Study guide Questions for The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

Chapter 1
1. What happened to Junior when he was born and what was the result of this occurrence?
2. What other problems did Junior have and what was he called?
3. What does he like to do?
4. What are his dreams?

Chapter 2
1. Describe Junior’s life.
2. Retell what Junior says is worse than being hungry about being poor?
3. What realization does Junior come to after this incident?

Chapter 3
1. Explain Rowdy’s relationship with Junior.
2. Retell what happens at the Pow-wow

Chapter 4
1. Compare Junior’s life with his sister Mary’s life.
2. Who is Mr. P and how is he strange?
3. What realization does Junior make when he excitedly opens his geometry book?

Chapter 5
1. What does Junior do?
2. Explain the conversation Mr. P has with Junior?

Chapter 6
1. Who does Junior learn has the most hope?
2. What does Junior decide he has to do and why?
3. Why is it going to be difficult for Junior to go to Reardan?
4. Why does he decide to do it anyway?
Chapter 7
1. What imagery does Junior have about Reardan?
2. How does Rowdy feel about Junior’s decision to leave?

Chapter 8
1. Explain what Junior and his dad discuss on his first ride to Reardan and tell how it effects Junior.
2. What is the irony about Junior attending Reardan?
3. Who is Penelope and why is she angry with Junior?
4. How does Junior react to Roger’s, white boy’s, offensive racist joke? Why is he confused about the outcome of this event? What does he think might happen?

Chapter 9
1. Junior wants to talk to Rowdy what to do, but Rowdy hates him for leaving the Rez. To whom does he talk instead and what advice does he get?
2. Why and how Junior gets to school the next day.
3. Who does Junior see when he arrives at school and what does Junior come to realize?
4. How does this interaction make Junior feel? How does is attitude change when he sees Penelope and explain the analogy Junior makes about a king and queen?

Chapter 10
1. Explain the anecdotal story Junior retells about Dawn and what we learn about his friendship with Rowdy from this story.

Chapter 11
1. Explain what happens at Halloween between Junior and Penelope.
2. What happens to Junior’s good intentions?

Chapter 12
1. Explain the event that happens in geology class about petrified wood.
2. What problems does Junior encounter in getting to school and how does he overcome them?
3. What causes Junior’s mother to cry and how does Junior feel about it?
4. Explain the development of Junior’s new friendship.
Chapter 13
1. Retell what Mary tells Junior in her email.

Chapter 14
1. Explain the irony about Indians celebrating Thanksgiving and tell what Junior’s Dad says about it.
2. What happens when Junior goes over to Rowdy’s house?

Chapter 15
1. Explain the analogy Junior discovers between Penelope and Junior’s dad.
2. How does Junior’s interaction with Penelope affect their friendship and their lives?

Chapter 16
1. What two pieces of advice about his love for Penelope does he get from Rowdy and Gordy?

Chapter 17
1. Why does Junior feel "half Indian in one place and half white in the other"?

Chapter 18
1. Explain what happens when Junior sends his picture to Rowdy and discuss the difference between Junior’s relationship with Rowdy and the students at Reardan.
2. What does Junior mean by the term become white? How does Gordy explain community through history?

Chapter 19
1. Retell what is going on in Mary’s life.

Chapter 20
1. What does Junior think of his chances of making the basketball team and why?
2. Explain what happens when Junior is pitted against Roger in the tryouts and why.
3. How is the Reardan basketball team treated when they arrive at the Wellpinit High School? How is Junior treated and why?
4. Retell what happens when Junior gets to play in the 3rd quarter and explain what happens in the end of the game and why.
Chapter 21

1. What happens at Christmas in Junior’s house?
2. How does Junior feel when his dad returns?
3. What present does Junior’s father have for him?
4. On page 151 Alexie write, “It was a beautiful and ugly thing” about Junior’s father’s gift. What does this mean?

Chapter 22

1. Explain the dichotomy Junior discovers between being “white” or “Indian”.
2. What happens to Junior’s grandmother? What does she request of the surgeon and why?
3. What is the irony about what happened to Junior’s grandmother?

Chapter 23

1. What happens at an Indian wake?
2. Who is Ted and how do the Indians feel about him? Explain why he has come to the wake.
3. What does Junior’s mom explain about the costume?

Chapter 24

1. Explain what Junior means when he says everything on the reservation seems to be about booze and God.
2. Summarize what Junior learns and thinks about the story of Euripides by Medea.
3. What even gives rise to Junior’s saying that he knows there are only “two tribes...the people who are assholes and the people who are not,” and what does that mean.
4. What is Junior’s grieving ceremony?

Chapter 25

1. In what ways has Junior become successful?
2. What unusual move does the coach take in Reardan’s match against Wellpinit and why?
3. Explain what happens in the game.
4. Why is Junior ashamed even though he is a hero?

Chapter 26
1. How does Rowdy’s email response “kick (Reardan’s) asses next year” make Junior feel and why? What is the significance of this response?

Chapter 27

1. How does Junior put death in perspective? What traumatic event occurs in Junior’s life?
2. Explain how the event happened and tell how the people on the rez reacted. What is the irony?
3. What does Rowdy tell Junior about Mary’s death? How does the Reardan community react?

Chapter 28

1. What happens at the gravesite?
2. What does Junior think of his sister when he describes her as “she went searching for her dreams...she didn't find them, but she made the attempt.” What similarity can be made between Mary’s and Junior’s actions?
3. Explain the context in which Junior now puts his own existence.

Chapter 29

1. What memory does Junior share about the rez?
2. What does Junior say about his peers at Reardan?
3. Explain the final exchange that transpires between Junior and Rowdy. What lessons do they each learn?
ALTERNATIVE STUDY GUIDE FOR The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie Final Comprehension Test

Mr. P's role in Junior's decision to enroll at Reardon and leave 'the rez' behind; his confession to Junior about the reservation teachers

Junior's family members' reactions to his leaving...Mom, Dad, Grandma, Eugene

Mary Runs Away's frustration in her new life with the Flathead Tribe

Junior's friendship with Gordy and Roger

Penelope's relationship with Junior

ROWDY...this crazy, bumpy relationship with Junior and how it changes throughout the novel

How/Why basketball plays such an important role in this novel

Junior's identity is a major theme in this novel...how/why does it change?

THEMES: There are many themes/motifs represented through this novel. You should be able to recognize different themes, explain them & identify events/quotes that illustrate each

*For example: Racism, Bullying, Identity, Family Relations, Alcoholism, Poverty, Role Models, Hopes and Dreams, etc.

CARTOONS: Junior's cartoons, drawn by Ellen Forney, play an important role in illustrating plot events, character traits, and mood...you should be able to explain the meaning and significance of these cartoons