

SEVEN GHOSTS

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1. Synopsis

Blurb

Jake and the other finalists in a story writing competition have been invited to a stately home for a tour like no other. As their guide leads them through the grand rooms, hidden nooks, and magnificent grounds, they are about to hear the stories of seven ghosts who haunt these walls.

But strange shapes and shadows follow Jake as he journeys through the house. The tour guide's behaviour becomes ever more suspicious. With each tale that he hears, Jake begins to feel more uneasy, and soon he will discover that something is very, very wrong....

Context

Pupils need to understand the concept of suspense.

Themes

- The paranormal
- Class and entitlement
- Inference v. literal
- Revenge
- Suspicion v. trust
- Points of view - justification of motivation

Ghost 1 illuminates class and entitlement. 1822.

Ghost 2 again shows issues of class and how servants are viewed and treated. 1872.

Ghost 3 shows a different view of a wealthy family – earned wealth and how they feel it is important to 'look like' they appreciate the community. 1893.

Ghost 4 indicates the pressure to be a certain way and the need the child had for approval. 1911.

Ghost 5 highlights jealousy and envy in an aristocratic setting focused on parties and entertaining. 1920s.

Ghost 6 shows different residents of the hall - a rock musician. 1970s

Ghost 7 written in the first person – a reveal to the other threads. Present day.

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2. Prepare Read Review Model

Prepare

Preparation of a book allows students to:

- Be ready for words not encountered before (decoding and understanding) fluency
- Understand the context of the book and access background information **knowledge**
- Build relationships with the characters and their motivation **engagement**
- Build skills and knowledge which will enhance the enjoyment of the book **confidence**

Read

During reading, signposts are given to:

- Understanding
- Rhythm
- Tone
- Devices
- Opportunities to build fluency

Review

After reading there are opportunities to:

- Practise skills together
- Check and deepen understanding
- Pinpoint literacy
- Examine literal and inferential meanings
- Review, summarise and put each chapter in context
- Ask questions
- Form and express opinions

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	Prepare	Read	Review
1 Seven Ghosts	Enhance background knowledge about different points of view and opinions on ghosts (see links). What are they? Do any students have strong views? Talk about artefact evidence versus anecdotal evidence. Do any students know any ghost stories to tell? Pick out language features, vocabulary and devices used in the oral retelling which is particular to the genre. I noticed you said.... I noticed you used... Did anyone spot....?	Note what you learn about Jake and how the context is introduced. How do you find out about the setting, the circumstances, and the characters? How do the illustrations on page 4 contribute to the mood? Jake looked at the other.... enter his story on page 6	Re read the passage: 'Jake looked at the others.... enter his story' on page 6. It tells of how Jake feels about others, but the implication illuminates how Jake feels about himself. It is as if we see him in contrast to the others. Talk about inference. Read the passage aloud in pairs or groups. Can you highlight the inference by tone of voice and expression?
2 Ghost 1 to page 27	The following chapter highlights many contrasts. Old and new; rich and poor; permanent and temporary... Can you generate other opposites that you may have come across in other reading?	Whilst reading this story, notice the contrasts in viewpoint and lifestyles. Passage: "A huge grin appeared on....". Read to practise fluency and expression. Read it 2-3 times until coherent.	This chapter, you could argue is about class and privilege. It is implied in how the characters speak to each other and how they feel about their status. Find evidence for this.
2 Present day Page 28 -	Discuss Ghost 1. What happened. Give a short, chronological retelling.	As you read, can you spot a change in Jake? Is there a logical explanation for what Jake sees?	Fill in the mind map to begin to document the chronology of the house, and the structure of the book.
3 Ghost 2	This chapter is about a servant girl. Discuss a 'workhouse', which is where she used to be and why she	While you read, take a note of the vivid description in this chapter. The description and	Discuss 'motivation' i.e., why characters act as they do. Why did Lady Agnes pick Maisie? Why did Sir

