

# **The Absolutely True Diary Of a Part-Time Indian**

Sherman Alexie

## **English 10 Study Unit**

Zane Spencer

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Google the book title at [www.sateskole.no](http://www.sateskole.no)

**The entire novel is available online**

## Please read this before you start:

You can do this novel study in one of two ways. You can request a printed copy of the study unit and a copy of the novel. You can place your answers in the spaces provided and submit your paper copy to the L.S.S. office to the attention of Zane Spencer. Or, you can read the novel online, do the unit using Microsoft Word and submit it to my e-mail address: [zspencer@sd74.bc.ca](mailto:zspencer@sd74.bc.ca) If you choose to do the assignment electronically, you do not need to repeat the questions, but be sure to include chapter titles so I do not lose the tiny piece of mind that I have left.

**The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian** is a thoroughly entertaining novel and one that can stand a close and careful reading. **Do not** read it while you are eating, watching TV, playing a game on your phone or watching Tic-Tocs, or some similar drivel, on Youtube. Give it your full attention. Please just try it and see what happens. This study guide will help you with the words and their meanings. It will ask you to think (OMG) about the ideas, characters and themes. If you are in your teens and if you have lived in Lillooet longer than 5 minutes, you will understand everything that Sherman Alexie talks about. Check it out for yourself and decide.

## The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

**Allusion:** A figure of speech whereby the author refers to a subject matter such as a place, event, or literary work by way of a passing reference. It is up to the reader to make a connection to the subject being mentioned.

**Explain the allusion or allusions in each drawing. Google them and find out where they come from.**

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



The rain in Spain

### Why Chicken Means So Much to Me



The shroud of Turin



Who is Vidal Sassoon?

What do the letters IQ stand for?

What is Kmart?

What is houndstooth?



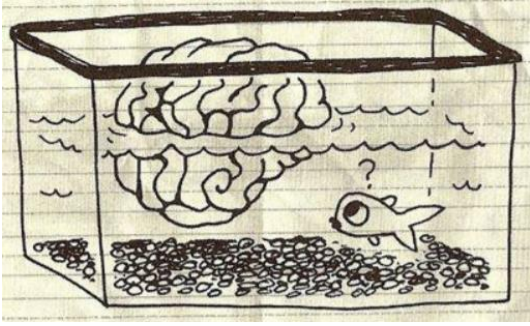
Who is Miles Davis?

Use a coloured pencil to draw the Mississippi River on the map.





# Revenge is my middle name



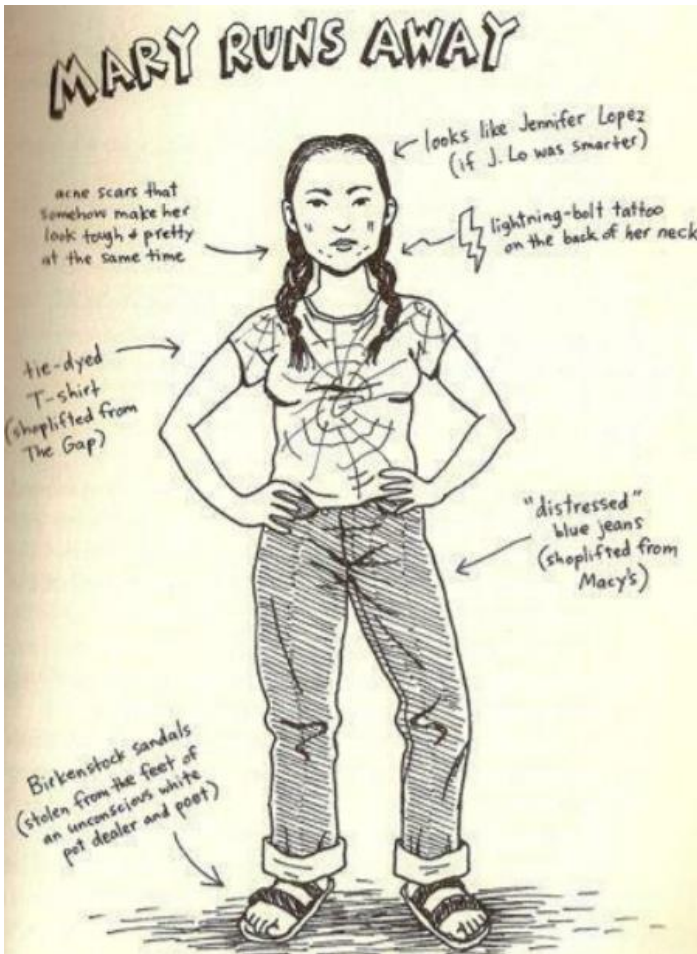
What is this drawing about?

