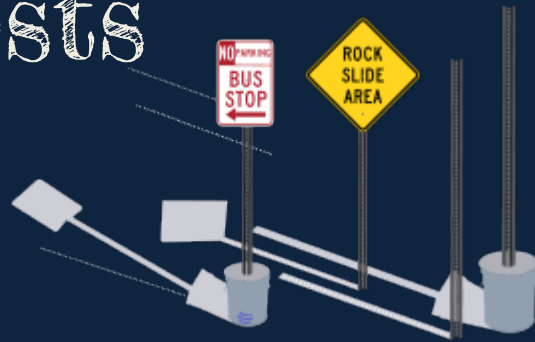


The Six Signposts



INTRO LESSON: *Be a smarter reader!*

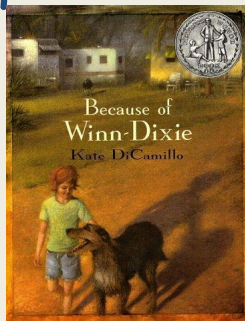
* What is a signpost? Turn to a partner and tell what you think a signpost is.

* From your examples, I'd say that a signpost is something that helps you know where you're going or reminds you to pay attention to something.

Signposts are Everywhere!

* Think about places you find signposts. Discuss with your partner and be ready to share your ideas with the class.

* Did you know that authors put signposts into their stories? They may not look like signposts you see on our roads, but they are similar because they help us know what to watch for.



Signposts

Here are the names of the signposts. Let's discuss what you think each one might be...

CONTRASTS and CONTRADICTIONS

AHA MOMENT

TOUGH QUESTIONS

WORDS of the WISER

AGAIN and AGAIN

MEMORY MOMENT

Let's Review!

- ★ Soon you're going to learn to notice some things that the author has put into a story. What are these called? Let's say it out loud together:

SIGNPOSTS!

- ★ Today we talked about six signposts that authors use. And with each signpost, we're going to learn to ask ourselves one question. I can't wait to begin!

Lesson One: CONTRASTS AND CONTRADICTIONS

If a friend who normally eats lunch at your table in the cafeteria came in one day and sat down alone at a table in the far corner, what would you think?

You'd probably wonder why he or she was acting that way!



As I read, I'm always on the lookout for a place where the author shows me a character acting in a way that is a **CONTRAST** (different) from what I expect or a **CONTRADICTION** (opposite) of how I would expect the character to act.

When you see a contrast or contradiction...

ASK YOURSELF:

Why did the character act that way?

The answer to this question could help you make a prediction or make an inference about the PLOT or CONFLICT.



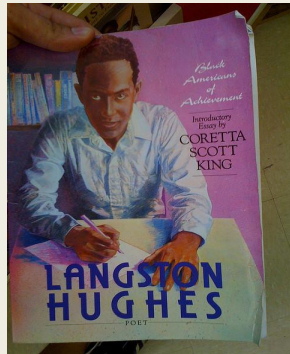
As you answer that question...

sometimes you might even gain insight into the **THEME** (the lesson or message) the author is trying to share. **AMAZING!**

Thank You, M'am (clip) - YouTube

Thank You M'am is the story of a boy trying to steal a woman's purse. Now look at your copy of Thank you, Ma'm by author Langston Hughes and follow along as I read it to you. See if you can spot something that looks like a **Contrast or Contradiction**.

**LOOK FOR THE
UNEXPECTED!**



Thank You M'am



At this point, I'm surprised that the woman does what she does! If someone tried to steal from me and I caught them I don't think I would take him home to wash his face!

She's acting in a way that **Contrasts** (is different from) what I would expect a woman to behave so I'm going to ask myself:

Why did the character act that way?

I think Mrs. Jones notices the boy's dirty face and thinks he looks neglected. Maybe Mrs. Jones is a mother herself and knows what a cared-for child looks like. I wonder if she has a son herself.

Let's read the second part...

of Thank You M'am. Follow along with me!

I'll stop here because I've noticed a character acting in a way that is surprising. Roger is **Contradicting** (acting opposite of) his earlier behavior. At first he wanted to escape. But now, when Mrs. Jones lets go of him and he could run out the open door he chooses to do what she tells him to do.

So I need to ASK MYSELF:

Why did the character act that way?

Ask yourself that question and share with your partner.

Here's the third Thank You M'am...

passage. Look for **Contrasts and Contradictions** as I read it to you. This time I'd like you to text-mark any you find.