<p>To page 47</p>	<p>believed that being a servant is better than the workhouse.</p>	<p>'painting a mental picture' also come through in the choice of verbs used. Can you find examples of this?</p>	<p>Michael pay for Maisie's funeral? Why did his wife dismiss Mrs Miller's concerns? Why did Maisie's ghost appear?</p>
<p>3 Present day Page 48-</p>	<p>What do you think will happen to Jake in the next part of the chapter?</p>	<p>What does Jake begin to suspect about the others?</p>	<p>Discuss what you notice about Jake now. Fill in the second ghost story part of the mind map.</p>
<p>4 Ghost 3 To page 61</p>	<p>Why is the 'Ice House' a perfect setting for a ghost story?</p>	<p>Read to the punctuation. Imagine you are reading out loud to a group who need to understand the story.</p>	<p>The family in Grimstone Hall now are privileged in a different way from the previous families. Can you find the parts of the text which highlight this? Why? Are Rupert and his father's attitudes different from each other?</p>
<p>4 Present day Page 62-</p>	<p>Does Rupert have a conscience about what he did? There is contrasting evidence in the first part of the chapter. Can you find two statements which illustrate this conflict?</p>	<p>Read the text carefully to understand what a 'folly' is and why they were built.</p>	<p>This part of the chapter starts with the sentence: 'The boy next to Jake shivered.' There is a literal meaning here but there is also a suggestion of something else. What? Fill in the mind map.</p>
<p>5 Ghost 4 To page 79</p>	<p>Link: https://www.e-architect.com to find out more and view an image of a folly. Tell a partner what the purpose of a 'folly' was. Did it have an alternative name?</p>	<p>Read the following short paragraph a couple of times; "Yes," said William. "I heard Father tell my mother that you might not know anything about mathematics or history or poetry but at least</p>	<p>Why is the passage you repeated whilst reading so significant? What does it reveal about the attitudes of the family?</p>

		you could throw a ball and climb a tree.”	
5 Present day Page 80-	What have all ghost stories so far got in common? Does your common thread have to do with structure, plot, motivation, or something else?	Read this short part of the chapter out loud to a partner. Convey as much meaning as you can through expression, flow, and enunciation. If you make a mistake, re-run the sentence.	There is water on the floor near Mrs Fox. Jake has a reasonable idea about why it is there... Do you suspect something else? What could it be? Mind map.
6 Ghost 5 To page 100	In the next chapter, Margaret plays the piano for guests. Read the passage ‘But the years had rolled by, andat the end.,’ on page 83. What does it say about Margaret’s playing? It never actually says it's bad but it’s definitely implied. What is the tone of this excerpt? Can it be read aloud making the implied meaning clear?	On page 86. ‘practise’ is spelt with an ‘s’ in the first paragraph, and ‘practice’ is spelt with a ‘c’ in the second paragraph. Work out why two different spellings are used by reading the sentences containing the two words.	Who do you feel sympathetic towards, or feel sorry for after reading this story and why?
6 Present day Page 101-	There is a sense of ‘natural justice’ about the stories so far. What does this mean, and can you cite examples from the previous stories?	While you read, pick up clues about Jake and Mrs Fox.	“If I tell you more, I’ll spoil the story” says Mrs Fox at the end. What device is this an example of? Why does she say this? How does it leave you feeling? Mind map
7 Ghost 6 To page 115	What is ‘the occult’? What does it mean? Do you believe in the supernatural? Why? Why not?	As you read the top of page 110, it says Fallon only visits when his father is away. Yet, he is primarily his father’s friend. What could you read into this? What is the literal meaning of the text? What is the inferential meaning?	In this chapter, Kingfisher asked himself what the big deal was regarding boarding school. What are the arguments for and against? What was Kingfisher’s opinion and how was this different from his father? Why did his father send him away

			to school and refuse to let him move?
7 Present day Page117-	“Kingfisher was surprised at how little upset he was,” it says on page 109 after Gareth dies. What does this sentence mean and what does it imply about Kingfisher’s character?	Can you work out the difficult words by ‘chunking’ them up, or reading on to see what they may mean?	“You always remember in the end.” This sentence gives a big clue about what happens with Jake. Is it what you suspected or was it a shock? Were there other hints? Where were they? Perhaps you misinterpreted the clues – they may have suggested that Mrs Fox was a ghost? Mind map
8 Ghost 7	Read the first paragraph together. Why does this feel more personal? What has the writer used?	As you read, pick up clues about what kind of boy Jake was. What were his character and personality like?	In this chapter, what did you learn about Jake? What is Jake’s response to Mr Malik telling him that he can do whatever he wants to be able to do? Find evidence to back up your opinion.
<p>Did the book have a ‘satisfying’ ending? Were all your questions and concerns answered? How did it leave you feeling? Pick any character and tell a partner why they deserved what happened to them. Complete your mind map.</p>			

