Notice and Note

Signposts for Fiction
When you **NOTICE** any of these signpost moments in a fiction story, poem, drama, or novel:

- **STOP**
- **ASK**
- **NOTE**
Did you Know?

**Most** fiction (short stories, novels, plays, movies, t.v. shows, and even poems) writers use the same tools to write. These tools are signals that help readers understand the text.

Since so many writers use similar tools, knowing what the most common ones are can guide readers beyond comprehension and into analysis.
SIGNPOSTS

Reading fiction is similar to taking a trip through another place. You might recognize some things about the new land, but others can be confusing.

Like when reading a map, knowing what signs to look for will make you more "at home" in the literature.
Dr. Kyleen Beers and Dr. Bob Probst analyzed many of the books most commonly read by young people both in and outside of school, and found some common moments in them. After a lot of very scholarly research and testing, they decided that students could think more deeply and write more analytically about literature with the help of six of these common tools.

They call them signposts, like the signs along the road that help you navigate a journey.
Signposts you Might Notice

- Contrast and Contradictions
- Aha Moment
- Tough Questions
- Words of the Wiser
- Again and Again
- Memory Moment

Since these are general, common devices, not every story will have all of them. They are listed, and are taught, in order from most common to least.
NOTICE:
When a character does something that contrasts with what you'd expect, or contradicts his/her earlier acts or statements,

Ask:
Why is the character doing that?

NOTE: Write and/or discuss your questions and possible answers to them.

The answers might help you make an prediction or draw an inference about the character, plot or conflict.
Contrast and Contradictions

How do the character's words or actions differ from what you would expect, or contradict things you know about him?

What can you predict about what might happen later in the story?

Ask Yourself:

Why is the character doing that?

This might give you insight into the character and/or foreshadow the later plot events.
The AHA Moment

NOTICE:
When a character realizes, understands, or finally figures out something,

STOP

Ask:
How might this change things?

NOTE: Write and/or discuss your questions and possible answers to them.

If the character has realized what a problem is, you have identified the conflict of the story.

If the character has understood a life lesson, you have identified the theme.
AHA Moment

What is the moment when the characters realize what is going to happen?

Have they learned a life lesson? If so, what?

Ask Yourself:

How might this change things?

This can help you identify conflict and/or theme.
Tough Questions

NOTICE:
When a character asks himself/herself a very difficult question,

STOP

Ask:
What does this question make me wonder about?

NOTE: Write and/or discuss your questions and possible answers to them.

The answers might help you identify and analyze the conflict or even the theme of the story, or to understand a character's motives.
NOTICE:
When a character (probably older and wiser) takes the main character aside and offers serious advice,

Ask:
What's the life lesson and how might it affect the character?

NOTE: Write and/or discuss your questions and possible answers to them.

Whatever the lesson is, it will help you determine the theme of the story.
Words of the Wiser

What advice or knowledge does the older, wiser character share with the protagonist?

Ask Yourself:

What's the life lesson and how might it affect the character?

The answer is likely a theme of the story.
NOTICE:
When a word, phrase, image or situation is mentioned over and over,

STOP

Ask:
Why does this keep happening again and again?

NOTE: Write and/or discuss your questions and possible answers to them.

This repetition is an author's way of telling you that something about this word, phrase, or situation is important. It might foreshadow something that is coming. Use it to predict what is coming up.
Again and Again

Is there a word, phrase, image or situation that keeps showing up?

Ask Yourself:

*Why does this keep happening again and again?*

This repetition could be a clue that the phrase or word or situation is important. It can help you predict future plot events.

*Sometimes, a repeated image becomes a symbol that is important to a theme of the story.*
Memory Moment

NOTICE: When the author chooses to interrupt the action to tell you about a memory,

STOP

Ask:

*Why might this memory be important?*

NOTE: Write your questions and possible answers to them.

The answer will help you determine theme, conflict, or even foreshadow future events.
Memory Moment

What do we learn about the character's past?

Ask:
*Why might this memory be important?*

The answers might help you *identify* some *foreshadowing*. It also can help you *analyze* a character's actions.