

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____
 Book or article: _____ Chapter(s): _____

LESSON OF THE UNEXPECTED*
“WHY DID THE CHARACTER ACT (FEEL) THAT WAY?”

The character acts in a way that *contradicts how he or she has acted before* or that *contrasts with how we would act* or that *reveals a difference among characters*.

Look for ways a character acts that:

- ... are contradictory (opposite or different) to how the character has acted in the past.
- ... contrast with how you would act in that situation.
- ... reveal a difference among characters (a way that this character is different from another).

Ask: “Why did the character act (or feel) that way?”

What character action or feeling was unexpected?	Pg #	What was unexpected about the action/feeling?	Why do you think the character acted/felt that way?

* We call this signpost Contrasts and Contradictions.

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AHA MOMENT
“WHY MIGHT THIS REALIZATION BE IMPORTANT?”

A character’s insight or sudden understanding reveals something important about the character or the plot.

Look for the moment when the writer seems to interrupt the action, or perhaps puts a character off alone to think, and some realization occurs to him or her.

- ... I suddenly realized that. . . .
- ... At that moment, I finally understood. . . .

Ask: “Why might this realization be important?”

What words told you this was going to be an Aha Moment?	Pg #	What realization came to the character’s mind?	How is this realization likely to be important in the story?

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TOUGH QUESTIONS

“WHAT DOES THIS TOUGH QUESTION MAKE ME WONDER ABOUT?”

A time when the main character asks him- or herself, or someone else, a tough question, one that doesn't have an easy answer.

Look for the moment when a character is confused or uncertain and either asks himself (or someone else might ask him) a very hard question that will shape his life or tells us that he is wondering about something important.

You might see a character saying to herself something like:

- ... I couldn't imagine what I ought to do about. . . .
- ... I realized that I was finally going to have to figure out. . . .
- ... I just didn't know which choice to make.
- ... How could I possibly decide between. . . .

Or a friend might say or ask:

- ... No matter how tough it will be, you'll have to choose between. . . .
- ... Before you do anything you're going to have to ask yourself. . . .

Ask: “What does this tough question make me wonder about?”

How did you know this was going to be a Tough Question?	Pg #	What did you wonder about when you thought about the question?	How is this question important to the story and how do you think the character will answer it? (Or, How will his or her answer affect the events in the story that follow?)

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WORDS OF THE WISER
“HOW COULD THIS ADVICE AFFECT THE CHARACTER?”

A wiser, often older, character shares his or her experience, wisdom, or lesson about life with the protagonist, hoping to guide him or her through a difficult decision.

Look for a scene in which a wiser character offers the main character advice that is helpful at this moment in the story, but could also be helpful throughout life.

Ask: “How could this advice affect the character?”

What did you see that told you this was going to be a Words-of-the-Wiser moment?	Pg #	What advice or insight did the wiser character share?	How do you think this will affect the main character (or the one who received the advice)?

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AGAIN AND AGAIN
“WHY MIGHT THE AUTHOR BRING THIS UP AGAIN AND AGAIN?”

A word, phrase, or idea is repeated, making us wonder about its significance.

Look for anything that keeps happening again and again.

You might see:

- ... a single word that is repeated more often than you would expect, as if the writer is calling special attention to it
- ... a situation that a character finds him- or herself in over and over
- ... an idea that keeps coming up

Ask: “Why might the author bring this up again and again?”

What did you find that keeps coming up over and over again?	Pg #	Why do you think the author keeps repeating this word, phrase, image, idea, or situation?	What does this Again and Again signpost lead you to think is going to happen later in the story?

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MEMORY MOMENT
“WHY MIGHT THIS MEMORY BE IMPORTANT?”

A memory interrupts the flow of the story, but reveals something important about the character or the plot.

Look for times when:

- ... the character suddenly starts remembering something, even right in the middle of some important event
- ... a quiet moment when the character thinks back on something from his or her past

Ask: “Why might this memory be important?”

What was happening when the character recalled the memory?	Pg #	What memory came to the character’s mind?	Why do you think this memory is important to the character or to the story?

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Contrasts and Contradictions

Definition: The character acts in a way that is contradictory or unexpected given how he or she usually acts.

Text Clue: Author shows feelings or actions the reader hasn't seen before or doesn't expect.

Question: Why would the character act this way?

Where in the text does the unexpected event or statement show up?

What inferences can you make about why the character would act this way?

Where in the text does the unexpected event or statement show up?

What inferences can you make about why the character would act this way?

Aha Moment



Definition: The character realizes or starts to realize something that changes his or her actions or thinking.

Text clue: Characters say “I realized” or “I suddenly knew” or “Now I know why . . .”

Question: What might the character do now?

What is the Aha Moment?

What inferences can you make about what the character will do now or think now?

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What inferences can you make about what the character will do now or think now?



Tough Questions

Definition: Character asks a tough question that reveals his or her concerns [inner conflict].

Text Clue: Character asks self or another a difficult question.

Question: What does this question make me wonder about?
What does it tell me about the character?

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Tough Questions

Definition: Character asks a tough question that reveals his or her concerns [inner conflict].

Text Clue: Character asks self or another a difficult question.

Question: What does this question make me wonder about?
What does it tell me about the character?

What did I notice

What did my partner and I say?

What are my final thoughts?

This question makes me wonder if . . . _____

It tells me that . . . _____



Words of the Wiser

Definition: An older character (mentor, advisor, parent, etc.) gives advice or an insight to the main character.

Text Clue: A wiser, often older, character offers a life lesson, usually in a quiet moment.

Question: What is important about that message?

<p><i>What did I notice?</i></p>	<p><i>What inferences can you make about why the message is important?</i></p>
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Again and Again

Definition: The author keeps bringing up the same image, phrase, or reference.

Text clue: A repeated image, phrase, or reference

Question: Why do you think the author brings this idea up again and again?

What is the idea or phrase that is repeated again and again?

Why do you think the author keeps bringing up this idea?

What is the idea or phrase that is repeated again and again?

Why do you think the author keeps bringing up this idea?



Memory Moment—Flashback

Definition: The author interrupts the flow of the story by letting the character remember something.

Text clue: “I suddenly remembered . . .”; “I remember . . .”; or “Thinking back . . .”

Question: Why might this memory be important?

<p><i>What did the character remember?</i></p>	<p><i>Why might the memory be important?</i></p>
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