Let's stop here. I've noticed several **Contrasts and Contradictions**. On your slate or sticky note, write one down then share with your partner.



ASK YOURSELF:

Why did the character act that way?

Let's discuss your thoughts!

Here's the last passage...

from Thank You M'am. Text-mark any **Contrasts** and **Contradictions** you find.

My head is full of thoughts! First, I want you to look back and find the **Contrast** and **Contradiction** you think is the most interesting. Of course you will then ask the anchor question:

Why did the character act that way?

Share your thoughts with your partner.



Let's Review:

CONTRASTS and CONTRADICTIONS

- ★ Those were great comments about Roger and Mrs. Jones. You were doing what we call "close reading"...reading deeply and bringing yourself close to the text. You were able to make inferences or predictions because you were reading closely.
- ★ Today we learned one text clue an author gives us. The name of this clue is...

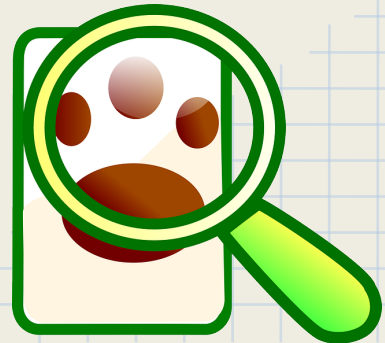
CONTRASTS and CONTRADICTIONS

Let's Review!

- ★ When I see a character acting in a way I wouldn't expect I want to stop right there and ask myself one question:

Why did the character act this way?

- ★ When I can answer that question, I am learning more about the story and more about the character!



Lesson Two: AHA MOMENT

- ★ Today we're going to learn another signpost you should look for as you read. This one is called an **Aha Moment**.
- ★ Have you ever looked around your bedroom at the clothes on the floor, your unmade bed, the overflowing garbage can and the papers all over and suddenly realized that your room was a disaster?

That's an **Aha Moment**.



Aha Moments are...

when you realize something...and that realization changes your actions! Like when you realized your room was a filthy mess and started cleaning it up or at least decided that it needed to be cleaned! Realizing it was a mess changed your actions...instead of sitting there just looking at it, you made a decision and eventually took action. Maybe you cleaned it up yourself or paid your little sister to do it for you! Perhaps you asked your parent to help.



As I read...

I am on the lookout for clues the author gives me that the character has come to an important new understanding about something.

The character may say something like:

- ★ "Suddenly I realized..."
- ★ "It came to me in a flash..."
- ★ "I now knew..."
- ★ "I finally understood that..."
- ★ "The thought came to me..."



When I notice...

a character suddenly seeing something in a new way I ask myself:

How might this change things?

The answer to this question can help you understand the **CONFLICT** in the story or even the **THEME** (message or lesson).

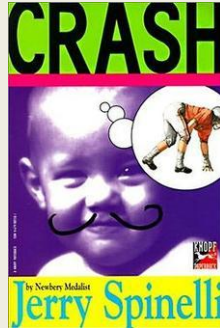


Let's look for an Aha Moment.

I'll read you some passages from the book *Crash* by author Jerry Spinelli. It's a book about a middle school boy named Crash who bullies another boy named Penn Webb. Crash often calls him "Webb".

[Crash Novel Trailer - YouTube](#)

The first scene is from the beginning of the book where Crash is outside and Penn Webb comes walking up the sidewalk.



Did you spot Crash's Aha Moment?

Text-mark that moment if you spotted it!

It says: "all of a sudden I knew what I had to do"

Now we need to stop and think about what that means. Crash has suddenly become aware of something...and that's going to change his actions! Discuss what Crash noticed and ask yourself:

How might this change things?

Our next Crash passage...

finds Crash and Penn Webb about to compete against each other in a school race. Webb's parents and his great-grandfather, Henry Wilhide Webb III, have come to watch. Crash is looking at all three of them and thinking about his own grandfather, Scooter. Up until now, Crash has continued to bully Penn Webb.

See if you can spot the **Aha Moment!**



Did you find it?

The **Aha Moment** appears when the author writes "The thought came to me".



Now we need to ASK OURSELVES:

How might this change things?

(How might Crash's realization that the two grandfathers might have liked each other change Crash?)

Discuss this with your partner and be ready to share!

