

Reading - Ms. Friedrichs

May & June 2026

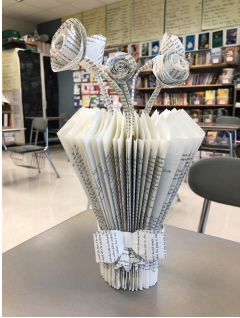


We have begun to read the novel, *Among the Hidden*, by Margaret Peterson Haddix and apply signposts while reading. As signposts are noticed, students stop and ask themselves the anchor question and record responses in their 3-column notes. To help go deeper in their thinking, students push themselves further by asking...What? So What? Now What? Students are demonstrating insightful written responses that show their depth of thinking..

By the end of May we will wrap up our shared reading experience of *Among the Hidden*. This book is the first in a series of seven. If you are looking for books for your child to read this summer, start with book two in this series, *Among the Imposters*. I highly encourage you to collaborate with your child to read the same book together and have lively discussions with them about the surprising twists and turns of the novel. Not only will you get a peek into the world of young adult literature (it's surprisingly good), but your excitement of reading will encourage your child to read more.

I hope you and your child have a wonderful summer. Ride some carousels and READ!

April 2026



We are almost finished with the introduction of our Notice and Note Signposts. We practiced finding important stopping points using the short story *Thank You Ma'am*, as well as excerpts from the novels *Crash*, *Hatchet*, *Riding Freedom*, *Maniac Magee*, and *A Long Walk to Water*. This close reading strategy acts as a scaffold by giving students specific clues to pay attention to while reading. Students learned how to find important stopping points in which to think or annotate deeply about what the author is trying to say. The Signposts help students attain a deeper comprehension of text by pausing to ask themselves anchor questions when reading. This strategy builds and strengthens metacognition skills and guides students to infer, identify foreshadowing, plot, conflict, and theme. Students are learning how to dig deeper and are learning to think and write about reading in insightful ways.

After break, we will apply these close reading Notice and Note strategies to our class shared read of *Among the Hidden*.

March 2026



For the month of March students will be introduced to Notice and Note Signposts (*Contrasts and Contradictions, Tough Questions, Memory Moments, Again & Again, Words of the Wiser, Aha! Moments*). This is a close reading strategy that acts as a scaffold by giving students specific clues to pay attention to while reading. The Signposts help students attain a deeper comprehension of text by pausing to ask anchor questions when reading. This strategy builds and strengthens metacognition skills and guides students to infer, identify foreshadowing, plot, conflict, and theme.

Signposts help students to STOP, NOTICE, and NOTE. Below I've listed all six Signposts. You will see there are three parts to each Signpost: The first part is what you notice in the story, the second part is the essential question you must ask yourself and answer, and the third part is how noticing and answering the question helps you as a reader. All three parts are equally important. Answering the anchor question while reading will help your child think and write about reading in insightful ways. When we have mastered the concept of all six signposts, we will put the skill to use reading *Among the Hidden* as a shared novel class experience.

Contrasts and Contradictions (CC)

When you're reading and a character says or does something that's opposite (contradicts) what he/she has been saying or doing all along.

Stop and ask yourself: "Why is the character acting this way?"

The answers could help you make a prediction or make an inference about the plot and conflict.

Aha Moment (AHA)

When you're reading and a character suddenly realizes, understands, or finally figures something out.

Stop and ask yourself: "How might this change things?"

If the character figured out a problem, you probably just learned about the conflict. If the character understood a life lesson, you probably just learned the theme.

Tough Questions (TQ)

When you're reading and a character asks him/herself a very difficult question...

Stop and ask yourself: "What does this question make me wonder about?"

The answers could help you make a prediction or determine the character's internal conflict.

Words of the Wiser (WW)

When you're reading and an older character offers serious advice to the main character....

Stop and ask yourself: "What is the life lesson and how might it affect the character?"

Again and Again

When you're reading and a word, phrase, image, or situation is mentioned over and over

Stop and ask yourself: "Why does this keep happening?"

The answers could help you determine the character's internal conflict and notice foreshadowing.

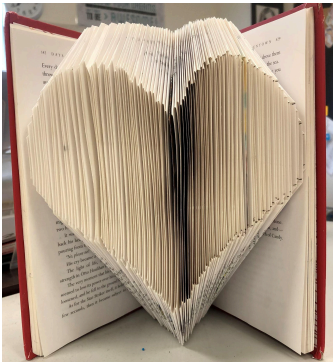
Memory Moment

When the author chooses to interrupt the action to tell about a memory

Stop and ask yourself: "Why is this memory important?"

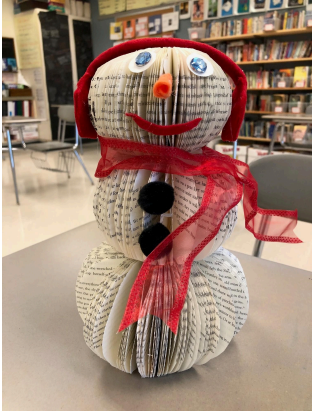
The answers could help you determine the character's internal conflict, notice foreshadowing. And determine a theme.

February 2026



During February we continued to practice our close reading and decoding skills using the Spire Next and HD Word Programs. Students have learned the value of repeated readings and how to break multisyllabic words into small chunks for better accuracy. Solidifying these skills are important to prepare students as we move into a deep comprehension unit in March using Notice and Note Signposts to help unpack complex text.

