- ▶ **Your ideas must be relevant to the character and to the line that has been selected.**

Specific details

- ▶ If you mention **FACIAL EXPRESSION** or **BODY LANGUAGE**, it is a good idea to give finer details
- ▶ For example:
 - I will use an angry facial expression.
 - Good, will get you some marks.
 - I will use an angry facial expression by gritting my teeth, scrunching my nose and furrowing my eyebrows.
 - Even better, gains you more marks!

Answer Structure

- ▶ To score well in the 8 mark question, you need to write TWO paragraphs.
- ▶ Both paragraphs follow the same structure:

A. CONTEXT (only needed once)

B. SKILLS: Physical & Vocal

C. EFFECT

Example:

At this point in the play, Mrs Johnstone is alarmed that Mickey is going to the 'posh' area, she is afraid he will meet his twin brother, her motive is to stop this from happening. I would use sharp inflection and loud volume on the word 'ever' to emphasise the importance that he never goes there. I would place further emphasis on this word by using a gesture of pointing at Mickey and a serious facial expression with furrowed eyebrows and pursed lips. **This would give the effect of urgency and panic, showing that Mrs Johnson is worried about the twins meeting each other.**



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Blood Brothers

SECTION B - 12 MARK QUESTION

Typical Question Structure

- ▶ **The 12 mark question ALWAYS follows the structure below.**
- ▶ **You are performing the role of XXXXXXXX.**
Focus on the shaded part of the extract. Explain how you and the actor playing XXXXXXXX might use the performance space and interact with each other to XXXXXXXX for your audience.
- ▶ **The parts that say 'XXXX' are the parts that will change from exam to exam.**

Question Structure

- ▶ **The 12 mark question tells you the effect that you should aim to create (for example, building tension).**
- ▶ **Your answer should focus on creating the effect by:**
 - (1) Suggesting ideas for use of the space.**
 - (2) Suggesting ideas for interaction with another actor.**
- ▶ **You must state HOW these ideas will help to create the effect set out in the question.**
- ▶ **Ideas need to be true of the characters and relevant to the shaded part of the extract.**

Answer Structure

- ▶ For the 12 mark question, you will write three paragraphs (four if you have time).
- ▶ Paragraph 1 is the shortest and does need to be brief. This paragraph sets up your answer.

A. PLOT SUMMARY

B. SETTING

- ▶ Paragraphs 2, 3 (and 4) all follow the same structure that you used for the 8 mark question:

C. SKILLS: use of space & interaction

D. EFFECT

Specific Details

- ▶ The **SKILLS** section of the paragraph is where you name the **USE OF SPACE and INTERACTION** skills you will apply to bring the **shaded part of the extract** to life.

E.g. **Use of space – Stage positions, levels, furniture, props, etc.**

Interaction – Eye contact, proxemics, physical contact, etc.

- ▶ **Remember:**
 - all ideas must involve you and the other character named in the question
 - all ideas must help to create the effect named in the question
- ▶ The **SKILLS** section should be the most detailed part of the paragraph.
- ▶ You **MUST** quote the lines from the **shaded part of the extract ONLY**.

Answer Structure

▶ Paragraph 2, 3 (and 4) Example:

At the start of the shaded extract, I want to come across as annoyed and stern as I lay down the rules to Edward, this will prompt him to answer back angrily and see a rise in tension. On the line, "I've told you never to go where that boy - where boys like that live", I would sit Edward in an armchair, **making physical contact by grasping both of his shoulders firmly and deliberately placing him on the chair**. On the line, "Do you understand?" **I will stand to tower over him, using levels to gain status**, intimidate him and enforce my rules. Having a **downstage position will allow me to look away from Edward and show the audience** my real inner feelings of the fear of losing Edward to his biological family. **The tension built here will be felt by the audience as they will understand my character is distressed and desperate. By wanting to keep Edward physically close through bullying and having status over him helps set an argumentative mood which will build tension.**

▶ **Use of space** and **Interaction** skills are balanced. **Effect** is linking to what the question asks.