Here's our next Crash passage:

It's still before the race, and Crash is thinking about Penn Webb's great-grandfather.

Did you spot the **Aha Moment**? This one is a bit tricky. It's in the largest paragraph. It says "suddenly I saw something: a gift".

At first we might think Crash saw something with his eyes, but if we really think about it, it's clear that he "saw" something with his mind.



It's time to ask

How might this change things?

(Crash has realized that he is the only one who can give Penn Webb's great-grandfather a gift, and he can give that gift because he's a fast runner. How might that change what Crash does next?)



Our last Crash passage...

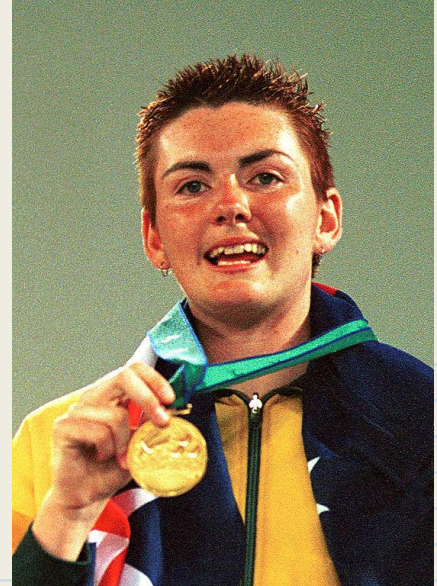
is about the race itself. Keep your eyes sharp...look for an **Aha Moment!**

(3rd par.) "It occurred to me"

(5th par.) "for the first time in my life, I didn't know if I wanted to win"

(last par.) "I knew"

How might this change things?



Let's review what we've learned about Aha Moments:

Turn to your partner one last time and tell each other what you learned today. Include:

- ★ What is an **Aha Moment**?
- ★ What do you look for in the text to spot one?
- ★ What is the anchor question you ask yourself when you find one?



Lesson Three: TOUGH QUESTIONS

We all ask questions like: What's for dinner? or Do I really have to do my homework?
We certainly want answers to those questions, but they aren't tough questions.

Tough Questions are those we ask ourselves or someone we trust that seem, at least for a while, not to have an answer.

We might ask: How will I ever get over the sadness of losing my pet?
What will happen if Mom loses her job and can't pay the rent?
Why does my brother pick on me?
Who will take care of me if my parents can't?
Am I brave enough to say no?



When you share tough questions...

with a friend, adult--or just yourself--you are really sharing something that bothers you. When something bothers you it's called "internal conflict", and you can spot it in a story when a character asks **Tough Questions** of herself or of a trusted person.



How to spot Tough Questions

Tough Questions often show up in pairs such as:
Why won't they talk to me anymore? Why are they treating me this way?

Sometimes the character may not actually ask a question but start a sentence with:

"I WONDER..." such as: "I wonder if the war will ever end."
or: "I wonder why my BFF didn't invite me to her party."

These are statements, but they still have the character looking for answers!



Let's look at...

a passage from A Long Walk to Water by author Linda Sue Park.. It's a novel about an 11-year-old boy in the country of Sudan during a time when rebels are raiding villages. Salva becomes separated from his family after his village is attacked, and he's terribly frightened and running.

[A Long Walk to Water Book trailer - YouTube](#)

Follow along on your copy and get ready to text-mark any **Tough Questions** you see.



Salva's Tough Questions

Salva asks: Where are we going? Where is my family? When will I see them again?

These are **Tough Questions** for an 11-year-old, and I'm sure we can feel Salva's pain.

ASK YOURSELF:



What do these questions make me wonder about?

The answer to this question can tell us about the **CONFLICT** in the story and may give us ideas about what will happen later in the story!

I am wondering...

- ★ Could I have survived at age eleven without knowing where my family was?
- ★ How will the people Salva is with react to him? Will they ignore him or try to help this young boy?
- ★ Most of all, I wonder what Salva is going to have to do to survive.



Let's look at the next passage...

We're skipping ahead in the story. Salva, who has been on his own for a while, finds a small group of people who are trying to survive. Follow along as I read the passage.

Obviously, the **Tough Questions** are: "would he have given water to those men? Or would he, like most of the group, have kept his water for himself?"



It's time to...

ASK YOURSELF:



What does this make me wonder about?

With your partner, answer this question and be prepared to share your responses with our class.

