The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

Sherman Alexie

Activities to teach Reading, Thinking, and Writing
THE ABSOLUTELY TRUE DIARY OF A PART-TIME INDIAN

by
Sherman Alexie

Art by Ellen Forney

Student Packet

Written by
Linda Herman

Contains masters for:
2 Prereading Activities
7 Vocabulary Activities
1 Study Guide
2 Character Analysis Activities
1 Critical Thinking Activity
2 Comprehension Activities
2 Literary Analysis Activities
2 Writing Activities
2 Quizzes
1 Novel Test
PLUS
Detailed Answer Key
and Scoring Rubric

Note

Please note: This novel deals with sensitive, mature issues. Parts may contain profanity, sexual references, and/or descriptions of violence. Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with them.

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Note to the Teacher

Selected activities, quizzes, and test questions in this Novel Units® Student Packet are labeled with the following reading/language arts skills for quick reference. These skills can be found above quiz/test questions or sections and in the activity headings.

Basic Understanding: The student will demonstrate a basic understanding of written texts. The student will:
- use a text’s structure or other sources to locate and recall information (Locate Information)
- determine main idea and identify relevant facts and details (Main Idea and Details)
- use prior knowledge and experience to comprehend and bring meaning to a text (Prior Knowledge)
- summarize major ideas in a text (Summarize Major Ideas)

Literary Elements: The student will apply knowledge of literary elements to understand written texts. The student will:
- analyze characters from a story (Character Analysis)
- analyze conflict and problem resolution (Conflict/Resolution)
- recognize and interpret literary devices (flashback, foreshadowing, symbolism, simile, metaphor, etc.) (Literary Devices)
- consider characters’ points of view (Point of View)
- recognize and analyze a story’s setting (Setting)
- understand and explain themes in a text (Theme)

Analyze Written Texts: The student will use a variety of strategies to analyze written texts. The student will:
- identify the author’s purpose (Author’s Purpose)
- identify cause and effect relationships in a text (Cause/Effect)
- identify characteristics representative of a given genre (Genre)
- interpret information given in a text (Interpret Text)
- sequence events in chronological order (Sequencing)
- identify and use multiple text formats (Text Format)
- follow written directions and write directions for others to follow (Follow/Write Directions)

Critical Thinking: The student will apply critical-thinking skills to analyze written texts. The student will:
- write and complete analogies (Analogies)
- find similarities and differences throughout a text (Compare/Contrast)
- draw conclusions from information given (Drawing Conclusions)
- make and explain inferences (Inferences)
- respond to texts by making connections and observations (Making Connections)
- recognize and identify the mood of a text (Mood)
- recognize an author’s style and how it affects a text (Style)
- support responses by referring to relevant aspects of a text (Support Responses)
- recognize and identify the author’s tone (Tone)
- write to entertain, such as through humorous poetry or short stories (Write to Entertain)
- write to express ideas (Write to Express)
- write to inform (Write to Inform)
- write to persuade (Write to Persuade)
- demonstrate understanding by creating visual images based on text descriptions (Visualizing)
- practice math skills as they relate to a text (Math Skills)
## Anticipation and Reaction

**Directions:** Consider the following statements before you read the novel. Place a checkmark in one of the boxes to show whether you agree or disagree with each statement, and provide your reasoning. After you have completed the novel, mark your response again. On a separate sheet of paper, provide explanations for each of your opinions that have changed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Before Reading</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Response After Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ you agree</td>
<td>1. Poverty only teaches you how to be poor.</td>
<td>□ you agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ you agree</td>
<td>2. A best friend is more important than family.</td>
<td>□ you agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ you agree</td>
<td>3. There is always time to change your life.</td>
<td>□ you agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ you agree</td>
<td>4. People should accept their own limitations.</td>
<td>□ you agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ you agree</td>
<td>5. Running toward something is better than running away.</td>
<td>□ you agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ you agree</td>
<td>6. A person needs to have hope in order to lead a successful life.</td>
<td>□ you agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ you agree</td>
<td>7. Cultural differences should not affect the way people treat each other.</td>
<td>□ you agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ you agree</td>
<td>8. The most important thing in life is to follow your dreams.</td>
<td>□ you agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td>□ you disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Directions: Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Use your answers in class discussions, for writing assignments, and to review for tests. Starred questions indicate thought or opinion questions.