Who is featured in the drawing below?



What is the most notable quality of his personality?

# Because Geometry is Not a Country Somewhere Near France



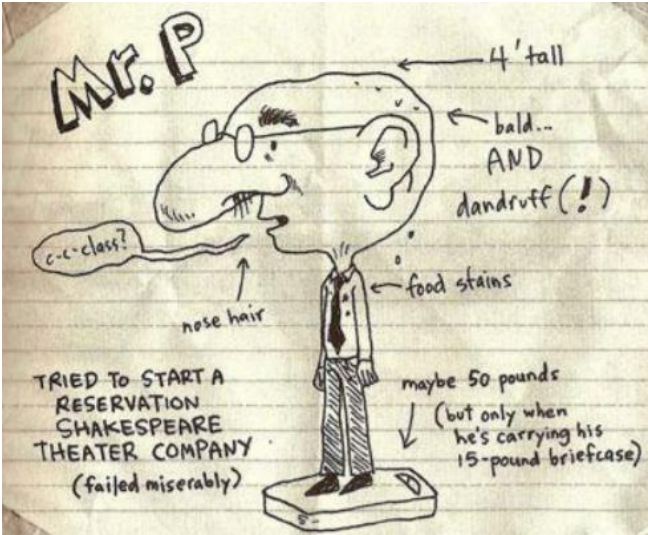
How is a tie-dyed T-shirt made?

What is the Gap?

What is Macy's?

What are "distressed" jeans?

What are Birkenstock sandals?



What is the main reason that so many of the kids like Mr. P.?

Why does Arnold get so angry about his geometry book?



### Hope Against Hope



Explain this cartoon.

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What does Mr. P. mean when he says, “We were supposed to kill the Indian to save the child.”

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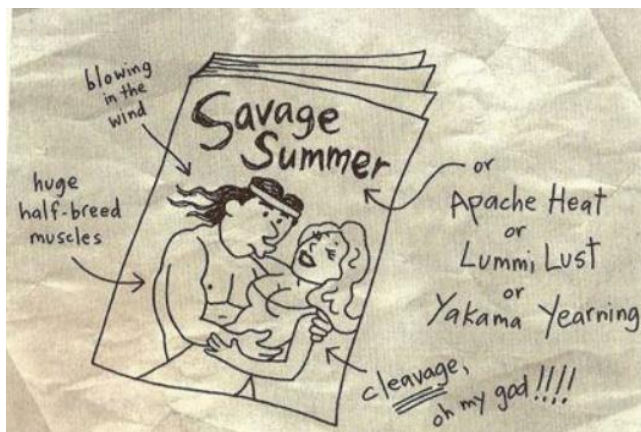
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What does the word Lummi refer to?

What does Yakama refer to?

What does “yearning” mean?

What is cleavage?

What is a half-breed?

Where is Spokane?



Explain this cartoon.

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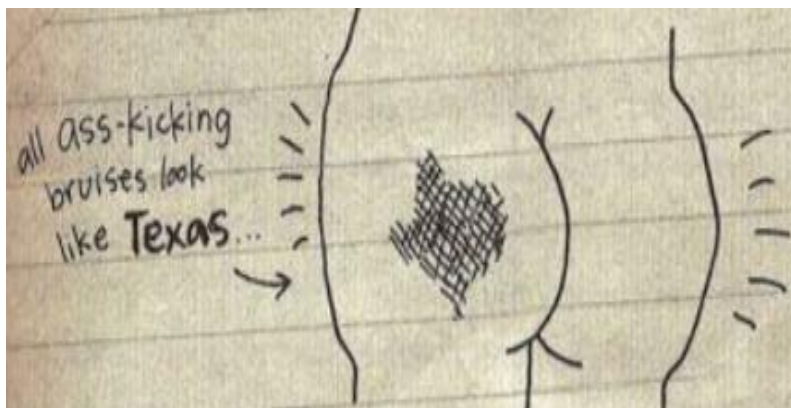
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### Go Means Go



Why do the bruises look like Texas?