Wondering about...

the questions Salva asks lets us imagine ourselves in this situation, which lets us understand the story better! When we get curious, we get more involved in the story!



One more Salva passage...

for us to read, so follow along. You'll easily spot the **Tough Questions**.

ASK YOURSELF:

What does this make me wonder about?

Share your thoughts with your partner.

Let's review Tough Questions.

REMEMBER: Authors show us **Tough Questions** to give us insight into the struggle (internal conflict) the main character faces. When we see those questions we should ask ourselves:

(Let's read it out loud together)

What does this make me wonder about?

Lesson Four: Words of the Wiser

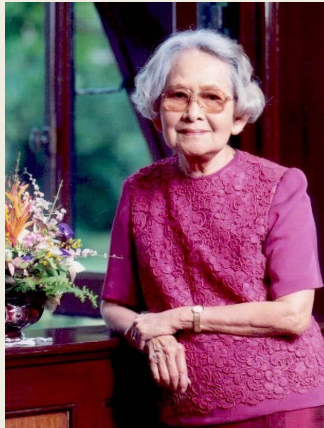
When I was about your age, my mom was always giving me advice!

- ★ "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all."
- ★ "You don't have to be friends, but at least be friendly."
- ★ And my favorite! "Always wear clean underwear because you never know if you're going to get into an accident!"



Authors are kind of like...

my mom. They like to include wise words...advice...in their stories. I am always on the lookout for scenes where the main character has a serious talk with a wiser character. Who might that character be? Often:



grandparent
teacher
parent
brother or sister
kind neighbor
employer



When we notice Words of the Wiser...

we want to pay attention to that scene, because the wise character is giving advice that is helpful at this moment, but could also be helpful throughout life. When we notice **Words of the Wiser** we want to ask ourselves this anchor question:

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

When you can answer this question you have probably found a **THEME** for the story!

Let's practice finding Words of the Wiser!

Riding Freedom is a book about a young girl named Charlotte who lives in an orphanage in the 1800s. She loves horses but is not allowed to work with them simply because she's a girl (UGH!).

Charlotte decides to run away, and she tells a trusted older man at the orphanage that she must escape. The man's name is Vern, and he cares for the horses at the orphanage. One of the horse's names is Justice.

Follow along with me and look for **Words of the Wiser**.



What advice...

did Vern give to Charlotte?

"I know, I know Miss Charlotte. You gotta do what your heart tells you."

Now that I've noticed the advice I will stop and ASK MYSELF:



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

I think Vern's advice might help Charlotte muster the courage to follow through with her plan to run away. It may also help her in the future when she faces tough decisions. Vern has shared his **Words of the Wiser**.

Second Riding Freedom Passage

Charlotte follows Vern's advice and leaves the orphanage. She finds a nice older man who lets her live in his barn and begins to teach her to drive a six-horse stagecoach. Learning to drive a stagecoach is challenging!



Follow along as I read the passage and be ready to text-mark the **Words of the Wiser**.

You will also need a sticky note or slate.

Did you find the Words of the Wiser?

Vern said: "Every time you fall, you learn somethin' new 'bout your horse. You learn what not to do next time."

Now ASK:

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

Jot down your answer on your slate or sticky note.



Last Riding Freedom Passage

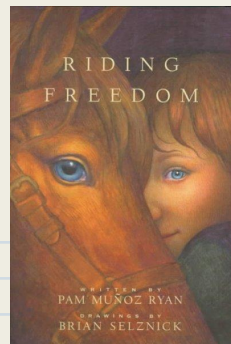
As the story continues, Charlotte has become a good stagecoach driver, but on this day someone from her unhappy past wants to ride on her stagecoach and this upsets her.

Ebenezer, the man who taught Charlotte to drive the stagecoach, sees she is upset and says: (Follow along as I read to you)

Soooo...here we are at the end of the scene and I spot another signpost! Look for it and text-mark the **Words to the Wiser**.

Now ask yourself the anchor question and answer it on your slate/note.

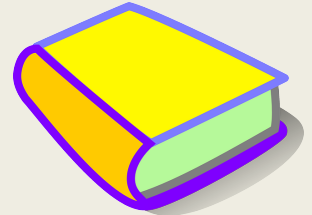
What's the life lesson and how might it affect the character?



Let's review Words of the Wiser

Today we learned to look for scenes where a wiser and usually older character gives advice to the main character to help him or her through this moment in the story, but also through much of his or her future life.

