

Following the signposts for  
greater understanding

# NOTICE & NOTE



# What do good readers do?

- Good readers are alert to the signposts that authors provide.
- When they see those signposts in their reading, they STOP, take NOTICE, and make a NOTE.
- Because of this, they understand what they read better, AND...
- ...they understand and appreciate the author's craft as a writer.

Why does the state put signposts up along the roads?



# Authors provide signposts, too!

- For the same reason---to help you find your way as you read.
- We are going to learn about 6 signposts authors provide and what we can learn from each of them.



# What does each signpost mean?



# Signpost # 1: Contrasts and Contradictions

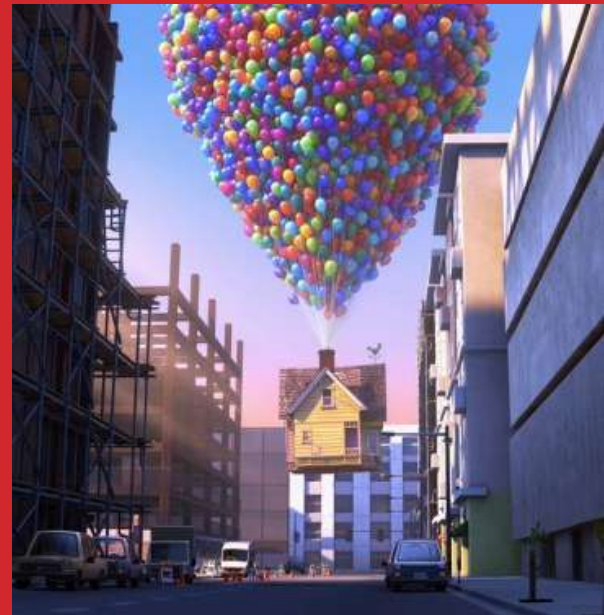
- When a character says or does something that is the opposite of what he/she has been saying or doing all along.
- When there is a sharp contrast between what we expect and what we observe.
- When the character experiences something in contrast with what he/she expects.

Video



# Contrasts and Contradictions

- Contrasts and contradictions show us other aspects of the character or the setting.
- This question encourages thinking/discussion about:
  - Character
  - Motivation
  - Situation
  - Theme
- Makes you think:
  - I was not expecting that!
  - Where did that come from?
  - Why did that happen?
  - That came out of the blue!



What are the contrasts or contradictions in this movie clip?

# Contrasts and Contradictions

-  and ask yourself:

**Why is the character doing that?**

- The answer can help you make a prediction or an inference about the plot or conflict.





and



Notice and Note



When a character says or does something that's opposite (contradicts) what he has been saying or doing all along,

You should



and ask yourself:

**“Why is the character doing that?”**

The answer could help you make a ***prediction*** or make an ***inference*** about the ***plot*** or ***conflict***.

# Contrasts & Contradictions



- “Thank You, M’am” by Langston Hughes
- Follow along as I read the story.
- Be alert for contrasts and contradictions  
-where the characters don’t act the way you expect them to
- Complete the chart below with your partner

What did I notice?	What did my partner say?
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

# What are my final thoughts?

*I think the author uses contrast or contradiction to show the reader...*

Where in the text does the unexpected event or statement show up?	What inferences can you make about why the character would act this way?

# “The All-American Slurp”

## by Lensey Namioka

After reading “The All-American Slurp” on page 315 of your literature book, answer the following questions:

1. Make a list of contrasts and contradictions (events where characters did the opposite of what you expected)
2. Describe how each family member (4 in total) approaches learning the new language. What does this tell you about his/her personality? Which method would you use?
3. Why does the narrator run and hide in the elegant restaurant?
4. Write a chunk paragraph to the following question: Does the narrator want to blend in with the Americans?

# Signpost # 2: Aha Moment

- An **Aha Moment** is a point when we realize something, and that realization changes our actions.
- “Suddenly I realized...”
- “It came to me in a flash...”
- “Now I knew...”

[Video](#)



# Aha Moment

- This signpost is kind of easy to recognize, because you've had lots of Aha Moments yourself.
  - You walk into class; everyone is looking at their notes and you suddenly realize, Aha! There's a test today that you forgot about!



# Aha Moment

- Or you look over your room, see the dirty clothes, the dirty dishes, the papers on your bed and you realize, Aha! My room is a disaster!



- I have to do something about this!

# Aha Moments



- Aha Moments are those moments when we realize something...
- ...and that realization **CHANGES OUR ACTIONS!**



Watch the video to determine:  
What is Bruce's Aha! moment?