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Blood Brothers

SECTION B - 20 MARK QUESTION

The 20 mark question in summary

- ▶ The 20 mark question is all about **YOUR INTERPRETATION** of a character. This means what **YOUR VERSION** of the character would be like if you played that role in a production of “Blood Brothers”
- ▶ In the 20 mark question, you need to say what acting techniques you would use to help you realise your interpretation. So you can refer to:
 - Physical and vocal skills** (which you do in the 8 mark question)
 - Use of space and interaction** (which you did in the 12 mark question)
 - The social, cultural and/or historical context of the play**
- ▶ In the 20 mark question, you **cover the whole extract** and make references to “**the play as a whole**”, which means referring to other scenes in the play.

Typical Question Structure

- ▶ The **20 mark performance question** ALWAYS follows the structure below.

CHOOSE THE PERFORMANCE QUESTION

- ▶ You are performing the role of XXXXXX.

Describe how you would use your acting skills to interpret XXXXXX's character in this extract. Explain why your ideas are appropriate for:

- this extract
- the performance of your role in the play as a whole.

- ▶ 'The parts that say 'XXXX' are the parts that will change from exam to exam.

Specific Details

For the 20 mark question, you will write **four or five paragraphs** (depending on how much you'd like to write).

The question is asking you to cover FOUR areas:

- ▶ **Describe your INTERPRETATION for the character**
- ▶ **Describe what ACTING SKILLS you will use to realise your interpretation**
- ▶ **Explain why your ideas are relevant to the EXTRACT**
- ▶ **Explain why your ideas are relevant to the PLAY AS A WHOLE**

Answer Structure

- ▶ **In Paragraph 1** you will provide a very quick **PLOT SUMMARY** – this should be very brief and needs to pinpoint where in the play the extract takes place and what happens in it. You should also make references to **KEY EVENTS** before and/or after the extract.

Example:

This scene takes place in Act One. Edward is a child at this point and he is given a locket by Mrs Johnstone to remember her and Mickey by, as he is moving out of the area. Later on in the play, when Edward is a teenager, Mrs Lyons discovers that Mrs Johnstone gave him the locket. This happens just before Edward is reunited with Mrs Johnstone and Mickey, and it foreshadows the moment at the end of the play when the two boys are told by Mrs Johnstone that they are brothers.

Answer Structure

- ▶ In **PARAGRAPH 2**, you will provide an **OVERVIEW of your character INTERPRETATION**. Paint a broad picture of what **YOUR VERSION** of this character will be like

A. In the EXTRACT

B. In the PLAY AS A WHOLE

- ▶ **Read the extract and ask yourself some of these questions:**
 - What age is my character at this point in the play?
 - What mood is my character in? Does this change?
 - What kind of relationship does my character have with others in this scene?
 - What does my character want in this scene? (Motives)
 - What kind of status does my character have in this scene?
- ▶ **Begin the paragraph by focusing on your INTERPRETATION in the whole extract.**
- ▶ **End the paragraph by saying how your interpretation is relevant to the play as a whole.**

For example:

I want my interpretation to communicate that Mrs Johnson is kind, caring and maternal and is looking out for the best life for her biological children.

My interpretation will allow Edward and I to establish a slightly closer relationship and connection. A connection needs to be made between our characters for the events that follow later in the play, where the two families re-unite in the countryside and the relationship is quickly re-established.

Answer Structure

- ▶ Paragraphs 3, 4 (and 5) all follow a similar structure to the one you used for the 8 and 12 mark questions:

A. CONTEXT

B. SKILLS: - physical & vocal skills
- use of space & interaction

C. INTERPRETATION: - the extract
- the play as a whole

D. LINKS
to the SCH context
of the play. These
can appear in A, B
or C.

- ▶ The **CONTEXT** should be the briefest part. You are telling the reader about the **mood, emotions or motivations that the character is experiencing in the part of the extract you are covering.**
- ▶ The **SKILLS** section of the paragraph is where you name the **ACTING SKILLS** and you will apply to bring **your INTERPRETATION** to life. Spread them out throughout your paragraphs. The **SKILLS** section should be the **most detailed** part of the paragraph. **You must use QUOTES!**
- ▶ The **INTERPRETATION** section is where you **EXPLAIN** how your acting ideas bring your **INTERPRETATION** to life.
- ▶ Try to include **links to the SCH (social, cultural, historical) context.**
- ▶ **You then repeat this structure for paragraph 4 (and 5 if you're doing a fifth), but now writing about the next chunk of the extract.**

Example answer

Key:

Plot Summary

Key Events

Extract

Play as a whole

Skills

Social, cultural, historical context

Interpretation

(Paragraph 1) This scene takes place in Act One. Edward is a child at this point and he is given a locket by Mrs Johnstone to remember her and Mickey by, as he is moving out of the area. Later on in the play, when Edward is a teenager, Mrs Lyons discovers that Mrs Johnstone gave him the locket. This happens just before Edward is reunited with Mrs Johnstone and Mickey, and it foreshadows the moment at the end of the play when the two boys are told by Mrs Johnstone that they are brothers.

