DESCRIPTIVE WRITING: KS3 KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

The Slow-Zoom

1. Begin by describing the **entire scene** *without* focusing on specific details. Aim to capture the **overall atmosphere** and give your reader a **general idea** of what you're describing.

2. Zoom in on a part of the image that **stands out** to you. Describe this element of the scene in **more detail**.

3. Zoom in closer. Try to **find a specific person** to focus on and describe them and their behaviour.

4. Zoom in all the way. Go **inside** your chosen person's mind. Describe their **thoughts and feelings**.

Descriptive Writing Techniques

Technique	Description	Example
Simile	Using 'like' or 'as ' to directly compare two things that share similarities.	*Her skin was pinched and puckered, like fingertips out of the bath.*
Metaphor	Making a comparison between two things that are not immediately alike but which share something in common.	*The classroom was a zoo, a howling, hissing, biting, fighting menagerie of feral five year-olds.*
Imagery	Using descriptive language to paint a picture in the reader's mind and appeal to the senses.	*The moonlight streamed down from the endless sky and shimmered across the gentle waves.*
Personification	Giving human characteristics or qualities to something non-human.	*The mountains frowned down at the climbing party, as if annoyed at having been woken up.*
Sensory description	Describing using the five senses to bring a place to life in the reader's mind.	*She gasped as the sour-sweet tang of the rubbish dump jumped up her nostrils and slid down her throat.*
Dehumanisation	Describing a person in such a way as to make them sound like an animal or object.	*He tore into the chicken leg, tearing off huge chunks of flesh and bolting them down, his chin dripping with grease.*

Sentence Starters

Starter Type	Example
Noun starter	*The sky was thick with choking black smoke.*
Adjective pair starter	*Relentless and ferocious, the inferno devastated the landscape.*
Adverb starter	*Pointlessly, the helicopter trickled water onto the blaze.*
-ing verb starter	*Wailing in terror, the people fled from their houses.*
Preposition starter	*Above the fire, the smoke cloud stood hundreds of feet in the air, obscuring the sun.*
Triple starter	*Hissing, roaring and spitting, the fire began to chase after the escaping residents.*

Punctuation

Punctuation	Usage & *Example*
Full Stop**.**	Marks the end of a sentence. *This is a dog.*
Question Mark**?**	Placed at the end of a sentence that is a question. *Who does that dog belong to?*
Exclamation Mark**!**	Use at the end of a sentence that expresses a strong emotion. *What a lovely dog you have!*
Comma**,**	Separates subordinate clauses from main clauses (when the subordinate clause is first) or items in a list. *Although I like cats, I much prefer dogs.* *Your dog has long, dark, glossy hair.*
Semicolon**;**	Joins two complete sentences that share a related idea. *I love your dog; it is so friendly.*
Colon**:**	Used to introduce a list or explanation. *I like lots of different dogs: Poodles, Pugs and especially Pomeranians.*
Dash **—**	Adds extra information to a sentence. *The dog can do tricks—he loves to roll.*
(Brackets**)**	Used to enclose extra information. Can be replaced by dashes or commas. *The dog (named Spot) can do tricks.*
Apostrophe of Omission**'**	Indicates a missing letter. *He doesn't like dogs.*
Apostrophe of Possession**'**	Indicates ownership. *This is Toby's dog.*
Ellipsis**…**	Creates a pause or suspense. *I opened the door…and I saw…a dog!*
Parenthetical commas**,**	Help to mark off additional information.\ *Spot, a dog who was young at heart, could do the most amazing tricks.*

Approaching a Poem – MESSAGE, TONE, LANGUAGE and STRUCTURE, CONTEXT

MESSAGE
- What is the poem about?
- Are meanings clear or ambiguous? Literal or figurative?
- Who is the speaker? What are their thoughts?
- Are there any alternative interpretations?
- What is the key message/ morale of the poem?
- Who is the poem written to?
- What themes are in the poem? Why are these significant?
- How is the reader intended to react?
- How does the poem make you feel?

TONE
- How does the speaker/ subject feel?
- What is the feeling that you get when reading the poem? What attitudes does the poem express?
- What mood runs through the poem? Why has the poet done this? What is the poet trying to say?
- Does the mood stay the same throughout the poem, or does it change?

LANGUAGE & STRUCTURE
- Where are key words and why are they significant?
- Are there any effective language techniques uses by the poet?
  (See the 'Language Techniques' section of the knowledge organiser)
- What do you notice about the structure of the poem?
  (See the 'Structural Information/Techniques' section of the knowledge organiser)
- Link back: how do the language or structural choices made by the poet lead you to your understanding of the MESSAGE and TONE?

CONTEXT:
- Who is the poet and when did they live?
- What happened in the poet's life? Did this influence their poetry?
- What social/ political ideas did the poet hold? How do these affect his/her poetry?
- What styles/ forms/ language is the poet known for? Are these evident in this poem?
- When/where do you think that the poem was set/written?
- What were the main attitudes at the time? What clues in the poem are there for this?
- Is the poem linked to any historical events? How is this significant?

