

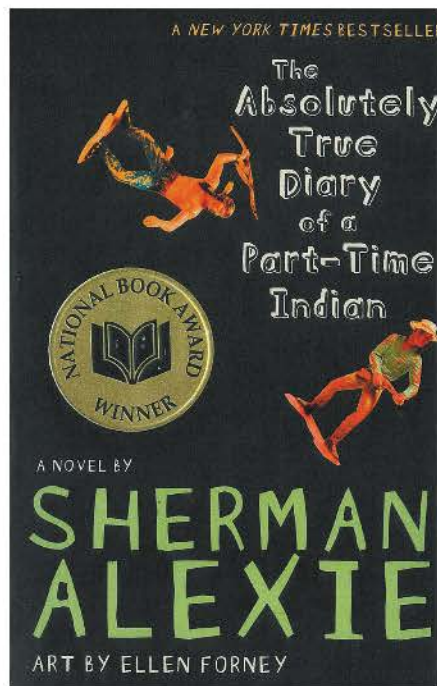
Reading ^{with} Relevance[®]

Building INDEPENDENT READERS and THINKERS

YOUR STUDENT WORKBOOK FOR

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

A novel by Sherman Alexie



This workbook belongs to:

About the Book

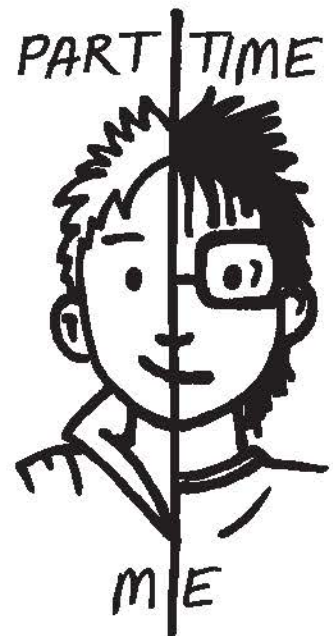
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

Story Summary

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian tells the story of Arnold “Junior” Spirit, a 14-year old boy growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation in the state of Washington. The “rez” is a hard place to grow up: poverty and alcoholism are prevalent, there are very few opportunities, and loss and grief are a regular part of life. It’s even harder for Junior, who is regularly the target of bullies. Junior takes his future into his own hands and leaves his troubled school on the reservation to attend an all-White high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot. Junior’s best friend on the reservation, Rowdy, stays behind and vows never to speak to Junior—the “traitor”—again. Once enrolled at Reardan High, Junior must prove his worth to his new teachers, the students, and most of all, himself. Though he struggles with his identity, Junior begins to make friends, succeed academically, and build community on the basketball court. Life seems to be improving, despite Junior’s feeling of being pulled between his two worlds. Throughout his journey, Junior grapples with questions about growing up and what constitutes one’s community and identity.

Poet and storyteller Sherman Alexie was born in 1966 on the Spokane Indian Reservation into the Spokane/Coeur d’Alene tribes. The award-winning author, like his protagonist in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, faced physical and social challenges in his early childhood that caused him great suffering and alienation from his peers, and important details of the author’s youth form the basis of this autobiographical novel. Alexie transferred from the reservation school at Wellpinit, attended Reardan High, and became a star basketball player. Later, he attended Gonzaga University and Washington State University, where he originally took pre-med courses. He did not pursue medical school because he discovered his love of poetry. In addition to many volumes of poetry and fiction, Alexie has authored songs and a screenplay. Many of his literary works explore the relationship between Indian and White culture. Alexie is also known as a compelling public speaker and stand-up comedian. He and his family live in Seattle, Washington.

About the Author



Session 1

Theme: *Being Different*

Guiding Question: *Today, we'll meet Junior, the main character of our book, and learn about the ways that he feels different than others. Can you relate to this feeling? What are some ways you stand out from your peers?*

Vocabulary

Write a complete sentence for each of the following vocabulary words. Use the definitions provided to make sure you are using these words correctly!



susceptible (pg. 3): adj., easily affected or influenced

impediments (pg. 4): n., obstacles or defects

perseverance: (pg. 13): n., continued effort despite difficulties

Story Setup

This book was written in 2007 by Sherman Alexie, an American Indian author who based this book loosely on his own childhood and teenage years. This book takes place near Spokane, Washington, on an Indian reservation. Indian reservations are places the US government set aside for American Indians after taking their native lands.

Read pages 1-14



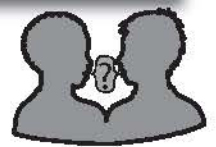
While You Read:

As you read, keep track of unfamiliar words, inspiring quotes, and questions you have.

Reading Context: Consider researching this medical condition to learn more.

seizures (pg. 3): sudden attacks of convulsions or loss of consciousness resulting from abnormal electrical discharges in the brain

Discussion Questions

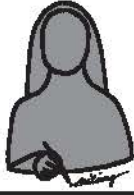


Write your response to each question below using a complete sentence.

- How was the prejudice of the White dentist revealed? How does that make you feel?

- Why do you think Junior uses humor to talk about his impediments? How do you think you would cope?

- Did Junior's dad do the right thing with Oscar? Why or why not?



Choose one of these prompts to respond to in at least one full paragraph of writing.

BEING DIFFERENT

Junior is different from other kids because he has a physical disability and is sensitive and artistic.

How are you different from others?

- » Have you ever felt insecure around your peers because of differences you have?
- » How do you deal with feeling different?
- » How can your differences be assets?

ACCOMPLISHING YOUR DREAMS

Junior knows his parents weren't able to accomplish their dreams.

What do you need in life to accomplish your dreams?

- » What personal characteristics do you think you need?
- » What outside factors (like school, parents, etc.) do you think you might need?
- » What do you think you could accomplish if you had people in your life always pushing you to pursue your dreams?
- » Do you have anyone in your life like that?

Name: _____

Example



My Future Plans

My job will be:

My hobbies will be:

I will travel to:

My Top Goals



Junior draws a picture of what his parents would have been if someone had paid attention to their dreams (pg. 12). Think about your own dreams—what things do you want to accomplish when you are an adult? Draw a picture of your future ideal self. Know that people are paying attention to your dreams and you can make them come true! Fill in the questions, and be sure to label additional important parts of your picture.

Future Self

The background of the page is a repeating pattern of a cartoon character with spiky hair and glasses, bisected by a vertical line. The words 'PART TIME' are written vertically on either side of the line. The pattern is light gray and covers the entire page.

Extra Activities for Exploring the Book

Real Life Connector

Name: _____

Event from the Story

#1

Something similar happened to me (or someone I know) when . . .

Event from the Story

#2

Something similar happened to me (or someone I know) when . . .



Find parts in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* that remind you of things that happened to you or someone you know in real life. Include as many details as possible, and remember to be specific.

Real Life Connector