What is Texas known for?



What is this cartoon about?



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### Rowdy Sings the Blues



What is this figure from Greek mythology called?

What makes Rowdy so angry?



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## How to Fight Monsters

What is the definition of irony?

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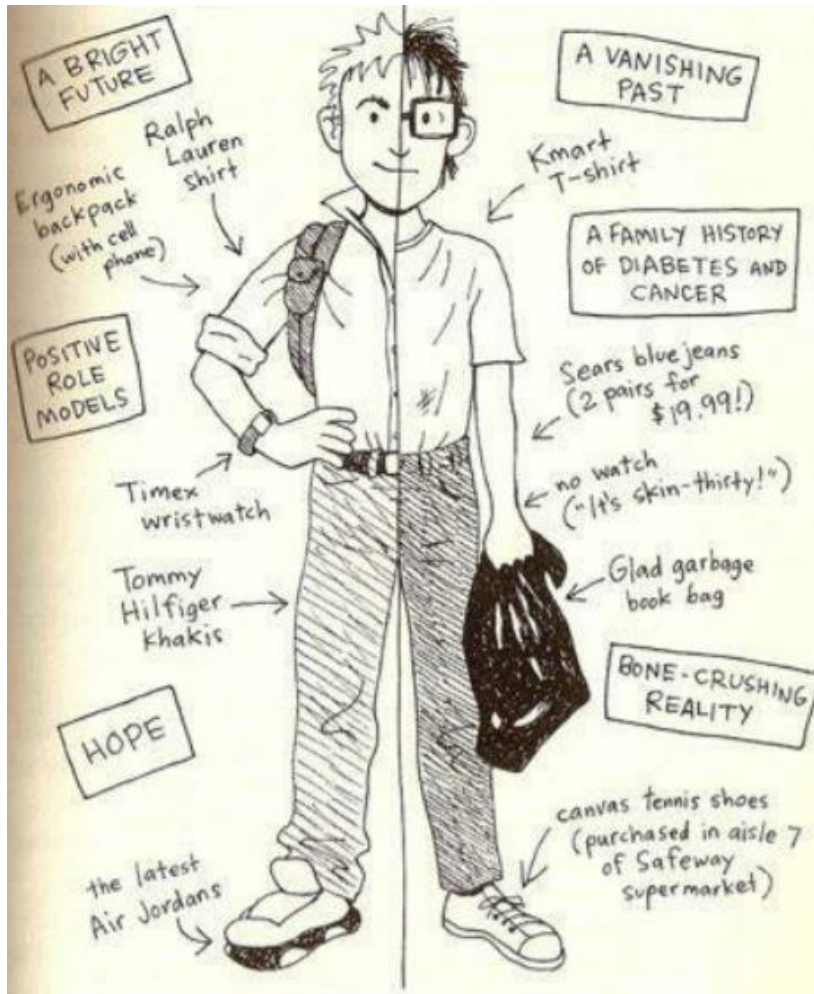


Explain the irony in Reardan's mascot?

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What does the above drawing say to you?

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# Grandmother Gives Me Some Advice



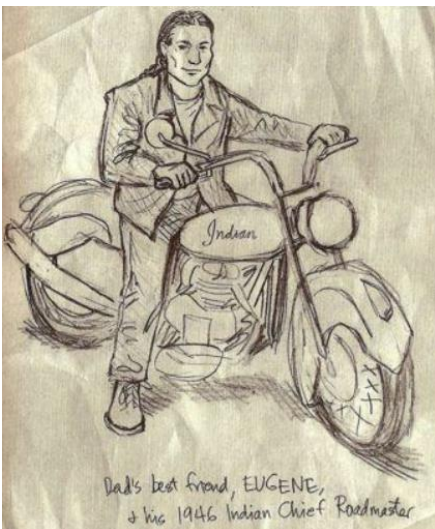
Why does Grandmother she does when she sells them on eBay?

describe her keychains as

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Research Indian motorcycles. Briefly state what you learned.

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## **Hallowe'en**

Why did Penelope and Arnold dress up as homeless people for Hallowe'en?

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## **Slouching Toward Thanksgiving**

Why was this such a difficult time for Arnold?