The Black-Eye-of-the-Month Club–Because Geometry Is Not a Country Somewhere Near France
1. Why did Junior need surgery when he was six months old?
2. How many teeth do most humans have? How many does Junior have?
3. Why did the white dentist only give Junior half a dose of Novocain?
*4. Explain the meaning of the chapter title “The Black-Eye-of-the-Month Club.”
*5. What does Junior mean when he says, “I draw because words are too unpredictable” (p. 5)? Are you able to express yourself best by talking, writing, or drawing?
6. What magic trick does Junior wish he could perform? Why?
7. Where does Junior live?
8. Why doesn’t Junior want to hear the truth from his mother?
9. What would Junior’s parents have been if given the chance?
10. What is Rowdy’s “war paint”?
11. Why does Rowdy attack the minivan?
12. How does Rowdy retaliate against the Andruss brothers?
13. What kind of comics does Rowdy like?
14. Who is Mary Runs Away?
15. What is the weirdest thing about Mr. P?
16. Who is Agnes Adams?
17. What does Junior do with his mother’s geometry book?

Hope Against Hope–How to Fight Monsters
1. How does Junior feel about being suspended from school?
2. What does Mr. P confess to Junior?
3. Who dreams of writing romance novels?
4. What is the nicest thing a teacher has told Junior? Who says this to Junior?
5. What advice does Mr. P give Junior?
6. Why does Mr. P believe that Junior threw the geometry book at him?
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian
Activity #16 • Literary Analysis
Use After Reading
(Literary Elements)

Story Map

Directions: Complete the story map below.

Characters

main __________________
main __________________
main __________________
main __________________
minor __________________
minor __________________
minor __________________

Setting

Date: ____________________
Place: ____________________
Other: ____________________

Conflict(s)

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

Possible Themes
(general statements the book makes about life)

Point of View

Author’s Style and Tone

Genre
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian
Quiz #1
The Black-Eye-of-the Month Club—Dance, Dance, Dance

(Main Idea and Details)

A. True/False: Mark each with a T for true or an F for false.

____ 1. Junior draws because words are too predictable.
____ 2. Hunger is not the worst thing about being poor.
____ 3. Rowdy wears war paint to look tough.
____ 4. Mary hides in the basement to write romance novels.
____ 5. Mr. P says hope can be found far away from the reservation.
____ 6. No one in Junior’s family has gone to college.
____ 7. Junior punches Roger to earn respect.
____ 8. Penelope is anorexic.
____ 10. Junior borrows money at the diner because he forgot his wallet.

(Main Idea and Details)

B. Fill in the Blanks

11. No one paid attention to Junior’s parents’ ________________________.
12. _______________________ is the most important person in Junior’s life.
13. Dad tells Junior he is brave like a(n) _______________________.
14. Mary marries a Flathead Indian and moves to _______________________.
15. Junior becomes _______________________ by semi-dating Penelope.

(Point of View)

C. Short Answer: Why does Junior feel he must transfer to Reardan High School?

___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
(Character Analysis)

A. Matching: Identify the speaker for each of the following quotes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Junior</th>
<th>b. Rowdy</th>
<th>c. Mary</th>
<th>d. Penelope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e. Roger</td>
<td>f. Gordy</td>
<td>g. Junior’s father</td>
<td>h. Junior’s mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Grandma</td>
<td>j. Eugene</td>
<td>k. Mr. P</td>
<td>l. Coach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

____ 1. “You have to leave this reservation.”
____ 2. “If that were true, then wouldn’t all white people be successful?”
____ 3. “But how can I get enough experience if they don’t give me a chance to get experience?”
____ 4. “You have to dream big to get big.”
____ 5. “Because I want to build something beautiful. Because I want to be remembered.”
____ 6. “They call me an apple because they think I’m red on the outside and white on the inside.”
____ 7. “You’re starting tonight…. You can do it.”
____ 8. “Think of all the new people you’re going to meet….It’s such an exciting idea.”
____ 9. “It will be good to have you out there. We need some new blood.”
____ 10. “The Indians around here are going to be angry with you.”
____ 11. “There’s a lot of white people here.... It’s pretty cool, you doing this….”
____ 12. “I always knew you were going to leave us behind and travel the world.”

(Summarize Major Ideas)

B. Identification: Explain how each word listed below is important to the story. Write one or two sentences for each word.

13. basketball
(Main Idea and Details)
___ 29. Junior hopes and prays that he will someday
   (a) be a famous writer and artist
   (b) solve the mystery of Turtle Lake
   (c) forgive himself for leaving his tribe
   (d) have Rowdy’s forgiveness for leaving the reservation

(Main Idea and Details)
___ 30. Whose death is not alcohol-related?
   (a) Eugene
   (b) Grandma
   (c) Mary
   (d) Oscar

D. Essay: On a separate sheet of paper, write a well-developed essay of at least three paragraphs for two of the following.

(Summarize Major Ideas)
I. Explain the meaning of the book’s title. Include whether or not you think the title is effective and why.

(Character Analysis)
II. Discuss how Junior changes throughout the novel and how he remains the same. Include how the reservation influences his character.

(Theme)
III. One of the novel’s themes is identity. Explain how life’s “struggle between being an individual and being a member of the community” (p. 132) addresses this theme.

(Author’s Purpose/Text Format)
IV. Discuss why you think the author chose to write the story as an illustrated diary. Give examples to support your answer.

