



Key Vocabulary: Educating Rita by Willy Russell

Vocabulary Word	Definition	Context
Accent	A particular way of pronouncing words that indicates the place of origin or social background of the speaker.	"I don't want to talk in this ridiculous voice all the time, I want my own voice." - Rita
Ambition	A strong desire to achieve something, typically requiring determination and hard work.	"I wanna know everything, y'know like what words to use to say things like love and why things like that." - Rita
Complacency	A feeling of smug or uncritical satisfaction with oneself or one's achievements.	"I'm just complacent. I'm so happy with everyone else being wrong." - Frank
Culture	The customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group.	"I had to go to the museum to find out what culture really meant." - Rita
Education	The process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university.	"It's a way of changing me from what I am to what I want to be." - Rita
Intellectual	Relating to the intellect or understanding rather than to emotions or instinct.	"I don't want to sound like the rest of them, all those morons talking about the bloody esoteric structure of the bloody whatever-it-is." - Rita
Jargon	Special words or expressions that are used by a particular profession or group and are difficult for others to understand.	"But they don't half talk in riddles, don't they? It's like a secret code or something." - Rita
Literature	Written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit.	"I mean, the books are brilliant, aren't they? You can just read them and they'll take you away from everything, and it doesn't matter about not having any friends, and it doesn't matter about being ugly." - Rita
Open University	A British distance learning university founded in 1969, which provides higher education courses for adults through a combination of supported distance and online learning.	"I'm going to take my exams and I'm going to pass them, and I'm going to have a baby because we've agreed to have one. We've even decided to call him Frank, whether it's a girl or a boy." - Rita
Social class	A division of a society based on social and economic status.	"But y' see, I don't want to be middle class, Frank. I hate it." - Rita
Tutorial	A period of tuition given by a university or college tutor to an individual or very small group.	"I've got tutorials every week, a sort of one-to-one with a tutor." - Rita
Working class	The social group consisting of people who are employed for wages, especially in manual or industrial work.	"I was coming in here before I started the course and I was coming in here after I started the course. And do you know what? There's not a lot of difference." - Rita



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Historical and political context of the play

The play "Educating Rita" by Willy Russell was first performed in 1980. At the time, the UK was going through a period of significant social and economic change.

The 1970s had been a time of high inflation, unemployment, and industrial unrest in the UK. This led to a period of political turmoil, with the Labour government of the time struggling to implement policies that could tackle these issues.

In 1979, the Conservative Party under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher won the general election and began a period of radical economic reform that became known as Thatcherism. This involved reducing the power of the trade unions, privatizing state-owned industries, and deregulating the economy. Thatcherism was driven by a belief in free-market economics and a desire to reduce the role of the state in society.

The backdrop of these political and economic changes can be seen in "Educating Rita." The play explores the theme of social mobility, as Rita, a working-class woman, seeks to better herself through education. This was a time when there was a growing recognition of the need to improve social mobility and provide greater access to education for people from all backgrounds.

The play also touches on issues of gender and feminism. It was written at a time when the feminist movement was gaining momentum, and women were fighting for greater equality in all areas of society.

Overall, "Educating Rita" reflects the historical and political context of the UK in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with its themes of social mobility, education, and gender reflecting the concerns and aspirations of the time.