**Noticing Signposts**

**Signposts are signals that good readers use to know when to slow down and get ready for a turn. (From *Notice & Note: Strategies for Close Reading* by Kylene Beers and Robert Probst.)**

* **Contrasts and Contradictions:** This is a point in the story at which a character's actions or thoughts clearly contradict previous patterns or contrast with patterns the reader would normally expect, suggesting a change or offering insight into the character. *Contrasts and contradictions might offer insights into internal conflict, theme, or relationship of the setting to the plot.*
* **Aha Moments:** These are the moments when a character's sudden insight or understanding helps us understand the plot's movement, the development of the character, or the internal conflict he faces. An aha moment is almost always revealed with very direct language such as "I realized…" or "I suddenly understood…" or "It cam to me that…." *Aha moments let you see the character figure something that almost always changes the character and therefore the plot.*
* **Tough Questions:** This is the point when the main character pauses to ask himself or a trusted other tough questions. Sometimes these questions appear as statements, often with the word *wonder*: "I wonder what I should do about…" *These moments of uncertainty give readers insight into the character's development, his internal conflicts, and perhaps theme*
* **Words of the Wiser:** This is the scene in which a wiser, often older character, offers a life lesson of some sort to the protagonist. *This lesson often emerges as the theme of the novel.*
* **Again and Again:**  This is an image, word, or situation that is repeated, leading the reader to wonder about its significance. *The object or phrase or event that is repeated might serve as some sort of symbol.*
* **Memory Moment:** A memory moment is a scene that interrupts the flow of the story and *reveals something important about a character, plot or theme.*
* **Last Lines:** Authors like to use all that whole space at the end of a chapter or section to give you something to think about. *An extraordinarily short last line – perhaps even just one word.– or one that begins with a conjunction (and or but) often points to something important, perhaps indicating imminent change.* Or they want to lure you into turning the page and reading the next chapter.
* **Mind the Gap:** Sometimes a gap in information or in the time line of the story can be hint that something important is being concealed or *that the main character is ignorant of something important*. If you just don't get it, note it.