Symbolism

Writers often use symbolism to explore ideas and themes in a novel. Read the excerpt below and discuss how this description of Father Christmas relates to the ideas and themes in the novel:

In town, outside Sainsbury’s, the scariest Father Christmas I’d ever seen was slumped in the back of a plywood sleigh. He was thin and short. So thin that his new black Santa’s belt wound twice around his waist. Stiff black stubble showed on his chin beneath an ill-fitting, off-white Santa beard and – strangest of all, I thought – a pair of brand new trainers gleamed on his feet. When he Ho-ho-ho’d he sounded like a serial killer.

1. Highlight all the words that tell the reader that this is not a traditional Father Christmas image.

2. Explain why Kevin Brooks has described Father Christmas in this way and how it links to the themes and ideas in the novel.

3. Find another example of Christmas imagery being used in a symbolic way in Chapter 1. Read through the novel and record at least three other examples.