

2021 English 8 Summer Reading Assignment

Dear rising eighth graders,

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. **So that it is fresh in your mind, you should read this book close to the end of the summer.**

In addition to the required reading selection, you must read **two books** from the reading lists “Recommended Books for Grade 8” or “Recommended Books for Grade 9,” both of which can be found at: <http://library.danahall.org/readinglists/summer-reading>. (Anything you purchased from the “extras” table at the Book Fair counts, too.)

As you read *Absolutely True Diary*, have a pen or pencil in hand and take notes to keep track of the novel’s themes and the characters’ development. Underline words or phrases that stand out to you. In particular, **prepare bullet points on each of these four questions** so that you are prepared to engage in discussions and write a graded essay when you return to school. You **do not have to turn in** these notes and they **will not be graded**.

1. What are some of the most important lessons Junior learns by the end of the book? How do the events and other characters in the book lead him to these realizations?
2. 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?
3. How does Sherman Alexie develop Junior’s voice throughout the novel? What kind of language does he use to communicate to the reader? (Look at: repetition, fragments, casual language, etc.)
4. What does the author mean by the following quotation: “Life is a constant struggle between being an individual and being a member of a community”? How does that describe what Junior goes through? How does it describe what most teenagers go through?

We look forward to teaching you in the fall!

Sincerely,

Mr. Elwell and Mrs. Robbins