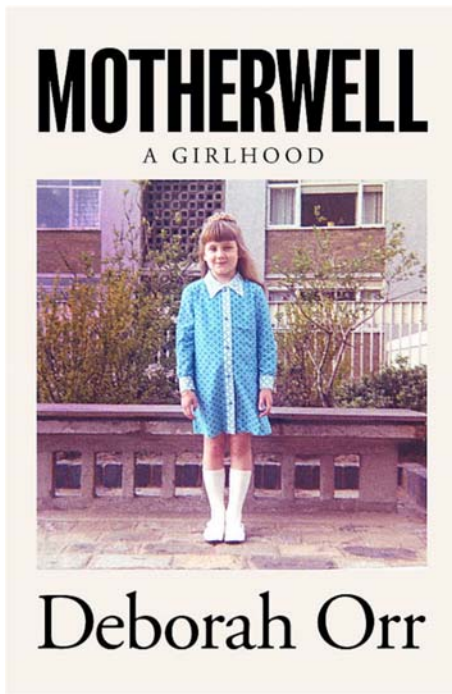


# The Literacy Lowdown: Motherwell



A level geography students, remember, you should:

- undertake wider reading
- use factual texts, discursive / creative material

## Summary

Motherwell is a book about motherhood set against the backdrop of deindustrialisation in Scotland.

It is a humorous memoir focusing on the relationship between Guardian journalist Deborah Orr and her mother, Win.

The story takes you from 18 Clyde Terrace, Muirhouse, Motherwell through to the decommission of Ravenscraig steelworks 'its buildings flattened and shovelled away, its earth decontaminated, there was just a big hole, in the town, in the shire, in so many people's lives' p292.

© Deborah Orr

## Specification links

AQA 3.2.3.1. Urban change: deindustrialisation, decentralisation, rise of service economy.

Edexcel 4A.5 There are wide variations in levels of engagement in local communities.

WJEC 2.1.4 Economic change and social inequalities in deindustrialised urban places.

## Key quotes

"That view. That stunning, dystopian panorama. A world unto itself, stretched out perfectly flat as far as the horizon, monochrome, like the telly. Except for the occasional blast of pale custard. Spikes of flame, so fast-moving that they seemed solid, roared implacably into the sky, day and night. Gas burn-off. A steelworks twice the size of Monaco." (p1)

"Those rotting wooden monuments must have stood there, decomposing, for maybe forty years. I don't think anyone minded. We were proud of the Lanarkshire, as a collective, as a town. It was our heritage, part of us, and it made us part of the world. The great black girders of Tate Morden in London were made at the Lanarkshire." (p41)

"Failure to be Scottish as a problem for my mum in Motherwell, just as failure to be English had been a failure for my dad in Essex. In both places I was a chimerical beast, as oddity." (p43)

"Grand-scale post-war modernism, two decades on from Armistice Day, was surging through Scotland and tower blocks were thrusting up into the sky." (p59)

"They were romantic about the Industrial Revolution, and for them the story of New Lanark was an antidote to the Marx-Stalin-Revolution-Workers themes." (p213)