When you find that scene, be sure to ASK YOURSELF:



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

When you can answer this question, you're learning about what's very important in the story, and that might help you think about the THEME (message or lesson) of the story.

Lesson Five: AGAIN and AGAIN

Much of what we learn about our friends (and our enemies!) we learn by noticing patterns in their behavior. This lesson, **Again and Again** is about spotting those patterns.

A pattern is when something is repeated--happens--**Again and Again**.

Let's say you're on the playground with your two best friends, and a third friend named Shayna arrives. One of the best friends suddenly soon after leaves your group. It happens again the next day. Finally, on the third day your friends leaves AGAIN. You've spotted a pattern!



You've spotted a pattern.

So now what? Noticing the pattern isn't quite enough. You have to ASK YOURSELF:

Why does this keep showing up again and again?

You'll have to really think about it and perhaps compare it to other incidents to see if you can figure out the meaning of the pattern.

Eventually you'll figure it out! Maybe these two friends had a recent argument or they could be in competition for the same position on the baseball team and are uncomfortable around each other right now.

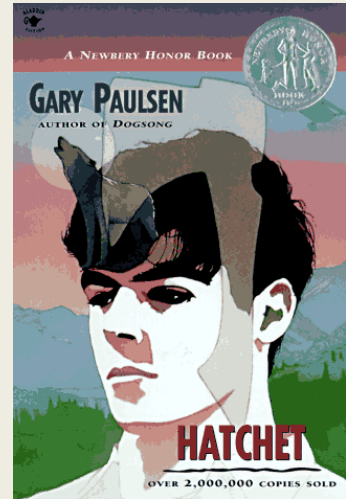


First Hatchet Passage

Hatchet is a popular novel by Gary Paulsen. It's about a boy named Paul Robeson who survives a plane crash in the Canadian wilderness, but he's left to fend for himself.

Hatchet - Book Preview - Gary Paulsen - YouTube

Follow along as I read the first passage. I am looking for something that happens **Again and Again**. Brian is seated next to the pilot as they fly over the Canadian forests.



The Again and Again Signpost

I notice right away that Gary Paulsen is using the **Again and Again** signpost because he has Brian speak the word "divorce" twice. He emphasizes it too, by letting it stand alone as a one-word sentence. And Brian tells us that he is always thinking of that word, so we know it's a pattern in Brian's life.

I'm not sure yet what part divorce plays in this novel, but I have noticed it and can tell it will somehow be important. I don't know whether it has anything to do with the situation Brian is in right now or if his parents are divorced but I now ASK MYSELF:



Why does this keep showing up again and again?

Let's read on in Hatchet.

Follow along with me in the next short passage.

What have you spotted? Discuss with your partner and see if you can answer the anchor question. ASK YOURSELF:

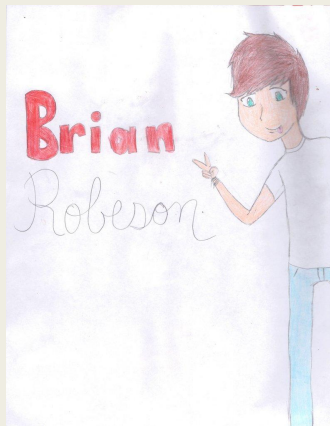
Why does this keep showing up again and again?

You all spotted that "divorce" was repeated several more times, and most of us noticed the repeated mention of the "Secret". We are beginning to see that Brian knows something about his parents' break-up that he's never shared. Why do you think this is so important that Gary Paulsen keeps driving it home to us **Again and Again?**

Last Hatchet Passage

Brian may feel a heavy burden about his parents' divorce...something he blames himself for. He seems to feel burdened with this big Secret. Think about what you are learning about the character of Brian Robeson and let's read on!

As I read, follow along and text-mark anything you see that's repeated.



What did you notice Again and Again?

That was a long passage. Take some more time to text-mark anything you saw repeated, then discuss with your partner.

What happened **Again and Again**?

- ★ divorce
- ★ the Secret (Did you notice the author capitalizes the word "secret"?)

Why does this keep showing up again and again?
(Discuss with your partner.)

I wonder if Brian feels responsible for the divorce because he knew a secret he didn't share. Or maybe he is haunted by this secret and wishes he didn't know it at all!