Structural Information/Techniques – the form (style) of the poem, its rhyme, rhythm, and meter, and how it is set out on the page

Form
The form of a poem is its physical structure. A poem's form is dictated by its stanza structure, line lengths, and rhyme scheme, amongst other features. Here are some common forms of poetry:

- **Sonnet** – A short rhyming poem with 14 lines. Sonnets use iambic meter in each line, and use line-ending rhymes.
- **Elegy** – A poem of serious reflection, normally about the dead.
- **Narrative** – Narrative poems tell the story of events through poetry. There are clear narration, characters and plot.
- **Epic** – A lengthy poem celebrating adventures & accomplishments.
- **Free Verse** – Free verse poems do not follow any rules.
- **Ballad** – A long poem in short stanzas – normally quatrains (4 lines) - that tells a story. They often use repetition.

Rhyme
Rhyme is the 'correspondence of sound between words or the endings of words, especially when these are used at the ends of lines of poetry.'
Poets use rhyme for a number of reasons:

- To make a poem more musical and give it a 'beat' or 'rhythm, or to show creativity and sophistication in language'
- To emphasise particular words/sounds that hold value or add meaning to the poem/ its messages;
- Aid the memory for recitation purposes.

Poets organise the rhyme in their poems using Rhyme Schemes:

- This can help to establish the form – for example, the English sonnet traditionally holds an ABAB-CDCD-EFEF-GG rhyme scheme.

Stanzas
A stanza is a grouped set of lines in a poem, set apart from other lines by a blank line of indentation.

- Stanzas are often used to group related ideas, or show content related to a particular time or place.
- Poets manipulate the number, type, and length of stanzas to aid meaning.
- Names of stanzas of different lengths are shown on the right.

Metre/Rhythm
The metre of a poem is the measured pattern of rhythm created by stressed and unstressed syllables. Rhythm refers to the overall tempo, or pace, at which the poem unfolds.
Poets who write free verse often tend to ignore meter and focus instead on the content and tone of their poem. However, many poems follow a clear metre throughout. Common metres are below:

- Iambic: Metre which starts with an unstressed and then a stressed syllable.
- Trochaic: Metre which starts with a stressed and then an unstressed syllable.
- Dactylic: Metre which starts with a stressed and then 2 unstressed syllables.
- Anapestic: Metre which has 2 unstressed and then a stressed syllable.

Key Questions Regarding Structure
- What is the form of the poem? How do you know?
- Does the poem have a regular or irregular structure? Why?
- How many stanzas does it have? What can be read from this?
- Does the poem rhyme? What rhyme scheme does it use? What is the effect of this? Is the rhyme regular or irregular?
- What can be noted about the line length/ metre?
- What rhythm (if any) runs through the poem? Why did the poet include this line length/ metre/ rhythm in the poem?

Line Type/Length
Lines of poetry can end in two ways – enjambment (the sentence runs over two lines) or end-stopped.
Unlike prose, writers of poetry can end lines where they choose, meaning that the line type and length is often employed to support meaning.

- The use of long lines, containing enjambment, for example, can reflect complex or even confusing ideas.
- Short, end-stopped lines may be used for dramatic effect, or to allow the reader to dwell on ideas.

Language Techniques – vocabulary, phrases, techniques and devices used by the poet.

Interesting Adjectives	Describing words that are specific or beyond the most obvious, creating a clear effect.	"Parting with his poison — Flash of diabolic tail in the dark room - he risked the rain again."
Interesting Verbs	Doing words that are specific or beyond the most obvious, creating a clear effect.	"Stumbling across a field of clods towards a green hedge That dazzled with rifle fire, hearing Bullets smacking the belly out of the air"
Imagery	Words or phrases that appeal to any sense or any combination of senses.	"Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red, Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou, Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed"
Similes	A comparison between two objects using "like" or "as"	"O my Luve is like a red, red rose That's newly sprung in June O my Luve is like the melody That's sweetly played in tune."
Metaphors	A comparison between two things in order to give clearer meaning to one of them.	"'Hope' is the thing with feathers— / That perches in the soul And sings the tune without the words/ And never stops - at all"
Alliteration	The repetition of initial consonant sounds	"With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim; He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change."
Assonance	The repetition of vowel sounds	"With its leaping, and deep, cool murmur… …White and shining in the silver-flecked water."
Repetition	The repeating words, phrases, lines, or stanzas	Keeping time, time, time, In a sort of Runic rhyme, To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Onomatopoeia	The use of words which imitate sound	"A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings."
Oxymoron	A figure of speech in which apparently contradictory terms appear together.	"Down the close, darkening lanes they sang their way To the siding-shed, And lined the train with faces grimly gay."
Personification	A figure of speech which gives animals, ideas, or inanimate objects human traits or abilities	"Death, be not proud, though some have called thee Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;"
Hyperbole	Exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally.	"The sea him lent those bitter tears Which at his eyes he always wears/ And from the winds the sighs he bore, Which through his surging breast do roar."