

2017 English 8 Summer Reading Assignment

The required book this summer is *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie. Arnold Spirit, Jr. is not a character you will soon forget! His voice is realistic and sometimes irreverent, and he does not hold back from sharing some tough and sad things about his life. Most importantly, he wrestles with ideas that are essential to understanding ourselves.

In addition to the required reading selection, you are expected to read three additional books from the list of recommended titles for 8th grade and 9th grade. Visit the Dana Hall Library website to view the summer reading list:

<http://library.danahall.org/reading-lists/summer-reading/>

As you complete the following activities, type your work on your iPad. You will be asked to submit your work to Schoology in English class on the first day of classes, so be prepared to share a digital document at that time. Also, bring your copy of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* to class with you on the first day of classes!

Activity for Free Choice Books

For each of the three free choice books, write two paragraphs explaining the following:

- **Paragraph 1:** Write a short paragraph to capture the essentials of the book. Identify the title and author, and provide a brief plot summary of the book.
- **Paragraph 2:** Highlight a specific excerpt from the book that you feel best captures the author's writing style and effectively establishes **mood** (i.e. a distinctive emotional quality). You must record your chosen excerpt and explain how the author's use of **detail** and **tone** (i.e. the writer's attitude towards the subject) work to create a particular mood and invite us into the world the writer has created.

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

Complete the following tasks for the required book:

As you read:

Have a pen or pencil in hand and mark up the text. Underline words or phrases that stand out to you. In the margins jot down observations or questions to bring up in class. This is called annotating the text, and is a vital way of interacting with your book!

After you read:

Please respond to the questions on the next page in *complete, polished sentences*. Each response should be approximately *1-2 solid paragraphs* in length. These questions will ask you to both report on and **interpret** what you have read. In order to interpret effectively, make sure to engage in a critical exploration of specific examples from the text, and always try to "show" rather than "tell"!

(Continued on next page...)

- 1. First Impressions**
What does the word 'diary' tell you about how the story is told? Consider the adjectives, "absolutely true" and "part-time." What might the title mean? What do the two figures on the cover depict, and why do you think they are included here?
- 2. Power of Language**
How does Sherman Alexie develop his voice throughout the novel? What kind of language does he use to communicate to the reader? (Look at: repetition, fragments, casual language, etc.) Identify a passage from the text that you think represents a particularly skillful example of writerly voice and explain why you made that choice.
- 3. "Like a Lion"**
Summarize the **epiphany** (i.e. a character's sudden realization about himself or the world around him) that Junior has about the second basketball game between Wellpinit and Reardan (pp. 195-196) and what it means for his classmates, his family, and his opponents. Why is Junior able to have this epiphany at this point in the book, and what does he learn?
- 4. "Remembering"**
Junior gives us a list of the tribes to which he claims membership (p. 217). Based on his list, how might he define the word "tribe"? How does Junior's complex list of tribes reveal something about his growth over the course of the novel?
- 5. After You Read**
Think carefully about Junior and Rowdy's interactions and conversations in the last chapter of the book. Choose a small excerpt (a few sentences or less) that you think is particularly beautiful or important. In a short paragraph, explore your chosen excerpt explain what is important or beautiful about it.