Let's Review Again and Again

The **Again and Again** signpost reminds us to be alert to things that are repeated in a story. These repeated things can be:

WORDS

PHRASES

ACTIONS

SITUATIONS

When we see these, we need to stop and ASK: (Let's read out loud together!)

Why does this keep showing up again and again?

The answers to this question can tell us about the story's **THEME, CONFLICT**, or may even tell us (**FORESHADOW**) about something that will happen later!



Lesson Six: MEMORY MOMENT

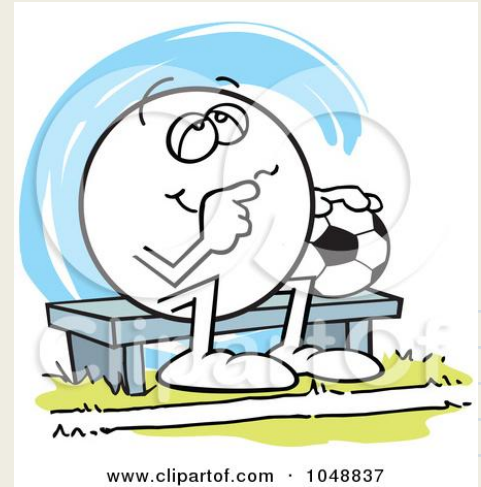
A **Memory Moment** is the point in a book when the author interrupts what's happening in the story to show us the main character as he or she remembers something important.

How do you spot a **Memory Moment**?

- ★ "I remembered..."
- ★ "In that very moment the memory came flooding back..."
- ★ "He was remembering when..."
- ★ "The memory of that day..."

Sometimes the clues are more subtle and tricky to spot:

- ★ "This picture always reminded me of..."
- ★ "My dad likes to tell the story about..."



When we spot a Memory Moment...

we want to ASK:

Why might this memory be important?

The answer to this question will tell us about **THEME** (message or lesson), **CONFLICT**, or might **FORESHADOW** (give hints about) events that will happen later in the story.



First Hope Was Here Passage

Let's look at a passage from Hope Was Here by author Joan Bauer. Hope is a girl who is moving to a new home...again. She and her aunt are getting into their car to begin their latest move.



As always, follow along and I'll pause to give you thoughts after the first part.

I found a Memory Moment...

when Hope sees Morty stop in his cab. She remembers the first time she waited on him at a restaurant where she worked and has fond memories of Morty.

So I will ASK MYSELF:

Why might this memory be important?

I think it helps me see how Hope is feeling about leaving home. She is going to miss Morty and others like him. Hope is leaving a warm, friendly town and is filled with uncertainty and anxiety not knowing what Mulhoney, Wisconsin will be like.



Our second Hope Was Here passage...

is from about the same point in the book. Addie is Hope's aunt, and she's trying to reassure Hope that everything will be ok. See if you can spot Hope's **Memory Moment**.

Follow along and get ready to text-mark the **Memory Moment**!



Hope's Memory Moment...

has her thinking back to memories of the three times she's been visited by her mother. So now that we've located the memory we want to ASK OURSELVES:

Why might this memory be important?

Please think about this question and share your thoughts with your partner.



Hope's memory...

is very emotional for her, we can infer. Her mother has abandoned her, so Aunt Addie is her security in life. Aunt Addie is Hope's "substitute mother" and Hope may be expressing how important Addie is to her because she provides the security Hope's mother wouldn't or couldn't.

Let's read one more passage about Hope. After I read I will give you time to text-mark any **Memory Moments** you find and discuss with your partner the answer to this question:

Why might this memory be important?

I'll bet you found the Memory Moments!

They were pretty easy to spot because the author wrote: "Enter memories, sweet and sour."

Let's share your thoughts...



Now here's what I am thinking...Hope mentions the pleasant times she had with Harrison such as when they baked enormous cookies, watching his fighting fish, and when he made funny, sarcastic comments about Hope's mother that showed he supports Hope. I realize this is a powerful way for the author to show me that Hope really values her friends!

Let's Review Memory Moments!

★ Tell your partner what a **Memory Moment** is.

A **Memory Moment** is when the author interrupts the story and has the main character experience an important memory.

★ Tell your partner what the anchor question is when you find a **Memory Moment**.

Why might this memory be important?

Great Job! Are you ready for the test on all six signposts? Go to the next slide...get your slates ready! There are 58 multiple choice questions and one open-ended!

JUST KIDDING!

There's no test! Hey, teachers have a sense of humor too!

