6 Signposts to Notice and Note in your Reading

Notice and Notesignposts are particularly noticeable points in a text that stand out as a significant moment in the story. They provide insight into or raise questions about literary elements such as character, setting, conflict, and theme. And because these signposts are consistently found in a majority of books, they support students as they read a wide range of literature—and even nonfiction texts. –Adapted from *Notice and Note, Strategies for Close Reading* by Beers and Probst

**2. WORDS OF THE WISER**

When a character (probably older and

wiser) takes the main character aside and

offers serious advice, STOP and ask, “What’s the life lesson and how might if affect the character?” This lesson is probably the theme of the story. Also, When the character in the book is attempting to give the reader some advice. Pay attention to this and what it could be telling us about our character and theme.

1. **CONTRASTS & CONTRADICTIONS**

When a character does something that contrasts

with what you’d expect or contradicts his earlier

acts or statements, STOP and ask, “Why is the

character doing that?” The answer will help

you make predictions and draw inferences

about the plot and conflict.

**4. AGAIN & AGAIN**

When you notice a word, phrase, or situation

mentioned over and over, STOP and ask yourself,

“Why does this keep happening again and

again?” The answer will tell you about the

theme and conflict, or will foreshadow what

might happen later in the story.

1. **AHA MOMENT**

When a character realizes, understands, or

finally figures out something, STOP and ask

yourself, “How might this change things?”

If it is about a problem, it tells you something

about the conflict; if it is a life lesson, it tells

you something about the theme.

**6. TOUGH QUESTIONS**

When a character asks himself a very difficult

question, STOP and ask yourself, “What does

this question make me wonder about?” The

answer will tell you about the conflict, and

help you think about what might happen

later in the story. Also, pay attention to questions that you think of while reading, what do these tell us about our character and conflict?

1. **MEMORY MOMENT**

When the author interrupts the action to tell

you about a memory, STOP and ask yourself,

“Why might this memory be important?” The

answer will tell you about the theme and conflict,

or will foreshadow what might happen

later in the story.

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