

Class Session 1: Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

Objectives: This lesson, inspired by Sherman Alexie's novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007), seeks to deepen your thinking about the novel in regard to two main issues: Native American children's literature in our world today and censorship. When I began thinking critically about the literature I read as a child, I found that, while I had read a few award-winning books with Native American characters (*Walk Two Moons*, *Julie of the Wolves*, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, *Indian Captive: The Story of Mary Jemison*, *Paddle-to-the-Sea*, etc.), very few of these books were actually written by Native American authors. I kept this thought in mind as I read Alexie's work, and I'm curious to know your thoughts about its place in our 21st century classrooms and world. I had heard about some of the censorship issues surrounding this book, and this was another thing in my mind as I read. This class session will serve to accomplish the following learning objectives:

1. I can think critically about the state of Native American children's literature today and where Alexie's book fits into the genre.
2. I can articulate an informed opinion on censorship in children's literature, specifically in regards to *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*.

Please work your way through this document from top to bottom. The left-hand column lists the topic and resources, and the right-hand column gives you directions on responding so our class can see your thoughts.

Native American Children's Literature Today

1. [First Nations Development Institute Native American Children's Literature Recommended Reading List](#)
2. Video: ["We Are Still Here": Young Native Americans Today](#)
3. Article: [Embracing Intercultural Diversification: Teaching Young Adult Literature with Native American Themes](#)

View the resources in the left-hand column and post your thoughts on this [Padlet](#).

- When responding about the Native Americans today video, use one of the following sentence stems to frame your response. Feel free to draw on any of your own experiences with Native American culture.
 - I used to think...but now
 - A line that stood out to me was...
 - An emotion I felt while watching the video was...
 - One thing I wonder about it...
 - What this means to me is...

Absolutely True Diary and Censorship

1. Video: ["Sherman Alexie on Book Banning and Censorship"](#)
2. [ALA: Top 10 Most Challenged Books Each Year](#)
3. Article: [Sauk Prairie High Parents Rail Against Curriculum Book](#)

View the resources in the left-hand column. Choose one of the following questions to answer and post a brief response in the Class Sessions 1 Discussion Forum. You should see a thread already started for you to respond to. You do not have to stick to the questions; you can also compose your own post on something else that relates to this topic.

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How do you think you would have responded to this novel if you were reading it as a middle schooler? As a high schooler?2. What age(s) do you think this novel is best suited for and why?3. How would you advise a teacher using this book facing controversy from a group such as parents or administration? If you do teach or have taught this book, have you ever had any controversy? If so, how did you handle it? |
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Conclusion: Hopefully, this class session engaged you in some new thinking surrounding *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, particularly in the areas of modern Native American children's literature and censorship. Thank you for your participation!

**Also, if you aren't already familiar with Padlet, it can be a great tool to foster discussion and collaboration in your classroom without a fancy platform like Schoology or Edmodo...and it's free!