End of *Persuasion* Discussion

Part 1: As a group, answer your assigned question below (which is not necessarily related to your chapter). Use textual evidence (at least 3 quotes with at least 1 from the first part of the book—Chapters 1-12) to support your answer.
Part 2: Summarize your chapter in a sentence or two. What did you find interesting or puzzling in this chapter? Turn that idea into a question you can pose in a whole-class discussion. Be very specific and use a quote if possible (this should have nothing to do with Part 1).

Chapter 19: What is the role of parents (include Lady Russell as a parent for Anne) in *Persuasion*? What kinds of examples do they set for their own children? What do you think led Anne to acquiesce to her family's wishes? Should families have a say in whom their children marry?

Chapter 20: Both Anne and Captain Benwick are poetry fans. How are their attitudes towards poetry similar, and how are they different? Louisa, after her near-death experience, also turns to poetry and becomes much more serious. Do their reading experiences suggest anything about how we as readers might relate to *Persuasion*? (Consider the following: Austen writes of Captain Benwick: "His reading has done him no harm, for he has fought as well as read.")

Chapter 21: Anne believes she was right to be "persuaded" by Lady Russell not to marry Captain Wentworth when he proposed years earlier. Anne also says that "[i]t was just possible that she might have been persuaded by Lady Russell [to marry Mr. Elliot]!" in Chapter 21. How is the persuasion of Anne as an adult here different from when she was persuaded as a seventeen-year old girl? Be specific. Do you agree with her? How else does the theme of persuasion develop throughout the novel? What distinguishes good uses of persuasion from bad ones? When is persuasion justified?

Chapter 22: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife" is the first line in *Pride and Prejudice*, which is a much lighter, more bubbly novel by Austen: in fact, she thought it was much too light. Compare this quote to what the narrator says near the end of *Persuasion*: "When any two young people take it into their heads to marry, they are pretty sure by perseverance to carry their point, be they ever so poor, or ever so imprudent, or ever so little likely to be necessary to each other's ultimate comfort." How does the novel support the idea that certain decisions belong to the participants (the people actually affected by the decision)?

Chapter 23: In Chapter 18, Admiral Croft stands at a print shop window looking at a painting of a boat and criticizes it by stating, "What queer fellows your fine painters must be, to think that anybody would venture their lives in such a shapeless old cockleshell as that?" As a naval officer, he believes the best depiction of a ship is the one that is most practical rather than the most beautiful. How does this moment highlight realism in the text? (Think about how Anne says, "I will not allow books to prove anything.") Find a moment in this novel that strikes you as incredibly realistic.

Chapter 24: Austen wrote *Persuasion* as her health was failing, hurrying to finish it before her death. Do you find the novel's narrative carries any sense of urgency or sentimentality, or any other indication of what the author herself was going through as she wrote it?