

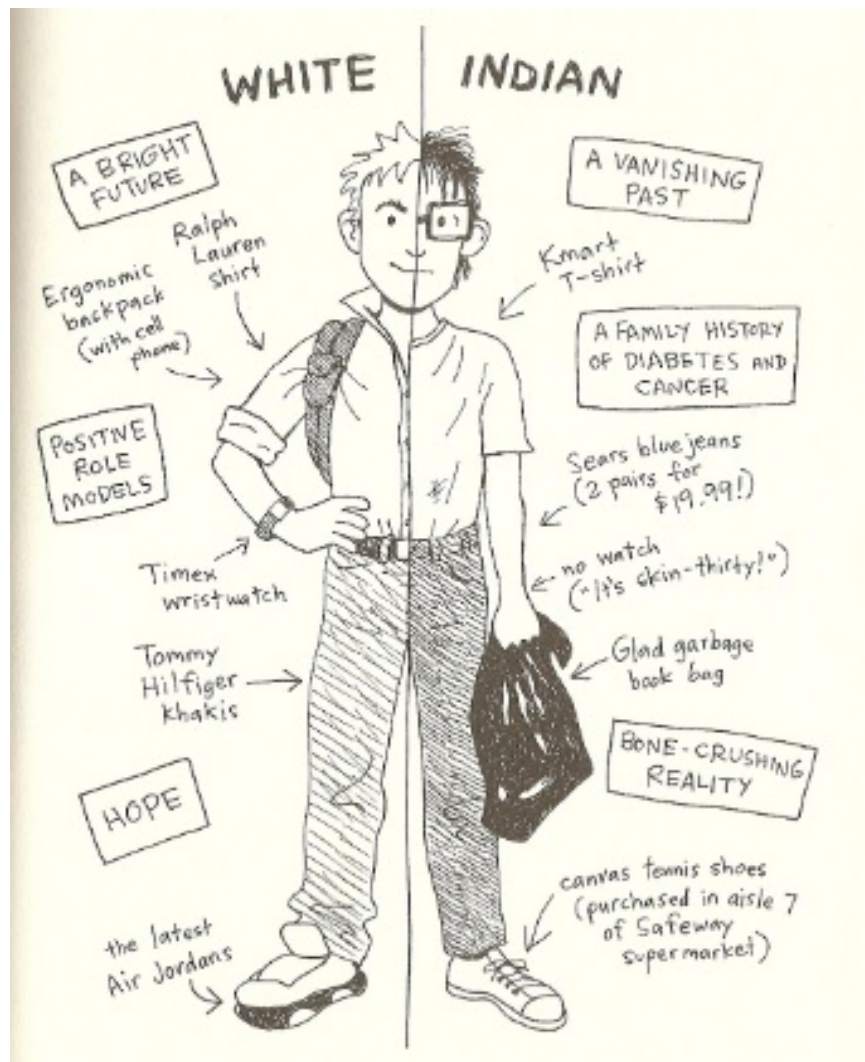
NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PERIOD: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE ABSOLUTELY TRUE DIARY OF A PART-TIME INDIAN

BY: SHERMAN ALEXIE

On page 57 the main character draws a picture depicting himself and his two different sides. Draw a picture of yourself in a similar manner. It does not have to be about race, it can be hobbies, religion, upbringing, family, dreams, etc. Draw two sides and write down at least 3 main points and 3 smaller points on each side. Outline your ideas on this page. Complete on a full piece of white paper. (Extra credit: color and include more details)



## "SORRY FOR NOT BEING A STEREOTYPE"

By: Rita Pyrellis 2004

How many of you would know an American Indian if you saw one? My guess is not many. Certainly not the bank teller who called security when an Indian woman — a visiting scholar — tried to cash a check with a tribal identification card. When asked what the problem was, the teller replied: "It must be a scam. Everyone knows real Indians are extinct."

And not the woman who cut in front of me at the grocery checkout a few months ago. When I confronted her, she gave me the once over and said: "Why don't you people just go back to your own country."

OK, lady, after you, I said, when I thought of it the next morning.

Even though I was born and raised in Chicago, strangers sometimes assume I'm a foreigner. For the record, I'm Native American, or Indian — take your pick. I prefer Lakota.

Sometimes strangers think I'm from another time. They wonder if I live in a teepee or make my own buckskin clothes or have ever hunted buffalo. They are surprised when I tell them that most Indians live in cities, in houses, and some of us shop at the Gap. I've never hunted a buffalo, although I almost hit a cow once while driving through South Dakota.

Sometimes, people simply don't believe I'm Indian. "You don't look Indian," a woman told me once. She seemed disappointed. I asked her what an Indian is supposed to look like. "You know. Long black hair, braids, feathers, beads."

