

BLM 4 Reader Response Questions: *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

Section One: Beginning to end of “Rowdy Sings the Blues”

1. Junior spends a lot of time describing himself. Based on your reading so far, what do you think he feels about himself and why? Support your response using examples from the novel.
2. Look closely at the cartoon of Junior’s parents on page 12, entitled “Who My Parents Would Have Been if Someone Had Paid Attention to Their Dreams.” Using examples from the novel, compare the cartoon to Junior’s reality.
3. Does Mr. P.’s reaction to Junior smashing him in the face make sense? Why or why not? Support your response using examples from the novel.

Section Two: “How to Fight Monsters” (p.54) to end of “My Sister Sends Me an E-Mail”

4. Junior faces racism from the people on the reservation, at Reardan, and probably from himself as well. How does Junior deal with this racism? Using examples from the novel, describe some of the challenges he faces.
5. Junior does not spend much time describing how he gets back and forth to school, but the cartoon on page 88, entitled “Junior Gets to School” gives us a pretty good impression. Give a brief synopsis of Junior’s transportation challenges, and discuss how this compares to your own life. How do you think it feels to face this every day?
6. Gordy tells Junior, regarding the cartoons, that “if you’re good at it, and you love it, and it helps you to navigate the river of the world, then it can’t be wrong” (page 95). How does Junior use his cartoons to make sense of his world?

Section Three: “Thanksgiving” (p.102) to end of “Red Versus White”

7. Describe Penelope and Junior’s relationship as you see it, using examples from the novel to support your response. Gordy and Rowdy both have opinions about the relationship as well. Describe and compare those opinions, using examples from the novel.
8. After the dance, “Roger, being of kind heart and generous pocket, and also a little bit racist” (page 129), drove Junior home. Why do you think that Junior feels Roger is racist? How does Junior hide his poverty? Support your response using examples.
9. On page 142, there is a self-portrait of Junior playing basketball. Describe this drawing, explaining which parts are ironic. What challenges does Junior face by playing basketball and how does he deal with those challenges?

Section Four: “Wake” (p.159) to the End

10. The whole novel contains very dark subject matter yet is frequently very humorous. Using examples from the novel, discuss how Alexie achieves this balance.
11. Junior comes to several realizations about how he fits into the world; for example, on page 217, he lists his membership in several “tribes,” most of which would not be described as traditional. Describe events that help him to reach these realizations.
12. On page 218 there is a sketch of Rowdy and Junior as nine-year-olds, holding hands and jumping into the lake. Based on this sketch and the tone at the end of the novel, how much hope does Junior feel about his future?