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Why did Arnold refer to Mr. Dodge as a “fake science teacher”?

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Arnold notes that “Indian families stick together like Gorilla glue.” If this is true, why did his parents feel like failures as parents?

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What place does Arnold name where the white people are scared of Indians?

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List three things you find **odd** about Gordy:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What did Arnold learn from Gordy?

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What do you think Gordy meant when he said that books should give Arnold a “metaphorical boner”?

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## **My Sister Sends Me an E-mail**

What does Arnold's sister, Mary, think was the coolest thing about the hotel she was staying in?

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## **Thanksgiving**

Why did Arnold think it was funny that Indians celebrated Thanksgiving?

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What was Arnold's father thankful for?

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Arnold waves at Rowdy who is in an upstairs room looking at Arnold out the window. Arnold is sad about something and thankful for something. What makes him sad and what makes him thankful?

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## Hunger Pains

What is anorexia?

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What is bulimia?

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Do you agree with Arnold's theory that all addicts have pain? Explain.

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What does Penelope say everybody thinks of her?

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What did you think about the advice that Penelope’s father, Earl, gave to Arnold when they first met?

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Why did Penelope and Arnold have “unusual goals for a small-town white girl and an Indian”?

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### **Rowdy Gives Me Advice About Love**

What is Rowdy’s advice?

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What is Gordy’s advice?

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What advice would you give to Arnold if he asked you how he could get a “white” girl to love him?

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**Dance, Dance, Dance**

Arnold did not want anybody to know he was poor. What happened that made it impossible to hide his poverty? How did it turn out?

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**Don't Trust Your Computer**



Arnold says to Gordy that, “some Indians think you have to act white to make your life better”. Why does he say this and what do you think he means?

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### **My Sister Sends Me a Letter**

Briefly summarize what Mary had to say.

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### **Reindeer Games**

The title of this chapter is from a Christmas song. Figure out what the song is and explain why it is such a great title for this chapter.

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**And a Partridge in a Pear Tree**

Why was Arnold somewhat impressed with the small and late Christmas gift from his father?

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**Red Versus White**

What does Arnold have to say about “white” fathers? Do you agree or disagree and why?

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What does Arnold like about Reardan?

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What does he think is the best thing about Wellpinit?

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What is Arnold’s grandmother’s greatest gift? How did this gift show up in the things she did?

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Why does Arnold say that his grandmother thought that gay people “were like Swiss Army knives”?

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**Wake**



Why did the billionaire from Montana attend Grandmother Spirit’s funeral? Why did it turn out so badly?

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What does the author mean when he comments that “each funeral was a funeral for all of us? We lived and died together.”

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**Valentine Heart**





How does Arnold cheer himself up during his grieving process?

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**In Like a Lion**

The title of this chapter is part of a proverb. Google or ask someone to find out what the rest of the proverb is and explain what it refers to.

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Why is this proverb a good title for this chapter?

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Arnold thinks about his father and decides, “he may not have loved me perfectly, but he loved me as well as he could.” What does he mean by this?

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What causes Arnold to throw up and cry after Reardan won the game with Wellpinit?

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## **Rowdy and I Have a Long and Serious Discussion about Basketball**

In an e-mail to Arnold, Rowdy calls him a “faggot”. After they exchange messages, Arnold says that he was a “happy faggot”. What made him think that?

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## **Because Russian Guys Are Not Always Geniuses**

When he reflects on his life, Arnold concludes that there is one major difference between Indian and white people. What does he conclude?

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Explain whether you agree or disagree with him?

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How does Arnold deal with his sister’s death?

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How does his father deal with his daughter's death?

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How does his mother deal with Mary's death?

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How does Rowdy deal with Mary's death?

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**Remembering**



Arnold remembers his sister for having moved to Montana in search of her dreams. What do you think her dreams were?

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She clearly did not realize her dreams, so why was Arnold proud of her?

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At one point, while cleaning graves with his parents, Arnold realizes that he could cry for his sister, cry for himself and cry for his tribe. Why might he cry for his tribe?

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**Talking about Turtles**





**Reflections:**

List three things you liked about this novel.

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List three things that you did not like.

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List three things that made you feel positive/happy/hopeful/entertained.

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List three things that made you feel down/sad/hopeless.

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On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate this novel? \_\_\_\_\_/10



