




BLM 3 – Lit Circle Prompts for *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* ...

Response prompts are adaptations from a 2012 NOII Collaborative Project in partnership with educator, Leah Hubbard and Jamaine Campbell

Section One: “Who Am I?” Self Perception (pages 1 – 43)

Quotation	Prompts
	<p>In what ways does Junior’s description of himself inform or shape what you thought of his character as you read? Did you find yourself making assumptions about Junior based on this description? What were your assumptions and why did you think these thoughts? What did you find in Junior’s writing to prove or support your reasoning for making assumptions about him? Despite Junior’s description of himself in the first few pages, he does not seem to be truly unhappy. Why do you think Sherman Alexie choose to describe Junior in such a way?</p>
<p>“I draw because words are too unpredictable. I draw because words are too limited. If you speak and write in English, or Spanish, or Chinese, or any other language, then only a certain percentage of human beings will get your meaning. But when you draw a picture, everybody can understand it.”</p>	<p>How would you describe yourself? Is it difficult to describe yourself in writing to others? Do you think people would find it hard to know who you are by your writing? What personal thoughts/ideas would make it hard to describe yourself to others? What assumptions do you think most people would make about you by the way you would describe yourself? How do people judge other people?</p>
<p>““I want you to say that you deserve better.” I couldn’t say it. It wasn’t true. I mean, I wanted to have it better, but I didn’t deserve it.</p>	<p>Do you think Junior is justified in striking Mr. P? Why do you think Mr. P suggests it is acceptable for Junior to be angry? What factors contribute to Junior’s beliefs that he does not deserve to be happy? Do you think these are valid reasons to not believe one deserves to be happy—what advice would you give to Junior? What do you think about Mr. P’s advice to Junior?</p>
<p>Free Choice: Find a quotation that connects to the idea of “identity”</p>	<p>Why did you pick this quotation? How does it connect to “identity” or one of our inquiry questions? What insight does it give us on “identity” and/or one of our inquiry questions?</p>

Section Two: How do experiences shape identity?

Quotation	Prompts
	<p>There are differing opinions about Junior leaving his community in order to attend school in Reardan. Choose two people who support Junior and two who are against Junior leaving. Without arguing whether they are right or wrong, try describing why you think they feel the way they do. What pressures do think this may create for Junior?</p>
<p>“Spokane Indian Rules of Fisticuffs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If somebody insults you then you have to fight him. 2. If you think somebody is going to insult you, then you Have to fight him. 3. If you think somebody is thinking about insulting you, then you have to fight him.” etc. 	<p>The Spokane Indian Rules of Fisticuffs (p. 61) seem to be a regular part of Junior’s lived reality. Why is Junior confused after hitting Roger? What does Junior come to realize after hitting Roger? What “unwritten/written” rules do you think apply in your life? It may be helpful to look at the rules you think apply at school/on sports teams/field trips/with family and friends/with community and community events.</p>
<p>Wab Kinew on 5 Stereotypes to Let Go Of www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlkuRCXdu5A</p> 	<p>Junior gets to enjoy one of the rare benefits of a stereotype while at Reardan High. He knew that based on the fact he was an Indian from the reservation, some boys who might have otherwise physically bullied him, thought of him as a “potential killer.” Besides being from the reservation, what other things do you think contribute to the creation of stereotypes? What are three other prominent stereotypes you can think of? Why do you think stereotypes exist?</p>
<p>Free Choice: Find a quotation that connects to the idea of identity.</p>	<p>Why did you pick this quotation? How does it connect to identity or one of our inquiry questions? What insight does it give us on identity and/or one of our inquiry questions?</p>

Section Three: How do people deal with challenges?

Quotation	Prompts
"In his own way, Gordy the bookworm was just as tough as Rowdy." (p. 116).	What connections is Junior making between the two? In what ways are Gordy and Rowdy similar? What do you feel are some noticeable differences between the two? What circumstances do you think have occurred to make each of them the way they are?
Bus scene from <i>Smoke Signals</i> (beginning where Victor says "You know Thomas, I don't know what you're talking about half the time. Why is that?")	<p>Prior to the dance, Junior tries to make himself seem different. What evidence from the novel can you use to support the idea the Junior is creating an image that hides his true identity? What do you think are the costs of maintaining such a self-identity for Junior?</p> <p>View the bus scene in <i>Smoke Signals</i> and consider whether it is better to try and be somebody you are not for other people or stay true to yourself in spite of other people. Explain your reasoning.</p>
"'I'm not anorexic,' she says. 'I'm bulimic.'" "She says it with her nose and chin in the air. She gets all arrogant. And then I remember there are a bunch of anorexics who are PROUD to be skinny and starved freaks." (p. 106-107)	In conversation with Penelope, Junior discovers that he is not all that different – what do you think he has come to realize? If catching Penelope vomiting is the catalyst for their friendship what do you think sustains their relationship? What are your personal feelings about their relationship?
Free Choice: Find a quotation that connects to the idea of identity.	Why did you pick this quotation? How does it connect to “identity” or one of our inquiry questions? What insight does it give us on identity and/or one of our inquiry questions?

Section Four: How might others actions or ideas shape who we are?

Quotation	Prompts
<p>"Do you want to know the very best thing about my grandmother? She was tolerant."</p>	<p>Junior thinks his grandmother was amazing. What examples does Junior give to demonstrate her tolerance for all peoples? Discuss how feel intolerance manifests itself in your world. Have you experienced intolerance? What do you feel is at the base of intolerance?</p>
<p>"I am zero on the rez. And if you subtract zero from zero, you still have zero." (p. 16).</p> <p>"I wanted to live up to expectations. I guess that's what it comes down to. The power of expectations. And as they expected more of me, I expected more of myself..." (p. 180).</p>	<p>What role do you think expectations play in shaping identity? Do you think that others' beliefs about Arnold have changed him or has he changed his own beliefs about himself? Support your ideas with evidence from the text. What expectations are placed on you? How have these expectations shaped you? Have you ever felt conflicted by others ideas?</p>
<p>"We were more than one hundred feet in the air. From our vantage point, we could see for miles. We could see from one end of the reservation to the other. We could see our entire world. And our entire world, at that moment, was green and golden and perfect.</p> <p>"Wow." I said.</p> <p>"It's pretty, Rowdy said." "I've never seen anything so pretty." (p. 226)</p> <p>"I would always love Rowdy. And I would always miss him too. Just as I would always love and miss my grandmother, my big sister, and Eugene. Just as I would always love and miss my reservation and my tribe." (p. 230).</p>	<p>Junior has experienced a lot of change in one year. In what ways does knowing who you are and where you are from provide strength to an individual? Why do you think Junior and Rowdy do not keep score while playing one-on-one at the end of the novel? In what ways does their friendship reflect Junior's feelings about being an Indian and being part of a tribe?</p>
<p>Free Choice: Find a quotation that connects to the idea of identity.</p>	<p>Why did you pick this quotation? How does it connect to identity or one of our inquiry questions? What insight does it give us on identity and/or one of our inquiry questions?</p>