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4. Vocabulary to prepare and appreciate

Vocabulary		
	Tricky words to prepare <i>before reading</i>	Wow words
1 Seven Ghosts	headphones polished banisters (talk about what is implied about the setting) Grimstone Manor House Seventeenth century vandalised burgled vertigo	shuffled atmospheres submit applause ripple of murmuring gaspd nagged
2 Ghost 1	Clarence former 'French musket ball' 'in equal measure' 'travelling folk' 'your honour' poaching gamekeeper 'line of fire' 'of all things'	clutching saluting snorted clubbed sulking yanked snagged pinnacles
2 present day p.28-	Old fashioned Queen Victoria	squinted weirdness (this word breaks a spelling rule. How come?)
3 Ghost 2 To page 47	honeymoon carriage hearth mantlepiece compassion	rumbled frail harsh motioned clamping muffled
3 present day p.48-	Igloo 'icehouse'	
4 Ghost 3 To page 61	wealthy government 'man of the people' 'pang of guilt'	bothersome invasion seeped ducked commotion horrified
4 present day p.62-	padlocked sundial landscaped	alarmed

<p>5 Ghost 4 To page 79</p>	<p>shuttered 'sensitive' (what it means in this context) sickly protective 'normal boy' transformation demon aimlessly</p>	<p>elfin thrashing ravaged</p>
<p>5 present day p.80-</p>		<p>squinted</p>
<p>6 Ghost 5 To p. 100</p>	<p>'Lease of life' 'everyone who was anyone' 'overstayed its welcome' 'cross my heart'</p>	<p>endearing scowling smirked launching asylum</p>
<p>6 present day p.101-</p>	<p>subtle</p>	<p>alarming</p>
<p>7 Ghost 6 To page 115</p>	<p>guitarist hilarious expelled occult coincidence</p>	<p>spurting trance</p>
<p>7 present day p.117-</p>	<p>weirdo</p>	<p>inspired fantastically creepy (why is 'fantastically a really appropriate word?)</p>
<p>8 Ghost 7</p>	<p>magician curse diagonal</p>	<p>yelling scandal slicing</p>

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Text level Mind Map - House chronology
plots and themes

Ghost 1 date and plot	What is going on with Jake?
Ghost 2 date and plot	
Ghost 3 date and plot	
Ghost 4 date and plot	
Ghost 5 date and plot	
Ghost 6 date and plot	
Ghost 7 date and plot	

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6. Task

You are the judge of a short story competition about ghosts. List your criteria for what you will be looking for in a quality short story: what kind of content; what writing devices will the writer use to write the story to have impact and how will the writer convey suspense, fear, and other emotions?

What kind of vocabulary will you be looking for? What, as a reader are your pet hates?

You may like to group your criteria into different categories such as

Mood; Effect; Vocabulary; 'scariness;' or you may choose categories based on how *you* judge quality writing.

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7. Links

Short ghost stories: <https://www.hauntedrooms.co.uk/5-short-true-ghost-stories>

<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/ghost-stories-ks3-11490589>

<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/ks3-paranormal-activity-life-after-death-11552251>

<https://ghosts101.com/what-are-ghosts>

8. Reading Recommendations.

If you liked this book, you might like.....

The Dead Men Stood Together by Chris Priestley

Friends for Life by Andrew Norriss

Skulduggery Pleasant by Derek Landy

The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman

The Haunting of Jessop Rise by Danny Weston

Frozen Charlotte by Alex Bell

The Piper by Danny Weston

Thirteen Chairs by Dave Shelton

Over the Line by Tom Palmer

Also, a group of children who won a competition with a creepy tour prize: **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl**