KS3/4 Bridging Unit: Analysis, techniques and notes for the study of *A Christmas Carol* – English Language Knowledge Organiser

READING QUESTIONS

Comprehension tasks require close reading and a range of reading strategies. It involves thinking about:

- meaning (and different interpretations)
- language/words
- implications
- asking questions
- seeing connections.

Identifying and retrieving information

Retrieval	Finding specific information in a text.
Skimming	Looking over a text quickly to get the general idea of its main ideas.
Scanning	Looking over a text quickly, line by line, for answers to specific questions.
Explicit meaning	Something that is clearly stated in a text.
Implicit meaning	Something that is suggested by the text but not explicitly stated, only implied.
Interpretation	An educated guess (based on what you have read) about what something means.
Chronology	The arrangement of events in the order they happened.
Tracking	Starting at the beginning of a text and reading carefully to the end.

COMPARING AND CONTRASTING

The similarities and differences between texts.

Useful words and phrases:

Comparing: in the same way, likewise, similarly, as can be seen in

Contrasting: in contrast, although, conversely, despite, however, nevertheless, yet

DESCRIPTION

Descriptive writing involves combining details to help the reader form an impression of a person or place. **An impression** is a feeling or opinion that you form about something or someone. Description often involves **figurative language**.

Common examples are listed below:

Term	Explanation
Imagery	This refers to the use of words to create pictures in the mind of a reader.
Simile	A simile is the comparison of one thing with another using the words 'like, 'as' or 'than'.
Metaphor	A metaphor is the direct comparison of one thing to another.
Personification	Personification is the description of an object as though it has human characteristics.
Extended metaphor	An extended metaphor is a metaphor that is continued or developed over several sentences or paragraphs in a piece of writing.

USING EVIDENCE

Evidence is something that helps to prove that what you are saying is true.

Indented quotations
These are mainly used for longer quotes. Rather than using quotation marks, you place the quote on a new line, and indent the entire quote to mark it apart from your own words.

Embedded quotations
This is the sort of quotation you will use most often. It appears within the body of your own writing, placed within quotation marks ("…") and you use it to quote a few words from a text.

SUMMARISING

A summary is a shortened version of a text. When you write a summary, you take out the main or key ideas from a longer piece of writing. You need to read the information carefully and then produce a summary **in your own words** to demonstrate how well you understand the main points.

SYNTHESISING

When you synthesise information, **you bring details from two or more sources/texts to form a new text**. Select accurate and relevant details based on the focus of the synthesis question. You are **not** required to explain your details or compare texts in a synthesis answer.

DELIVERING A TALK

Talks should contain thoroughly researched content with clear, focussed points. The topic and audience will determine a suitable tone. Do not talk too fast or too slow and consider your body language. Some useful techniques to use include:

- **Facts** – Statistics and facts provide evidence to prove a point.
- **Anecdotes** – Concise stories about individuals to illuminate a topic.
- **Rhetorical questions** – Gets the audience thinking about the answers.
- **Personal pronouns** – Words like 'I', 'we' and 'you' can involve an audience.
- **Humour** – Depending on the topic, light humour is usually well-received.
- **Imperative language** – Command words are a direct way of communicating strong feelings.
- **Emotive vocabulary** – Carefully chosen words to involve the audience emotionally.

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A CHRISTMAS CAROL Plot	
Stave 1	Scrooge treats Bob, Fred, and others with contempt, and only cares for money and himself. On Christmas Eve he is visited by Marley's Ghost, who warns Scrooge of his impending fate and the visit of the three spirits.
Stave 2	The Ghost of Christmas Past shows Scrooge scenes of himself as a young boy in school and as a young apprentice. They also witness Scrooge's breakup with his fiancée and the life and family he could have had. Scrooge reflects on how he has treated others.
Stave 3	The Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge the Cratchit family celebrating Christmas. He also shows him his nephew Fred as well as various groups of working-class people celebrating. Finally, Scrooge sees two monstrous children: Ignorance and Want.
Stave 4	The Ghost of Christmas Yet-to-Come shows Scrooge how the community react to his death and how he is thought of after he passes on. This is contrasted with the death of Tiny Tim.
Stave 5	Scrooge wakes on Christmas morning, reborn as a new man. He delights in putting right his wrongs from Stave 1 and opens himself up to helping others and celebrating Christmas.

Themes
(the wider ideas about a text beyond the main story)

Christmas	Greed	Poverty	Change
Generosity	Family	Responsibility	Supernatural
Forgiveness	Injustice	Redemption	Death

Characters

Ebenezer Scrooge (the main character)	Ebenezer Scrooge is miserable, miserly, tight-fisted and horrid. He rejects Christmas and refuses to offer help or be kind to anyone. The events of the novel drastically change Scrooge's character, and turn him into a generous, open-hearted man.
Bob Cratchit (Scrooge's clerk)	Bob is hard-working, uncomplaining and loves his family. He is humble, meek and grateful for all he has.
Fred (Scrooge's nephew)	Fred is positive, kind and warm-hearted. He persists in inviting Scrooge to Christmas dinner as he realises Scrooge will miss out if he doesn't come.
Tiny Tim (Bob Cratchit's youngest son)	Tim has physical difficulties and is not likely to live a long life. In spite of this, he is good natured and is always thinking of others.
Marley's Ghost (Scrooge's deceased business partner)	Marley's Ghost warns Scrooge of the fate that awaits him after his death if he does not change his ways.
Spirits of Christmas Past, Present and Yet-to-Come	These three ghosts all play a part in Scrooge's transformation. Each contribute by showing Scrooge key events in his life and the lives of others.
Fan (Scrooge's deceased sister/Fred's mother)	Fan is kind to Scrooge when he is a boy in school.
Fezziwig (Scrooge's old boss)	He shows seasonal generosity to his workers, including Scrooge who is his apprentice.