How might this moment change things? What does Bruce's Aha Moment make him do? What does he realize? Can you also find the contrast and contradiction?



# Aha Moment

-  and ask yourself:

**How might this change things?**

- If the character just figured out a problem, you've learned about the *conflict and solution*.
- If the character understood a life lesson, you've probably learned the *theme*.



and



Notice and Note



When suddenly a character realizes, understands, or finally figures something out,

You should



and ask yourself:

**“How might this change things?”**

If the character figured out a problem, you probably just figured out the **conflict**

If the character understood a life lesson, you probably just figured out the **theme**.

# Aha Moment



- Excerpt from “Crash” by Jerry Spinelli
- Crash is a middle-school age kid who bullies another kid named Penn Webb. Crash often refers to him by his last name, Webb.
- The first excerpt is from the beginning of the story, when Crash first meets Penn.
- Follow along as we read.

# Aha Moments

- As we read, be alert for Aha Moments- when the character realizes or begins to realize something that changes his/her actions or way of thinking.
- Complete the chart below with your partner:

What did I notice?	What did my partner say?
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

# What are my final thoughts?

*Why do you think the author has the character realize this?*

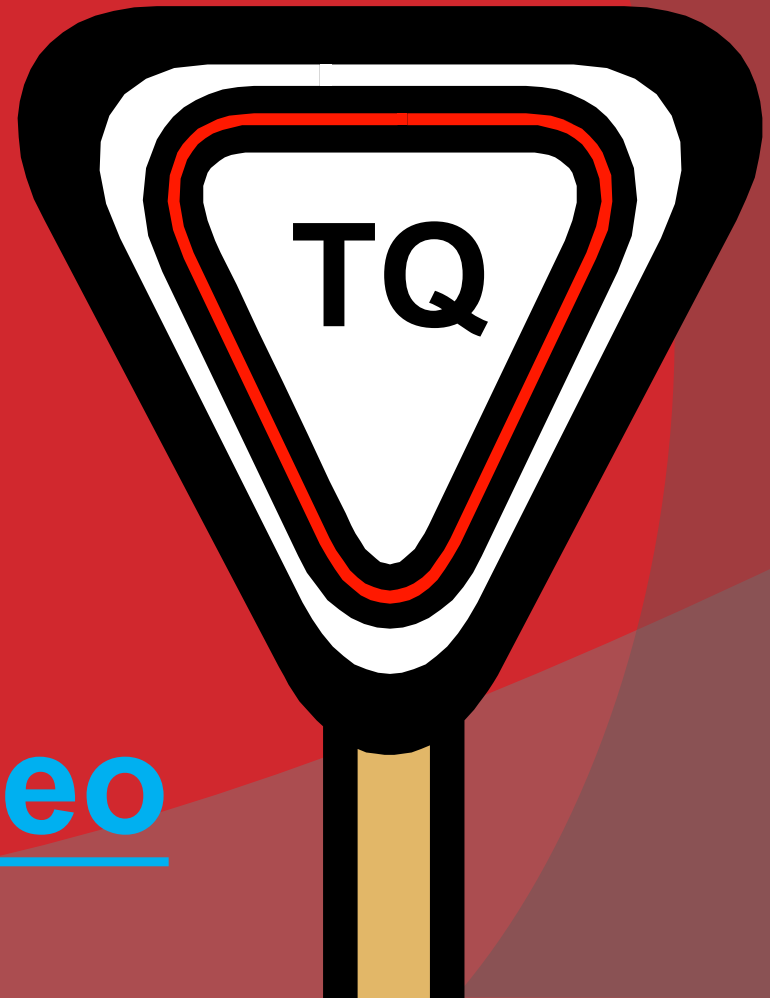
What is the Aha Moment?	What inferences can you make about what the character will do or think now?

# “Charles” by Shirley Jackson

# Signpost # 3 Tough Questions

- When you're reading along and the character asks himself (or another character) a really difficult question...
- ...or expresses serious doubt or confusion...

Video



# Tough Questions

- ⦿ Now we all ask questions every day...
  - What's for dinner?
  - Did we have homework?
  - Will you take out the garbage?
- ⦿ Those aren't "tough questions."
- ⦿ Tough Questions are those that seem, at least for a while, not to have an answer...



# Tough Questions

- ...or to have an answer that will change the way we look at the world or the choices we make.
- When a loved one has died, we may ask ourselves, “Will I ever get over this?”
- When we are pressured to do something we know is wrong, we may ask ourselves, “Am I strong enough to say NO?” Authors often show tough questions in a straightforward way:
  - They often appear in pairs: “Why don’t they talk to me anymore? Why is everyone treating me this way?”
  - Sometimes the character says something like, “I wonder...”

