**Improving your marks in Unfamiliar Text:**

**MERIT**

“Shows convincing understanding”

This means that you make a statement that explains the idea or feature, with considerable further detail to justify it; gives reasons, showing ability to read “between the lines.” Will make **several comments** in relation to at least one point; may use a range of examples to illustrate a point; may include multiple points to show they are making connections.

**EXCELLENCE**

“Shows perceptive understanding”

This means that you appreciate how significant aspects of the text communicate **the writer’s** purpose “beyond the lines.” Synthesises points from across the text; explores a **theme** with **examples from throughout the text**; shows understanding of the writer’s craft; and may also relate this to the **wider context of society** and **human experiences**.

Explaining the use of language features:

You must explain why the author has used the language feature/the effect of the language feature in the **context** of the text you have read. This means you cannot give a language feature’s general effect. You must take the common effect and link it to the text you read.

We know that writers use similes and metaphors to help reader’s create an image in their mind, or to compare it with something they recognise. That is what similes and metaphors are used for; that is their *literal* meaning. However, you MUST explain why the writer has chosen that specific comparison, and explain why that comparison is effective, and what idea it conveys. What specific image does it bring up?

**To show perception:**

* Comment on the writer’s **purpose** – what is their message? What is their reason for writing the text? How do techniques or specific examples show the writer’s purpose?
* What is the theme in the text? What examples show the theme **throughout** the text? (Note: this means the text as a whole piece, not just one section of it).
* Link techniques and examples together – show how they reinforce an idea. Try not to treat each example as a stand-alone point.
* Link the text, and the message in the text, with society and human experiences. This needs to be explained, so one short, out-of-place comment will not suffice.

**Key tips:**

* Answer all parts of the paper – do not leave out the long answer question.
* Explain your ideas in detail, supported with evidence from the text.
* Question C is given more room on the paper for a reason. Think deeply about the text.
* Use the bullet points in the question to help guide your answer. Think about each bullet point, and support these bullet points with relevant, well-explained examples.
* Read your texts more than once – the first reading gives you an overview only. Further readings of the text will help you identify the overall message and the author’s purpose in the text.