(Paragraph 2) In this extract, I want my interpretation to communicate that Mrs Johnson is kind, caring and maternal and is looking out for the best life for her biological children. My interpretation will allow Edward and I to establish a slightly closer relationship and connection. A connection needs to be made between our characters for **the events that follow later in the play**, where the two families re-unite in the countryside and the relationship is quickly re-established.

(Paragraph 3, 4 (&5)) When I say “We’re a right pair, aren’t we, you an’ me?” I will speak with a calming tone, lowering my pitch and would use the gesture of patting Edward on the back gently with my hand to comfort him in this moment. I will emphasise my Liverpool accent on this line, in contrast to Edward’s Queen’s English accent, supporting the play’s social context that we are from different classes. My calm gesture while I console Edward shows the kindness and love of my interpretation. It is suitable for the extract as in this moment, Edward is visibly upset that he has to leave the area and his friend Mickey behind. I could repeat this level of calm and control in Act Two, for example, when Edward and Mickey are told that they were twins separated at birth. This will help to communicate the level of maternal love that Mrs Johnstone has for both of her sons, **throughout the whole play, but specifically at the end** when they both come together and learn the truth.



GCSE Drama Small Island

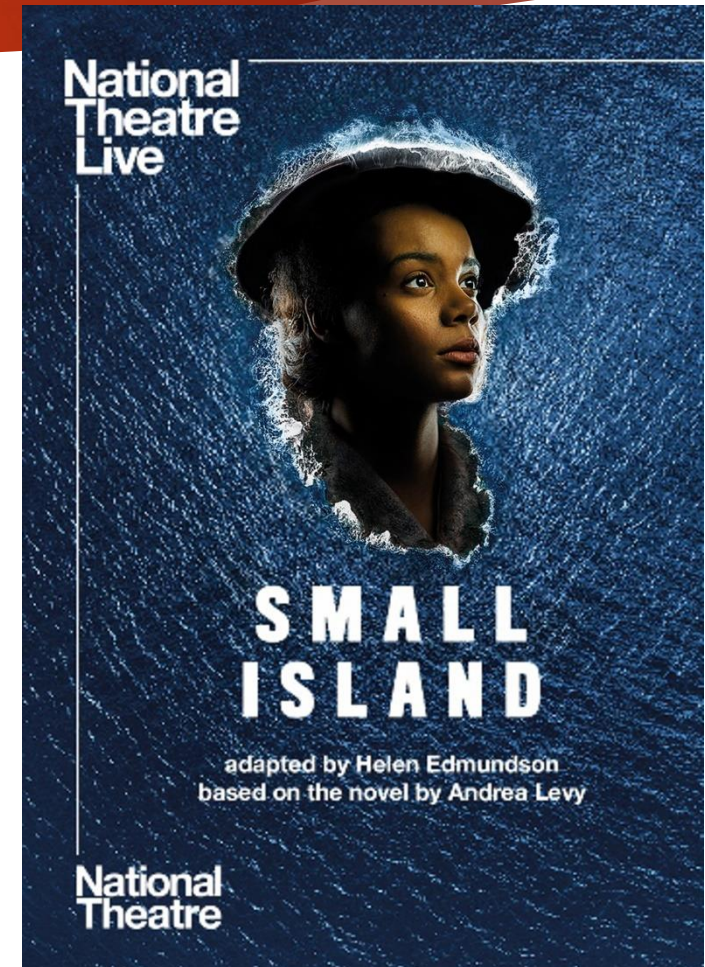
SECTION C - 32 MARK QUESTION

Small Island

About Small Island

Adapted for the stage by Helen Edmundson, *Small Island* follows three intricately connected stories. Hortense yearns for a new life away from rural Jamaica, Gilbert dreams of becoming a lawyer, and Queenie longs to escape her Lincolnshire roots. Hope and humanity meet stubborn reality as the play traces the tangled history of Jamaica and the UK.