# Tough Questions

- Tough questions are not just about the answer to the question.
- They are often more about big ideas in life and in the book.
- They often make us wonder about other things...
- They may lead us, then, to the theme or lesson of the book.
- Sometimes the author may not ask the question directly...it is implied.



This scene has no words, but you can still figure out:

- What is Mulan's Tough Question?
- What is she asking herself?
- What does she decide?

# Tough Questions

-  and ask yourself:

**What does this question make me wonder about?**

- The answers will tell you about the conflict and might give you ideas about what will happen later in the story. You will learn about a character's INTERNAL CONFLICT.



and



Notice and Note



When the character asks himself a really difficult question,

You should



and ask yourself:

**“What does this question make me wonder about?”**

The answers will tell you about the **conflict** and might give you ideas about **what will happen** later in the story.

# Tough Questions

- Excerpt from “A Long Walk to Water” by Linda Sue Park
- This book is about an eleven year old boy named Salva who lives in Sudan during a time when rebels are raiding villages.
- He becomes separated from his family after the rebels attack his villages.
- He’s now alone, scared and running.

# Tough Questions

- As we read, be alert for the Tough Questions  
-when the character asks himself a really difficult question that reveals his/her concern (inner conflict)
- Complete the chart below with your partner:

What did I notice?	What did my partner say?
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

# What are my final thoughts?

*This questions makes me wonder if...*

*It tells me that...*

What is the question?	What does this question make me wonder about? What does it tell me about the character?

“President Cleveland, Where Are You?”

By Robert Cormier



# Signpost # 4: Words of the Wiser

- Words of the Wiser is when a wiser (sometimes older) character takes the main character aside and gives some good advice.
- Think of your parents or grandparents trying to help you do something the right way so that you don't make a mistake or something doesn't go wrong.

Video



# Words of the Wiser

- Has anyone ever told you...

“If you can’t say something nice, then don’t say anything at all.”

“Don’t put all your eggs in one basket.”

“Treat others as you want to be treated.”

- The advice is probably a life lesson that the author wants you to think about.

- The wiser character is usually an older character like a family member, teacher or maybe even a friendly neighbor.

# Words of the Wiser

Sometimes it takes having someone else give the good advice to realize what is right in front of us.



What is the life lesson that Rafiki wants Simba to learn? How will this change Simba?

# Words of the Wiser

-  and ask yourself:

**What's the life lesson, and how will it affect the character?**

- Whatever the lesson is, you have probably found the theme for the story.



and



Notice and Note



When a character (who's probably older and lots wiser), takes the main character aside and gives serious advice,

You should



and ask yourself:

**“What’s the life lesson, and how might it affect the character?”**

Whatever the lesson is, you’ve probably found a **theme** for the story.

# Words of the Wiser

- Excerpt from “Riding Freedom” by Pam Muñoz Ryan
- The story is about a young girl named Charlotte who lives during the mid-1800’s in an orphanage because both her parents are dead.
- She feels life is hard because she is not allowed to be with the horses and so she decides to run away.
- In this scene, she is saying goodbye to one of the adults that work at the orphanage caring for the horses.

# Words of the Wiser

- As we read, be alert for the Words of the Wiser -when a character pulls the main character aside and give good advice.
- Complete the chart below with your partner:

What did I notice?	What did my partner say?
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

# What are my final thoughts?

*This advice is important in the story and in life because...*

What did I notice?	What inference can you make about why the message is important?

