

**Explain**  
**How a Novel has**  
**Affected Your Worldview:**

A Step-by-Step Example  
by Sophie Rosen

## References

Beers, Kylene & Robert E. Probst. Notice and Note. Portsmouth, NH: Heineman, 2013.

Paulsen, Gary. This Side of Wild: Mutts, Mares, and Laughing Dinosaurs. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2015.

## Clues to Important Parts of a Story

### - Contrasts and Contradictions

when a character says or does things that contradicts what s/he has been saying or doing

### - Again and Again

when a word, phrase, object or situation is mentioned over and over again

### - Memory Moment

When the author interrupts the action to tell a memory

### - Tough Questions

when a character asks himself a difficult question that requires a lot of thought

### - Aha Moment

when a character suddenly realizes, understands, or figures out something

### - Wise Words

when a character give the main character some important and helpful advice

## Step One: Notice and Take Notes

"I was...even more tiny [than the ship], so that one would think that I would feel dwarfed, alienated in some way. In fact, just the opposite happened: I loved it" (ix).

"The incredible blue...made me feel that I was a part of it,..." (ix).

He found himself "marveling that such a think would be, *could* be" (ix).

"The ocean was what drew me then...Later, it...was like coming home" (x).

"...I would come to know - to *know* - how small a part of everything I really happened to be" (x).

"...thinking in all the world...I was alone, completely and vastly and wonderfully alone. Alone" (x).

"And precisely at that moment a young gray whale...came alongside and lay his or her head across the stern of the boat, virtually in my lap..." (x-xi).

"...I realized we are never quite alone" (xi).

## **Step Two: Tell Your Main Idea**

We are never really alone in this world.

## **Step Three: Tell What You Used to Believe**

I used to think that I had goals to reach in life and that while people might help me reach those goals, really, I was on my own. It was my journey. My life. I believed that adulthood was about about taking care of myself, about reaching my goals, about being independent.



## Step Four: Tell What in the Book Changed Your Mind

Gary Paulsen writes about aloneness in his book This Side of Wild. He tells how, when he was only seven years old, he and his mother crossed the Pacific Ocean in a small ship on their way to join his father in the Philippines. He writes that "one would think that I would feel dwarfed, alienated in some way. In fact, just the opposite happened: I loved it" (ix). He adds that the "incredible blue...made me feel that I was a part of it,..." (ix).

Later, as an adult, Paulsen says that he was on his own boat on the Pacific when he came "to know - to *know* - how small a part of everything I really happened to be" (x). He was feeling all alone on the ocean when a grey whale "came alongside and lay his or her head across the stern of the boat, virtually in my lap..." (x-xi). And, Paulsen says, he "realized we are never quite alone" (xi).

## **Step Five: Tell How You See the World Now**

Reading that short chapter, I realized that somewhere along that way I stopped believing life is about being independent and pursuing goals. I still think that it is important to work hard and take care of myself. But I also know that life is not about me and my goals. Each of our bodies contain more cells that belong to viruses and bacteria than cells that belong to us. Each of us affect other lives every day. Always, all around us, there are plants and animals and people reminding us that we are part of a vast universe.

## **Step Six: Tell How You Will Behave Differently From Now On**

So, the next time I am in this classroom alone, marking assignments or preparing lessons, I will take time to notice the plants around me. How are they doing? Do they need water? Would they like a bit of care? And the next time I look out at the night stars, I will remind myself how there are so many precious lives in this unimaginably huge universe. We are all important. We are all a part of the whole. We are not alone.

## Writing Tips:

1. Start with a topic sentence.
2. Sequence your ideas in a logical order so readers can follow your thinking.
3. Smoothly insert brief quotations, with page numbers, as evidence.
4. Use a combination of long and short sentences.
5. Use some parallel structure and include some appositives.
6. Make sure you have a strong concluding sentence.
7. Proofread: perfect spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
8. Double-space and be very neat.