Andrea Levy's epic, Orange Prize-winning novel bursts to new life on the Olivier stage. A company of 40 tells a story which journeys from Jamaica to Britain, through the Second World War to 1948 – the year the HMT *Empire Windrush* docked at Tilbury.



The Socio-historical Context

The socio-historical context of Small Island

The 1948 British Nationality Act gave everyone who lived in the UK or any British colony around the world, the same rights to live and work in Britain. The British colonies included the Bahamas, Barbados, Trinidad and Jamaica, as well as countries like Australia and Canada.

Between 1947 and 1970, nearly half a million people would take up the offer and travel to the UK. They saw Britain as a place of opportunity – for better jobs and a prosperous future.

On 22 June 1948, Caribbean migrants arrived in the UK on the SS Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks in Essex, their first stop before travelling towards London.

On arrival in the UK, people were often met with racism, lack of acknowledgement of their professional skills and very different living conditions.

Typical Question Structure

- ▶ The **32 mark live theatre performance question** will be similar to the structure below

CHOOSE THE PERFORMANCE QUESTION

Describe how one **or** more actors used their vocal and physical skills in a particular scene or section to **show their character's emotions**. Analyse and evaluate how successful they were in communicating their character's emotions to the audience.

You could make reference to:

- vocal skills, for example pitch, pace and tone of voice
- physical skills, for example body language and facial expression
- a scene or section and/or the production as a whole.

[32 marks]

Answer Structure

- 1. Introduction:** Introduce the production. Include the title, playwright, theatre/location, and the date you watched it. Give a brief overview of what the performance was about, the themes and style of the production.
- 2. Point and character:** State the main actor/character you will be focusing on for your answer. State the specific moments or scenes involving this character that you'll be discussing in detail.
- 3. Evidence of skills:** Delve into specific acting skills or techniques the actor used. Discuss the actor's physical portrayal: use of body language, facial expressions, movement, and positioning on stage. Analyse the vocal techniques: pitch, tone, pace, volume, accent, and clarity.
- 4. Explain and analyse:** How did the actor effectively convey the character's emotions in this moment?
- 5. Evaluation and personal response:** Share your personal response. Was this moment convincing? How did you feel towards the character at this point? Always provide reasons for your opinions.
- 6. Link:** Discuss how the moment links to the themes, character's development and the overall narrative.
- 7. Conclusion:** Sum up the actor's contribution to the chosen scene, linking back to the question.

Script Extract – Act 2, Scene 9

QUEENIE (**suddenly**). Will you take him?

HORTENSE looks at her, confused.

HORTENSE. But... I already have him, Mrs...

QUEENIE. No. I mean... will you take him with you - when you leave? When you move? Take him and look after him.

Silence.

GILBERT. What are you saying?

QUEENIE suddenly drops to her knees in front of them.

QUEENIE. Please. I trust you. I know you. You're good people.

HORTENSE. No, Mrs Bligh...

QUEENIE. Please. Oh please. I'm begging you. For his sake. Take him and look after him. Please. Please.

BERNARD appears in the doorway to the kitchen.

BERNARD. Queenie. What in God's name are you doing?

QUEENIE stares at the floor, unable to reply.

That's your child. What are you thinking? You're his mother.

QUEENIE. But I can't look after him.

BERNARD. Why? Why ever not?

QUEENIE. How can I? I don't even know how to comb his hair.

BERNARD. But that's ridiculous. We would work something & out. You are not giving your child away to these people.

QUEENIE. But.

BERNARD. We'll bring him up. Together.

QUEENIE. What?

BERNARD. We'll say he's adopted. It's quite simple.

QUEENIE. Oh, Bernard... No..

BERNARD. An orphan..

QUEENIE. No..

Script Extract – Act 2, Scene 9

BERNARD. There's been a war. All sorts of things have happened.

QUEENIE. No! It wouldn't work. I know it wouldn't. You wouldn't be able to bear it...

BERNARD. Yes, I would. If I have to.

QUEENIE. No. You might think you can do it now - he's little now. It's easy. He's sweet. But he's going to grow up into a...

a big, strapping coloured lad. And people will snigger at you in the street and ask you awkward questions....

BERNARD. We'll tell them he's adopted.

QUEENIE. All those proper, decent neighbours in the suburbs who'll turn their backs on us. Are you going to punch the other dads 'cause the kids call him names? Are you going to be proud of him? Glad that he's your son?

