

11th Honors American Literature — Summer Reading Assignment 2018

11th Honors American Literature

Over the summer, you will be responsible for reading the following:

- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* – Mark Twain
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* – Sherman Alexie

Literary analysis is a major component of 11th grade American Literature. Therefore, it is imperative that you spend quality time with these selections. **Reading alone is not enough. Annotate both selections. Consider the following:**

- **Characterization** – how do they change?
- **Setting** – how does setting affect character and theme?
- **Themes** – what is the universal message?
- **Symbols** – main symbols in each book?
- **The multi-genre nature of *Part-Time Indian*** – why does Alexie include cartoons? What is the effect?

In addition to reading, follow the directions below for each book.

- **For *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* you are to write a short essay based on the specific prompt below.** In order to write an effective essay, you must understand what Brill is saying in the prompt about how Alexie spans both worlds – the white world and the Native American world – through his main character's struggles and triumphs. **The essay is due on the first day of class.**
- **For *Huckleberry Finn*, be prepared to write an essay on a specific prompt during the second week of school** after reviewing the novel.
- Discussion and further examination of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* will be included in a subsequent unit.

2018 Summer Reading Essay Assignment for

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie

After you have read Alexie's novel, read the following excerpt from Susan Berry Brill. Do you agree with her analysis of Alexie's work as it pertains to the novel? Respond to her assertions in a typed, two-page essay using 3-4 examples from the text to support your opinion. Write your essay in MLA format, including in-text (parenthetical) citations. Consult a dictionary for unfamiliar words.

Throughout Alexie's writing, he displays a critically discursive stance against virtually anyone and anything. This is an equal opportunity anger that perceives both the weaknesses and failures of both Indian and white worlds. . . . Alexie lives and writes on the interstices between the divergent stories of both worlds, what he refers to as "the in-between / between tipi and HUD house / between magic and loss" (43). . . .

And yet, the interstice is not only a place of pain and anguish, but also a place in which lives are born and lived with joy as well as pain. When human lives come together in the loves and joys of fancydancers, basketball player, and lovers, then the conversive magic of human interrelationships transforms the interstice into the here and now as meaningful as any. . . . The reservation dreams of fancydancers and basketball players are the same dreams of all human beings trapped within the discursive lies of oppositional relations, relative (in) significance, subjective power, and objective weakness. . . . The dreams of treaties that won't be broken, the dreams of loves that will mend the torn weavings of broken relationships and families, the dreams of the conversive power of myth, all these survive even beyond the pain of loss. . . . from Susan Berry Brill de Ramirez, *Contemporary American Indian Literatures & the Oral Tradition*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999. 190-93.

If you have questions, contact English teacher Leslie Wolfe at wolfe2@fultonschools.org.