

Educating rita  
character analysis  
argumentative essay



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Educating Rita was written by Willy Russell.

It was set in Northern England in 1985. Rita is a literature student at the Open University which was opened to the public in the 1960's as the way of enabling adults, like Rita to have a chance to go to the university which they were not able to do at the age of eighteen. The play is set at the Open University grounds and during these tutorial sessions is when Rita is introduced to us. Rita is on the search to gain confidence and an education. This is to be a hard journey as her background education was poor. She grew up in an area where education was poor and not taken seriously.

Education was objected to 'by your mates, by your family, by everyone'. This emphasises that as a young student she was unable to take education into account as it was something which was not valued within her cultural background. As she didn't start her path in education soon enough before secondary she would have been able to enrol in brighter career paths. As this option didn't exist she had to be taken in as an employee at the hairdressers. As she gets older and independent she realises she wants more from life and education and wants to know 'everything'. She questions her life saying 'is this the absolute maximum I can expect from this living lark.'

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you have to decide whether it's gonna be another change of dress or change in yourself' and Rita decides on the latter. The significance of the door being stuck refers back to her childhood education never being easy and Rita being shut out from it. In the next scene when Frank finds her leaning over the door she says 'I was just oiling it for you' emphasising that she wants to make her

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path to education as easy as possible, not wanting to be shut out once again. Secondly Rita differs in characteristics to Frank her university lecturer in many ways.

He appears to have gained minor success. Frank comes across as he has had a great education as a young student gaining himself qualifications to work as a lecturer which nevertheless bores him. He does not value what she really desires. Rita's spoken English can be called common.

Rita uses common slang words frequently. The way Rita comes across in her tutorial sessions grew to a point of Frank admiring her. Frank's admiration about Rita is her being a cocky young woman who tends to make jokes about things she doesn't know and the way she also looks at the world of literature with innocence. Rita feels that he has a great middle-class lifestyle and his middle class accent and speech 'y' can say dead clever things like that can't y'? I wish I could talk like that'. He is exactly what she wants to be. Towards the end of Act One we can see Rita is already beginning to change as she starts to understand literature and the books Frank refers to.

Rita begins to feel a 'hunger for literature'. She also begins to have an interest in theatre productions as she refers to seeing Macbeth as 'bleeding great...

. it was fantastic' this is when she starts to change her attitude towards her course not wanting to 'dump it in all together' anymore, but rather wanting to achieve having learnt literature, also her movement has changed as at first she had been very fidgety and would walk around the room. 'Don't you just sit down when you walk into a room' this statement has taken a turn as <https://assignbuster.com/educating-rita-character-analysis-argumentative-essay/>

she has started to sit down and just get on with her course. The words Rita uses to express her enthusiasm for Macbeth happens when she is telling Frank about her day out she uses an extract from the play she watched '.

.. out, out brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow. .' this shows the enthusiasm to learn a written scene from the play. Rita as a character at first comes across a person who likes to take in and judge everything before she can begin something ' looking idly round the room'.

This seems to be only a phase as her education in literature begins she has started to get on with her path to be an educated woman. At the beginning of Act Two we see major changes in Rita Willy Russell conveys these to us as Rita has attempted to change into having intellectual discussions and has felt she can interact with her fellow students. She is now happy to discuss academic topics. She also begins to defend herself using educated terms, no longer making jokes. Rita also changes her appearance as she has ' brought all sorts of second-hand gear in the markets' this emphasising that she is making a turn, into education fully as she has changed herself physically and mentally to look more like a ' proper student'. Willy Russell shows there has been a change in their relationship as when Rita is in a deep discussion is when she describes about Trish her new flatmate and the elegant bistro she had exchanged with working at the hairdressers, Frank is surprised as she describes this all to her, she criticises him saying ' has been that long' emphasising that their has a been a break between them but has it been that long.

Frank finding out about the new Rita portrays his concern as he says ' you use to tell me all the little details' meaning he misses the small talk of their life and what she use to do, at work and her relationship with Denny. Their relationship deteriorates after he asks her to criticise his poetry as Frank feels she has changed but not for the better when getting her education. He feels that he wants the old Rita with her original approach to literature. Frank compares Himself to ' Mary Shelley' who wrote ' gothic number called Frankstein' to emphasise that the changes to her under his influenced was not for the best he believes she has become a monster. Rita on the other hand feels she is ' educated' and has changed herself for the better instead of buying a new a dress. ' I'm not the little girl once use to hop on your lap bambie eyed I'm educated now' At the end of the play Willy Russell brings the two characters back together to show that Rita does really rely on him even if she does not show it through the play.

Rita takes her exams and passes and at the end of the play, she is reunited with Frank. She now realises how much she owes him and she is now very grateful for everything he has done. Frank has helped Rita grow and develop through educated she now has the opportunity to make the choices in life that previously denied to her. Willy Russell ended the play like this so the audience could see what choices or opportunities Rita now had, showing that all of the change and struggle was worth it in the end.