Apparently, as Indians go, I'm a flop, an embarrassment to my racial stereotype. My hair is shoulder-length, and I don't feather it, unless you count my unfortunate Farrah Fawcett period in junior high.

When you say you're Indian, you better look the part or be prepared to defend yourself. Those are fighting words. When my husband tells people he's German, do they expect him to wear lederhosen and a Tyrolean hat? Of course not. But such are the risks when you dare to be Indian. You don't tug on Superman's cape, and you don't mess around with a man's stereotype.

Native American scholar Vine Deloria wrote that of all the problems facing Indian people, the most pressing one is our transparency. Never mind the staggering suicide rate among Native youth, or the fact that Indians are the victims of violent crimes at more than twice the rate of all U.S. residents — our very existence seems to be in question.

"Because people can see right through us, it becomes impossible to tell truth from fiction or fact from mythology," he wrote. "The American public feels most comfortable with the mythical Indians of stereotype-land who were always THERE."

Sure. Stereotypes don't have feelings, or children who deserve to grow up with images that reflect who they are — not perfect images, but realistic ones. While Little Black Sambo and the Frito Bandito have gone the way of minstrel shows, Indians are still



## VOCABULARY

WORD	PAGE #	DEFINE	SENTENCE IN BOOK	OWN SENTENCE
SUSCEPTIBLE:				
INSEPARABLE:				
IMPENDING:				
ARTICULATE:				

## VOCABULARY

WORD	PAGE #	DEFINE	SENTENCE IN BOOK	OWN SENTENCE
VULNERABLE:				
REPRESSED:				
JUDGMENTAL:				
SCINTILLATING:				

## LITERARY LOG - WHITE VS. INDIAN

Junior is constantly dealing with the differences between the existence of white people vs. the Indians on his reservation. These differences are mentioned both in the text and in the cartoons. As you read, watch for these moments of difference. As you find them, write a brief summary of the moment (quote or cartoon) and then analyze: **how does this difference affect Junior?**

DESCRIPTION OF DIFFERENCE & PAGE NUMBER	EFFECT ON JUNIOR'S LIFE

## THEMES, MOTIFS, SYMBOLS

WORD:	THEME	MOTIF	SYMBOL
DEFINITION:			
EXAMPLE:			
EXAMPLE:			
EXAMPLE:			

## SHORT ANSWER

Text-to-Self: Do you think that people label you with a stereotype? What is unfair about the stereotype?

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Text-to-World: Is this book just about Indians or Native Americas? Or do you think it's about other people in American society?

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Text-to-Text: What other books have you read in which a young protagonist had to struggle with living in two worlds- one at home and one at school or the world?

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## CHAPTER RESPONSE QUESTIONS

### The Black-Eye-of-the-Month Club

1. Why is Junior a member of 'the Black-Eye-of-the-Month Club'?
2. Why does Junior draw cartoons? What do the first two cartoons depict? What does this tell us about Junior?
3. Describe the style of writing in the first chapter.

### Why Chicken Means So Much to Me

1. What does Junior identify as the worst thing about being poor?
2. 'And hey, in a weird way, being hungry makes food taste better.' (p. 8) What does this statement show us about Junior?
3. What happens to Oscar? What does this illustrate to the reader?
4. How is poverty a cycle for Junior's family?
5. Use five adjectives to describe Junior's personality so far.

### Revenge Is My Middle Name

1. Describe Rowdy and Junior's relationship. What do they do for each other?
2. What is the Spokane Powwow?
3. What does Rowdy do to the Andruss brothers? Why? What does this demonstrate about his friendship with Junior?

### Because Geometry Is Not a Country Somewhere Near France

1. Describe Mr P.
2. Why is Junior so cynical about white teachers?
3. What angers Junior about his geometry book?

### Hope Against Hope

1. Why does Junior throw his geometry book? What does it signify?
2. Why does Mr P say the following? 'Every white person on this rev should get smashed in the face. But, let me tell you this. All the Indians should get smashed in the face, too.' (p. 40)
3. What is Mr P's advice to Junior? Why does he give him this advice?

### Go Means Go

1. How do Junior's parents react to his decision to change schools? What does this show about them?

### Rowdy Sings the Blues

1. How are sporting results used to compare the two schools? Why is it significant that Rowdy performed well at most competitions?
2. How does Rowdy react to Junior's decision to move schools? Why does he react in this way?
3. How does Rowdy disguise his pain?

### How to Fight Monsters

1. Why is Junior deemed to have betrayed his tribe?
2. Describe the cartoon on page 57. What does this symbolize about Junior's insecurities?
3. How does the confusion over Junior's names demonstrate his change in culture?
4. How do the students react to Junior at Reardan?
5. How could Junior have reacted to being called names?
6. How does the fight illustrate the differences in social codes?
7. 'Maybe I was telling the world I was no longer a moving target.' How is this a significant moment for Junior?

