Complete the mindmap with techniques a writer might use to present character in a novel or short story.

**Description of clothing** - can imply wealth, attitude, personality, age, era ...

Creating character
How do writers create a sense of character?
What techniques do they use?
How do we find out what a character is like?
Now read the following ‘crunched’ extract from a well-known story, describing a character.

about advantage all all along always an an and and and and and and and and and and and and and and and and and and and and appeared are as as as asked at at at beggars bestow better bitterer blew blind blue boast but but call came care carried cheek children chill chin christmas clutching cold cold come coming could could courts covetous crowded dark dear degree did did didn’t didn’t distance dogdays dogs doorways down edge entreaty even ever ever evil external eye eye eyebrows eyes falling features fire flint foul from frosty froze gait generous gladsome grasping grating grind had had hail hand handsomely hard have he he he he he head heat heaviest him him him him him him him him his his his his his his his is is it it its its keep know know knowing less life life liked lips little looks low made man master me men's more my never nipped no no no no no no no no no nobody nose nuts o'clock of of of office often oh old old on on on on once one one ones only open or out out over own owners oyster paths pelting place pointed purpose rain rain red respect rime said saw say scraping secret see self-contained sharp shrewdly shriveled sinner sleet snow snow solitary spoke squeezing steel stiffened stone stopped street struck such such sympathy tails temperature than than that thaw the the the they they they thin thing though tight-fisted to to to to to to to to to to trifle tug up upon very voice wag warm warmth warning was was was was was was way way weather weather what what what when when where which will wind wintry wiry with with within woman would would wrenching you you

1. Decide whether this is a likeable character or not and find evidence in the language to support your claim.

2. Highlight any nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs that are repeated.

3. Notice words that start with the same letter – which is the most frequent initial letter? Does this have any effect on you as a reader?

4. Using only the words above create three sentences of your own to describe this character.

5. What name do you think this character should have? Why?
Here is the extract in its original form. It is taken from Charles Dickens’ story *A Christmas Carol*. You may notice that one word was omitted from the crunched version. Which word is it and why was it omitted?

**Read and annotate this extract**, looking for evidence of how Dickens has presented the character of Scrooge.

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grind-stone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shriveled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dogdays; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often "came down" handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?" No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, "No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!"

But what did Scrooge care? It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call "nuts" to Scrooge.
You will now be using the following guidelines to help you write an extended answer to the following question:

**How does Dickens present the character of Scrooge in this extract?**

**Notes before writing**

- The question is asking you to consider how the character is **presented**.

- A good answer will look at the different ways in which we **learn** about the character and **explore** the effects of these.

- You should aim to discuss one or two techniques per paragraph (you may use more than one quotation to highlight this). For example one paragraph might focus on the physical appearance of Scrooge, another might focus on the way Dickens uses the senses to involve the reader.

- With this particular extract, it is a good idea to start at the beginning and work your way through the different approaches used to emphasise Scrooge’s cold and miserly nature.
Suggested outline and sentence starters

(though of course, you don’t have to use these at all)

**Introduction:** Give an overview of the character presented by the extract as a whole. You can use some embedded quotations here, though there’s no need to analyse in this opening paragraph. Aim for a few sentences, summarising the character.

*In this extract we are presented with...*

**Paragraph 1:** Explore the use of metaphor and simile in the opening lines. What impact do these have on the reader? You might also like to explore the use of alliteration in the sentence that starts ‘Hard and sharp...’.

*In the opening paragraph Dickens uses imagery to create a vivid impression of Scrooge. He is described as ‘a tight-fisted hand at the grind-stone’, and this metaphor suggests... We are also told that he is ‘hard and sharp as flint’ and this simile adds to the previous image by...*

**Paragraph 2:** Look at the list of adjectives in the first paragraph – two techniques are employed here. Can you explain what they are?

*A list, that seems potentially endless...
Verbs are used as adjectives, invoking...
The effect of these words is to create a sense of...*

**Paragraph 3:** Explore the appeal to the senses in the opening paragraph. You might also like to look at the use of assonance in this section. Can you explain the effect of the repeated short ‘i’?

*Each sense is appealed to in turn and this has the effect of...
The reader can picture Scrooge’s ‘nipped...nose’ and his ‘shrivelled...cheek’...*

**Paragraph 4:** Dickens now focuses on temperature. How does he emphasise Scrooge’s coldness? Use two examples and explain how these work.

**Paragraph 5:** Explore the negative impact this character has on others. It is interesting that the dialogue we are presented with is one that has never actually happened – what effect does this have on the reader? How does Dickens intensify the reader’s impression of Scrooge? Use two examples and explain the sense of escalation.

**Paragraph 6:** Notice the different tone of the last paragraph. It is still 3rd person, and still a narrative voice (rather than Scrooge’s own) but we are invited to look at the world from Scrooge’s point of view...or, you might suggest that the narrator takes a sarcastic tone here...or both! You decide!