

*The Absolutely True Diary  
of a Part-Time Indian*

by Sherman Alexie

Springfield Central High School  
Summer Reading Packet

## Welcome to Springfield Central High School

Congratulations! You are ready to begin your life as a student at Springfield Central High School. Although this is an exciting time, it can also be a time filled with some anxiety and apprehension. To help you make the transition to high school, the English Department has designed a summer reading program for all incoming grade 9 students.

The Springfield Central High School book bag is our gift to you. Inside you will find a copy of the novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie, as well as a packet of questions and activities for you to complete before coming to school in the fall. Your freshman English teacher will collect the completed packet during that first week; the novel will be collected at the conclusion of your discussion.

This packet of activities is designed to give you the opportunity to react on both universal and personal levels. Your new grade 9 English teacher will get to know your talents and personal philosophies from the early writing samples in your completed packet.

Be sure to have the book read and the packet completed **before the first day of school in August.**

## Pre-Reading Activity #1

### Vocabulary

#### DIRECTIONS:

- Read the sentence from the novel that contains the vocabulary word.
  - Read the definition.
  - Read the question in the box. Then answer that question in a complete sentence using the vocabulary word.
1. "I haven't had a seizure in seven years, but the doctors tell me that I am susceptible to seizure activity" (3).

Susceptible=likely to be stricken with or by

Question: What kind of behavior would make you susceptible to catching the flu?

2. "And let me tell you, that old, old, old, decrepit geometry book hit my heart with the force of a nuclear bomb" (31).

Decrepit=broken-down, fallen into ruin

Question: How would you feel if you had to attend an old, decrepit school?

3. "I couldn't sleep that night because I kept thinking about my impending doom" (70).

Impending=hanging over one's head, hovering in a threatening way

Question: What strategies do you use to tackle your impending homework?

4. "We should have all been delirious that she'd moved out of the basement" (91).

Delirious=wildly excited

Question: What kind of music makes you delirious?

5. "Can an Indian have a legacy in a white town?" (182).

Legacy=an inheritance, something passed from one generation to the next

Question: What is the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King?

6. "VULNERABLE! She told me I was vulnerable" (203).

Vulnerable=open to attack or being hurt

Question: What kind of a situation could make a teenager feel vulnerable?

7. "I wept because I was the only one who was brave and crazy enough to leave the rez. I was the only one with enough arrogance" (217)

Arrogance=an attitude of superiority

Question: Explain how arrogance can be a good thing.

8. "I kept expecting one of them to snap and send me plummeting to my death" (225).

Plummeting=falling

Question: What might cause your grades in school to start plummeting?

## Required Activity #1: Rowdy and Arnold

The relationship between Rowdy and Arnold changes and matures throughout the book.

**Explain what their relationship is like when Arnold is still going to school on the reservation.**

Give two specific examples to support your answer.

1.

2.

**Explain what their relationship is like when Arnold goes to the white school off the reservation.**

Give two specific examples to support your answer.

1.

2.

**Explain what their relationship is like After the final basketball game between the Wellpinit team and the Reardan team.**

Give two specific examples to support your answer.

1.

2.

## Required Activity #2: Two Worlds

Open your book to page 57 and check out the drawing of Arnold (Junior) in his two worlds. Now, it is your turn to think about your own two worlds.

- In the space below, make an outline sketch of yourself and put a line down the middle.
- On one side, draw and describe yourself as a student in **middle school**.
- On the other side, draw and describe yourself as you hope you will be in **high school**.
- Be sure to include your feelings and emotions about both parts of your life. (Note: Arnold uses “hope” to describe his white side and “bone-crushing reality” to describe his Indian side.)

### **Required Activity #3: Reservation Life**

Arnold presents a realistic view of reservation life, giving the reader an opportunity to see the ugliness and the beauty. Fill in the chart with specific examples of the beautiful and ugly sides of the life he witnesses.

<b>RESERVATION LIFE</b> <b>The beautiful side</b>	<b>The ugly side</b>



## Required Activity #4: Greater Human Truths

As you actively read this book, be sure to note below any greater human truths. You must have at least five.

Example: "If you let people into your life a bit that can be pretty damn amazing" (129).

*Be sure to cite the quote correctly. Include quotation marks and page number. See above example.*

### Greater Human Truths

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## Required Activity #5: Artifacts

- An artifact is an object or material thing.
- Make a list of **five artifacts** that represent Arnold's life **on the reservation** and **five artifacts** that represent Arnold's life **off the reservation**.
- Explain the **significance** of each artifact. Why is it important as a symbol of this part of his life?

Example: The **basketball** plays a significant role on and off the reservation. (You are free to use this as your first example.)

Artifacts from Reservation Life Artifact	Significance/Symbol of his life

Artifacts from Life off the Reservation Artifact	Significance/Symbol of his life

## Required Activity #6: Cartooning

Arnold uses cartooning to help him understand his life better, to make fun of himself, and to honor people he loves. The cartooning also helps us better understand Arnold's thought and feelings. In the space below the cartoon, explain what this cartoon tells the reader about Arnold.



What this cartoon tells me:

## **Required Activity #7: What I'd Like You To Know About Me**

Draw a cartoon that represents something you would like us to know about you.  
You may use the one-frame method (page 63) or the multi-frame method (previous page).