

6 SIGNPOSTS to NOTICE & NOTE

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.

2) 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.

3) TOUGH QUESTIONS

When a character asks himself/herself 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.

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4) 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 it affect the character?" This lesson is probably connected to the theme of the story.

5) AGAIN AND 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.

6) 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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