Pause. BERNARD can't answer.

I've thought about nothing else. And you know what? I don't think I've got the guts for it. I thought I would have... I should have, but I haven't. And I'm his mother.

(To GILBERT and HORTENSE.) I'd have to give him to an orphanage.

BERNARD. Queenie.

QUEENIE. And they don't want the coloured ones.

BERNARD. We should talk about this in private.

QUEENIE. They're sending all the half-caste babies to America. America, Gilbert - can you imagine? They'd treat him like dirt. They'd send him up the back in the picture hall.

GILBERT. Queenie...

QUEENIE **(crying)**. You'd love him. I know you would...

BERNARD. Queenie, this is not the solution.

Example Answer

In September 2022, I watched the 2019 production of *Small Island* via National Theatre Live Stream. Adapted by Helen Edmundson and based on the novel by Andrea Levy. *Small Island* journeys from Jamaica to Britain in 1948 – the year of the HMT *Windrush*. The themes of the performance explored throughout are hope, humanity and racial inequality. The style of the performance is mainly naturalistic with some non-naturalistic techniques explored.

A section where they show their characters' emotions was Act 2, scene 9, when Queenie offers to give her baby away to Gilbert and Hortense. Aisling Loftus who plays the role of Queenie Bligh speaks the line "Will you take him with you – when you leave" with a quivering tone of voice and soft, high pitch. She pauses after the word "you" and licks her lips as if they are dry in order to give her the confidence to carry on the line. She is positioned downstage left, her body language is stiff and rigid from head to toe with her arms stretched out in front of her which are also fixed firmly into position with her fingers spread widely open as if to steady herself and it is evident to spot the tension and fear through her fingertips. Emotion fills her eyes, her eye contact is transfixed on a spot and gazed in position with water filling her eyes whilst deliberately avoiding eye contact with the characters of Gilbert and Hortense as she continues to ask them to take her baby away. She continues to beg and persuade both Gilbert and Hortense to take baby Michael on the line 'You're good people', her voice remains a fixed volume as she tries to steady herself with a calm tone and high pitch as she emphasises the word 'you're' in order to convince herself that she is doing the right thing. Emotion fills her face as she scrunches up her facial expressions as if to hide away the pain she is feeling by asking them to take her baby. She brings her hands together in front of her chest and rubs them together forcefully showing the tension and emotion she is feeling. Emotion continues to fill her eyes as they remain transfixed on the same spot. This effectively communicated the idea that Queenie was trying to do the right thing in order to save her marriage and comply with societal expectations. This successfully portrayed Queenie as a strong and selfless mother. This made me feel emotional for the character of Queenie because of the pain she was experiencing having to make this difficult decision. I found this very engaging because her acting was so passionate and emotional. Loftus successfully communicates her emotions through this scene.

Example Answer Continued

In the same scene Andrew Rothney who plays the role of Bernard enters midway through, and appears through the doorway into the kitchen which is placed centre stage and surveys the situation which is taking place. He casts his eyes from left to right as he sees Queenie kneeling down on the floor begging, and speaks the line 'Queenie. What in god's name are you doing? That's your child'. In an RP accent he uses an authoritative tone of voice and medium volume showing his emotion towards his wife. His posture is perfectly straight symbolising his straight laced personality and walks rapidly from the kitchen door towards Queenie who is positioned centre stage closing the proxemics between them both. As he moves closer and on the line 'That's your child' he uses his gestures and points his arm and finger towards centre left in the direction of the baby. On the line 'But that's ridiculous' Bernard moves across stage and kneels down in front of Queenie further closing the proxemics between the two characters to show the emotion, concern and pain he holds for his wife whilst looking directly in to her eyes. This effectively communicated the idea that Bernard deep down cares for his wife and wants to make her happy and make their marriage work. This successfully portrayed Bernard as a kind and caring husband who was willing to support his wife and her baby. This made me feel emotional for the character of Bernard as it was obvious to see the support and love he had for his wife. I found this very engaging because his acting was so caring and considerate. Rothney successfully communicates his emotions through this scene, through the successful use of proxemics, voice and eye contact.

To conclude, both Loftus and Rothney are exceptional actors particularly in this scene where they are dealing with a difficult and emotional situation. As mentioned in detail they both successfully show their characters emotions through their vocal tone and pitch and their facial expressions and body language to portray believable characters in this scene.