(Making Connections)
V. Explain what the W. B. Yeats quote at the beginning of the novel—“There is another world, but it is in this one”—means and how it applies to the novel.
Answer Key

Activities #1–#2: Answers will vary.

Activity #3: Crossword puzzles will vary.

Activity #4: Noun—culture, romance, addicts; Verb—contemplating, pummeled, mutilated, betray; Adjective/Adverb—sober, racist, ambitious, translucent, moral, potential, mute; Category—Answers will vary.


Activity #6: Word maps will vary. Dictionary definitions of the vocabulary words as used in the novel: monotonous—uninteresting, repetitive; subtle—not obvious; destiny—fate; gorges—overeats, stuffs oneself; mutated—transformed; defying—challenging, disobeying; smudged—dirtied, smeared; biological—related to living organisms; limitations—inadequacies, imperfections; retroactive—retrospective, relating to the past; hysteric—uncontrollable laughter; revealing—making known, disclosing; ecstatic—thrilled, delighted; penultimate—second to last; sympathy—understanding, compassion

Activity #7: Word associations will vary. Examples: repressed—Penelope: Penelope is repressed by maintaining her popularity rather than expressing her true emotions; primitive—Gordy; Gordy explains that when humans were primitive, weak people were banished from the tribe; banished—Junior; Junior feels banished by both Indians and whites because he is different; sentimental—Junior; Junior becomes sentimental at the cemetery while thinking of his grandmother, sister, and Eugene; humiliation—Rowdy; Rowdy feels humiliation when Junior blocks his shot during the basketball game; optimistic—Rowdy; Rowdy is optimistic about Junior’s nomadic future; intimidate—Roger; Roger and the other basketball players intimidate Junior during his first week of school; pelted—Andruss brothers; The Andruss brothers pelted Junior with insults; contempt—Earl; Earl expresses contempt when his daughter dates an Indian; taunted—Mrs. Jeremy; The social studies teacher taunted Junior for missing so many days of school; concussion—Junior; Rowdy gives Junior a concussion during a basketball game; endeavor—Junior; Junior’s endeavor is to live a better life; eccentric—Grandma; Grandma is eccentric in that she is an Indian who never drinks alcohol; binge—Father; Father goes on a drinking binge whenever he is depressed; tolerant—Grandma; Grandma’s best characteristic is that she is tolerant of everyone she meets.

Activity #8: Stories will vary.

Activity #9: 1. a 2. a 3. b 4. b 5. a 6. a 7. b 8. b 9. a 10. b

Study Guide

The Black-Eye-of-the-Month Club—Because Geometry Is Not a Country Somewhere Near France:
1. Junior was born with water on the brain. 2. 32; 42 3. The dentist believed Indians only feel half as much pain as white people. 4. Bullies beat up Junior at least once a month. 5. Words limit Junior because not everyone speaks the same language, whereas everyone understands pictures; Answers will vary. 6. make a drawing of food or money become real; Junior’s family is poor. 7. Spokane Indian Reservation 8. The truth is Junior cannot do anything to save Oscar. 9. Junior’s mother would have been a teacher; Junior’s father would have been a musician. 10. the bruises on his face from his father’s punches 11. Rowdy is angry with Junior for laughing at him, but he will not hurt his best friend. 12. Rowdy shaves off the brothers’ eyebrows and cuts their braids. 13. Rowdy likes comics for kids, such as Richie Rich, Archie, and Casper the Friendly Ghost. 14. Junior’s older sister 15. The teacher sometimes forgets to come to school. 16. Junior’s mother 17. Junior throws the book at Mr. P.
Linking Novel Units® Student Packets to National and State Reading Assessments

During the past several years, an increasing number of students have faced some form of state-mandated competency testing in reading. Many states now administer state-developed assessments to measure the skills and knowledge emphasized in their particular reading curriculum. This Novel Units® guide includes open-ended comprehension questions that correlate with state-mandated reading assessments. The rubric below provides important information for evaluating responses to open-ended comprehension questions. Teachers may also use scoring rubrics provided for their own state’s competency test.

Scoring Rubric for Open-Ended Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-Exemplary</td>
<td>Thorough, complete ideas/information Clear organization throughout Logical reasoning/conclusions Thorough understanding of reading task Accurate, complete response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Sufficient</td>
<td>Many relevant ideas/pieces of information Clear organization throughout most of response Minor problems in logical reasoning/conclusions General understanding of reading task Generally accurate and complete response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Partially Sufficient</td>
<td>Minimally relevant ideas/information Obvious gaps in organization Obvious problems in logical reasoning/conclusions Minimal understanding of reading task Inaccuracies/incomplete response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-Insufficient</td>
<td>Irrelevant ideas/information No coherent organization Major problems in logical reasoning/conclusions Little or no understanding of reading task Generally inaccurate/incomplete response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>