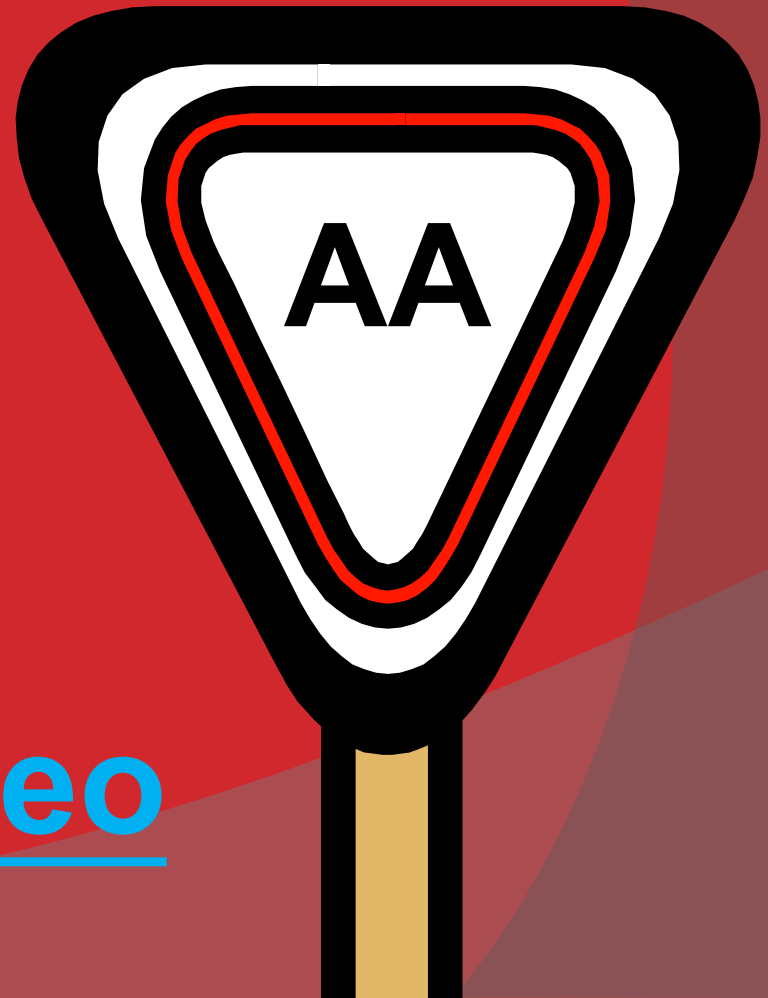


# “Flowers and Freckle Cream” by Elizabeth Ellis

# Signpost # 5: Again and Again

- Again and Again is when an author repeats something in a text, sometimes separated by many pages but clearly intended to make a point.
- It can be a word, phrase, object or situation.

[Video](#)



# Again and Again

- Imagine you are having lunch with your friends and the new kid comes and sits down at the table. One of the other kids in the group gets up and moves to another table. The next day the same thing happens, and again the next day, and the next day. At first you may not notice or think anything of it, but after awhile you do so you ask yourself “Why does my friend keep leaving?”
- There is a reason why this keeps happening over and over again.

# WHY?



# Again and Again

- ❖ Maybe your friend had an argument with the new kid
- ❖ Maybe your friend likes the new kid and doesn't know how to talk to him/her.
- ❖ In a story, the author repeats to show emphasis on a theme or idea



Watch this movie clip  
and decide:

- What does Elsa say to herself over and over again when she touches any object?
- Why does she repeat this over and over?

# Again and Again

-  and ask yourself:

**Why does this keep showing up again and again?**

- This will tell you about the theme and conflict, or it can foreshadow what will happen later.



and



Notice and Note



When you notice  
a word, phrase,  
object, or  
situation  
mentioned over  
and over

You should



and ask yourself:

**“Why does this keep showing up  
again and again?”**

The answers will tell you about the  
**theme** and the **conflict**, or they might  
**foreshadow** what will happen next.

# Again and Again

- Excerpt from “Hatchet” by Gary Paulsen
- The story is about a thirteen year old boy named Brian that is traveling in a small plane flying over the forest in the far north.
- He is seated next to the pilot and in the silence he begins to think to himself.

# Again and Again

- As we read, be alert for the Again and Again moment- when a phrase, word, object or situation are repeated
- Complete the chart below with your partner:

What did I notice?	What did my partner say?
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.



# What are my final thoughts?

*I think the author uses repetition to show...*

What is the idea or phrase that is repeated again and again?	Why do you think the author keeps bringing up this idea?