### Grandmother Gives Me Some Advice

1. 'I realized how much of my self-worth, my sense of safety, was based on Rowdy's fists.' How does Junior learn to stand up for himself?
2. What is Junior's grandmother's advice?

### Tears of a Clown

1. What does Junior's story about Dawn illustrate to the reader? What does Junior's story about Dawn illustrate to the reader?

### Halloween

1. How does Junior try to establish a connection with Penelope?
2. How does trick or treating remind Junior of Rowdy?

### Slouching Toward Thanksgiving

1. How does the author illustrate Junior's loneliness?
2. What is significant about Junior speaking up in class?
3. How does Mr. Dodge reply and how does this make Junior feel?
4. Examine the cartoon of Junior's journey to school on p. 88. Contrast this to how you normally get to school. How many kilometers is twenty-two miles?
5. What does Mary do? Why?
6. How does Junior become friends with Gordy? What do they have in common?

### My Sister Sends Me an E-mail

1. Summarize Mary's email in three dot points.

### Thanksgiving

1. Why does Junior think of Rowdy at Thanksgiving time?
2. Describe the cartoon Junior draws. Why is Rowdy's respect still so important to Junior?
3. How does Rowdy's father regard the cartoon? Is this type of reaction typical in today's society? How could the fear of being considered 'gay' limit male interactions?

### Hunger Pains

1. How does Penelope and Junior's friendship develop?
2. How are Penelope and Junior using each other?

3. What advice does Junior give Penelope? Is it good advice?

#### Rowdy Gives Me Advice About Love

1. Why does Junior refer to how 'white' Penelope is? What is the effect of this?
2. 'White girls are privileged. They're damsels in distress.' (p. 116) What does this mean?

#### Dance, Dance, Dance

1. Why is the novel called *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*?
2. Examine the cartoon on p. 120. Analyze each of the pictures. Why do you think Alexie presents the information in this way?
3. How do Penelope and Roger react to Junior's admission that he is poor?
4. What does Junior learn by the end of the chapter?

#### Don't Trust Your Computer

1. What does Junior email Rowdy and how does he reply? Why does this make Junior laugh?
2. Why do the people at home call Junior an 'apple'?
3. What does Gordy say about the role of the tribe? How is this applicable to Junior?

#### My Sister Sends Me a Letter

1. What does Junior think of Mary's 'gorgeous new place'?

#### Reindeer Games

1. Why does Junior try out for the basketball team?
2. What happens at try-outs? Why does Junior get in?
3. Why does Junior say 'it was like something out of Shakespeare' (p. 142) when he discovers their first game is against Wellinpit?
4. What happens when Junior enters the gym? How does he react? Why?
5. What happens during the basketball game? Write a short news report.

#### And a Partridge in a Pear Tree

1. Describe Junior's Christmas.

#### Red Versus White

1. What good things about his culture does Junior realize?
2. Why does Junior describe his grandmother as tolerant?

#### Wake

1. 'We all have to find our own way to say good-bye.' (p. 161) How does Junior do this?
2. Who is Billionaire Ted and what is his story?
3. 'We lived and died together.' (p. 166) What does this show about Junior's community?

#### Valentine Heart

1. How does Junior cope with his grief?

2. What do Junior's cartoons (pp. 170 & 171) reveal about his emotions?
3. What happens in Mrs. Jeremy's class? Why is this so significant to Junior?

#### In Like a Lion

1. How does Junior explain his improvement in basketball?
2. What does the cartoon on p. 182 demonstrate about his feelings?
3. How does Sherman Alexie build tension towards the game?
4. What is the Reardan game plan? Is this successful?
5. How does Coach give his team confidence?
6. What happens during the game? Why does Junior cry when the game is finished? What does he realize?

#### Rowdy and I Have a Long and Serious Discussion About Basketball

1. Why is the chapter title humorous?

#### Because Russian Guys Are Not Always Geniuses

1. How does Mary die?
2. How does Junior react to Mary's death? Why does he react in this way?
3. Why does Junior feel responsible in some way for Mary's death?
4. How do the students at Reardan show they care?

#### My Final Freshman Year Report Card

1. Describe Junior's report card.

#### Remembering

1. What realizations does Junior arrive at?
2. What tribes does Junior belong to? How does this help him feel better?

#### Talking About Turtles

1. Why do Junior and Rowdy climb the tree? What does this symbolize?
2. How does Rowdy compare Junior to a nomad?
3. 'We didn't keep score.' (p. 230) What does the final line signify?
4. Do you think Rowdy and Junior will remain friends? Explain.