January 2026



Happy 2026! In January we continue to build upon our foundational skills taught from September to present. We are adding in a **Close Reading** strategy using materials from Spire Next. This reading comprehension program provides scaffolded instruction and support to help unpack complex text. This program follows a close-reading and gradual -release process that enables students to acquire and practice reading, fluency, and vocabulary skills with teacher support and then apply them independently.

Close Reading is a careful and purposeful rereading of text:

The Close Reading Process:

First Read- A focus on a specific reading comprehension skill such as inferencing, schema, plot, main idea, theme, text structure.

Second Read- A focus on the literary or genre skill taught with that selected passage.

Third Read- A focus on critical thinking skills

Close Reading is a powerful tool. Students gain confidence as readers and deepen their comprehension of complex text.

DECEMBER



December is a culminating month, bringing together the many skills we have been focusing on since the start of the year. We continue to build our decoding and encoding skills through our HD Word program, adding in a special emphasis on fluency. Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, at a good pace, and with proper expression. Good fluency leads to improved comprehension.

We are practicing both fluency and comprehension with a shared read of *The Whipping Boy*. Students listen to each chapter read aloud and modeled by the teacher, followed by a quick “sketch to stretch” to visualize a chosen sentence. Students then partner read the same chapter for fluency. Finally, in partnership, students answer comprehension questions targeted at inferring, schema, and synthesizing skills to show their deep understanding of the text. Responses should show a depth of knowledge about what the author is really trying to say. Using the What? So What? Now What? model, students are pushing each other to think and write about reading in insightful ways.

NOVEMBER



During the month of November we are turning our focus to fluency skills using HD Word. HD (High Definition) Word is a structured word work program that will take place two class periods a week for 30 weeks. The program targets skills to improve decoding, fluency, and vocabulary using a systematic word reading program. This program is designed to:

- Teach students a flexible strategy for decoding grade-level multisyllabic words
- Increase their oral and silent reading rate
- Expand their knowledge of general and academic vocabulary
- Allow students to gain confidence in their reading ability

Students continue to do a fantastic job with their daily, weekly, and yearly reading goals. I see many Wild Readers emerging!

OCTOBER



During the month of October students reviewed and practiced the critical reading skills of visualizing and verbalizing, inner voice, schema, inferring, and synthesizing to create a deeper comprehension of text read. We will apply these essential skills to our shared read of the *Whipping Boy*. Below are the skills and their definitions:

Visualizing & Verbalizing: Creating an image/movie in your head. Use this strategy to recall and retell with deep comprehension

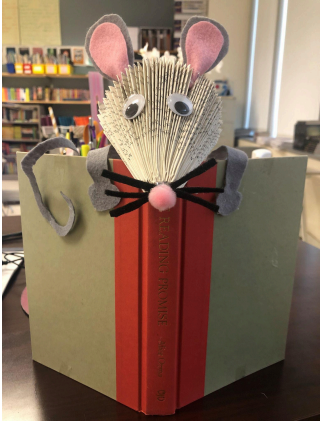
Inner Voice: What the author has to say (text) + What's going on in your head (inferring, visualizing, using schema) = Real Reading

Schema: Schema is you. It's your feelings, experiences, thoughts, and opinions wrapped into one. Schema = Background knowledge

Inferring: Reading between the lines. Determining what the author is really trying to say. Text clues + Schema = Inferring

Synthesizing: Putting clues together to follow a changing storyline. Changing your thinking along the way.

SEPTEMBER 2025



Dear Parents,

It was wonderful meeting many of you at Open House.

It has been equally wonderful having all the students back in school and adjusting to their new middle school environment. I have seen lots of smiles and students ready to give their personal best.

I have introduced your child to the concept of a *Wild Reader*. What is a Wild Reader? It is a person who loves to read; a person who doesn't leave home without a book in hand; who knows what book they want to read next. Although it is a tall order, that is my goal for your child this year. Of course, we will be working on many reading skills to help that goal become a reality.

My main goal at the start of the year is to set up our independent reading/ goal-keeping strategies. Each child received a "Commitment to Read" Bookmark. Whether at home or in school your child should fill out this bookmark daily. Each student determines and commits to a number of pages to read each evening. This reading is done within the 20 minutes (or more if they wish) of combined required reading for LA and Reading class (a 20 minute total-NOT 40 minutes). If your child meets their page goal, they assign a check mark in the 3rd column. If they read more than what they committed to, they assign a check plus, and if they are under, they assign a check minus. These checks show accountability and bring a sense of accomplishment and pride to the students. This "commitment to pages read" promotes stamina in reading and helps to focus your child during their at home independent reading time. Students also glued in their Book Status and 15 Book Challenge grid into their Reader's Notebooks for weekly and yearly accountability to their reading life. I find when students set goals they will reach for them. I am so excited to watch these Wild Readers grow in their skills and love of reading!

We are currently focusing on the powerful comprehension strategies of Inner Voice, Inferencing, Schema, Synthesizing, and Visualizing. With visualizing, students have been introduced to structure words that help turn individual words into focused and detailed images in their minds. We have worked on picture to picture, word to word, sentence to sentence, and finally a full paragraph. Students should be practicing running a full movie in their head while reading from their independent books each evening. Coming soon...We will put all these strategies into action while reading aloud *The Whipping Boy* as a class shared read.