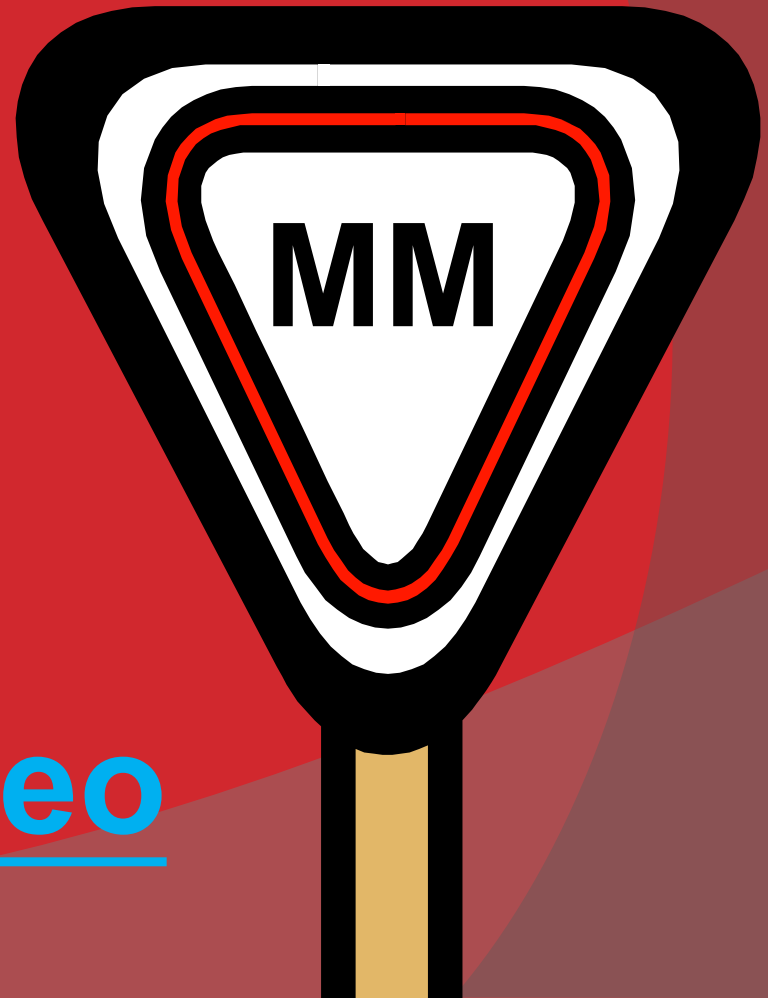
# “Eleven”

by Sandra Cisneros

# Signpost # 6: Memory Moments

- A **Memory Moment** is a point when the author interrupts what's happening in the story to show us the main character as he/she remembers something important.

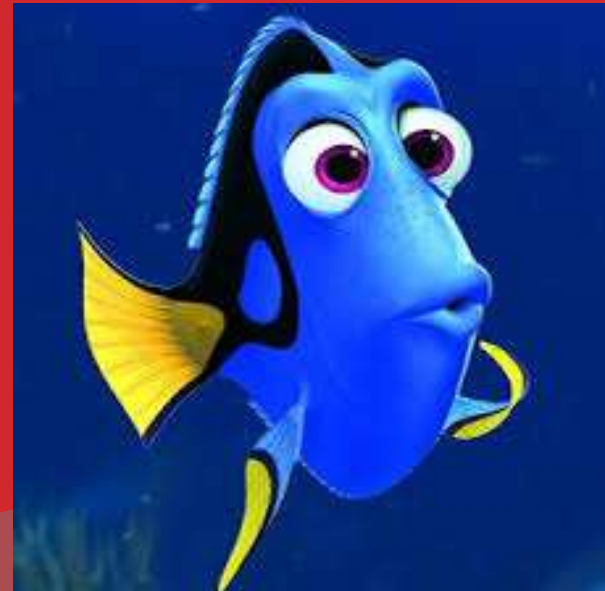
[Video](#)



# Memory Moment

- Sometimes a Memory Moment is very obvious: “I suddenly remembered the time...”
- Sometimes more subtle: “My dad liked to tell the story about...” or “That picture always reminded me of...”

In this movie trailer, what does Dory's *Memory Moment* tell us about what is going to happen in the movie?



# Memory Moment

-  and ask yourself:

**Why might this memory be important?**

- The answer will reveal something about the character, the plot, or the theme.
- It might *foreshadow* something that will happen or that will become important.



and



Notice



and Note

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When the author interrupts the action to tell you a memory,

You should



and ask yourself:

**“Why might this memory be important?”**

The answers will tell you about the **theme**, **conflict**, or might **foreshadow** what will happen later in the story.

# Memory Moment



- “Hope Was Here” by Joan Bauer excerpts:
- Once again, Hope has to leave a place she’s called home.
- We pick up the story as Hope and her aunt are getting into the car to begin their latest move.
- Follow along as I read. Be alert for Hope’s memories.

# Memory Moment

- As we read, be alert for the Memory Moment - when the author interrupts the action to tell a memory.
- Complete the chart below with your partner:

What did I notice?	What did my partner say?
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.



# What are my final thoughts?

*I think the author uses this flashback to show...*

What did the character remember?	Why might the memory be important?

# “The Sandcastle” by Alama Luz Villanueva