

American Indian Boarding Schools

An Exploration in Global Ethnic and Cultural Cleansing

Lesson 1: It's About Time: Studying Parallel Lives in History to Understand View Point and Human Progress

Brought to you by the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe



Teacher Guide and Student Worksheets
A Supplementary Curriculum Guide written by

Ziibiwing Center
Of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways

A Guide for Thinking

These six lesson activities are intended to coordinate with the Ziibiwing Society's text, *The American Indian Boarding Schools*. If you do not already have this text, we highly recommend that you download a copy. It is available to you at no charge at the following link:

<http://www.sagchip.org/ziibiwing/planyourvisit/pdf/AIBSCurrGuide.pdf>

Ziibiwing Center Comparative Timeline

Teachers and students will also want to access the above timeline. It is a wonderful tool to comparatively look across American Indian, U.S. and world history at the same time. You will find this timeline at:

<http://www.sagchip.org/ziibiwing/planyourvisit/timeline/index.htm>

Building Background Knowledge

If you are new to the topic of American Indian Boarding Schools, the following link will provide you with a quick tutorial.

Humanities in a Minute Overview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&v=PTm479tr2jo&feature=endscreen>

*Produced by the Minnesota Humanities Center
<http://www.minnesotahumanities.org/>*

Essential Question:



Historical facts lend perspective to our attitudes. They help us realize that perhaps the life we are enjoying today, or not enjoying, is not because we necessarily deserve it. It could be that our ancestors were at the right place, at the right time and in the right cultural group...or not. How have your experiences been shaped based on your perspective?

The Absolutely True Story of a Part-time Indian

By Sherman Alexie

We will be referring to excerpts from this novel. Here's a link to build your background knowledge in case you have not had a chance to read it yet. We recommend reading the link before proceeding with this PowerPoint.

<http://www.nativenewsnetwork.com/i-found-myself-wanting-to-defend-sherman-alexie.html>

The Absolutely True Story of a Part-time Indian

By Sherman Alexie



A drawing of "Junior," the protagonist.

Life Experience is Varied

In Sherman Alexie's book, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, Junior, the protagonist, has a life that may be different than yours despite the fact that he is a contemporary high school student. Consider the following comic that is included in the book, illustrated by Junior.

"Are You Poor?"

POSSIBLE
RESPONSES:

①



②



③

"Pore"? You mean,
"pore"? do I have pores?



④

Well... poverty is a relative thing... historical theoreticians believe that when you define a certain income as opposed to output, statistics are skewed...



⑤

Gasp!
LOOK OVER THERE!



Junior comes from a reservation that is economically disadvantaged. When he transfers from his school on the "rez," an abbreviation of "reservation," to a school a half hour away in the city, Junior encounters a new cast of friends, teachers, and enemies with very different backgrounds from his. Junior finds ways to adapt and flourish outside of the circumstances in which he was born while staying true to his identity and personal integrity.

Junior is *Not* Cool

His teeth are very crooked, and his family can't afford braces. To solve this problem, the dentist pulls 10 adult teeth in one day!

His beloved dog, Oscar, gets ill and Junior's father shoots the dog to put him out of his misery.



Junior is a teenager growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. His family is very poor, but rich in many ways.

You might have braces on your teeth. You might be able to afford to take your sick dog to the vet. Not everyone can.

Why not?



When and Where We are Born

Consider the year 1912 on the Ziibiwing Center Comparative Timeline. Compare the events in the world, in United States history and the six students at the Mt. Pleasant Industrial Indian Boarding School.

List all of the ways a teen could emotionally experience this year in history.

When and Where We are Born

Life isn't fair, in large part, because of where we are at on the Historical Food Chain.

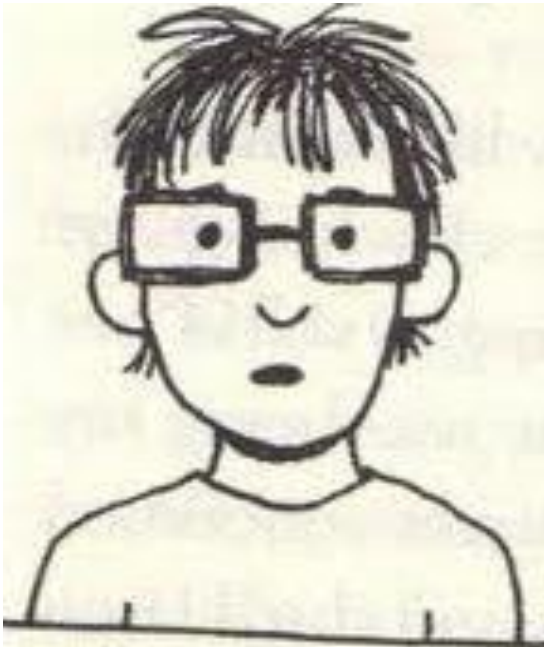
Some families amassed fortunes years ago. Through careful management, they can afford the best of the best for their children. Others who managed their money just as well, however, may have met circumstances that caused them to lose all of it.

Junior Didn't Choose...

Junior didn't choose, as none of us do, when to be born. He didn't choose his parents. He didn't choose poverty.

Kids who were on the Titanic or at the Mt. Pleasant American Indian Industrial Boarding School certainly didn't sign up for their experiences either.

American Indian Stereotypes



From *The Absolutely True Story of a Part-time Indian*

A stranger watching Junior from a distance might think that with his big head, ethnic heritage and crooked teeth he is too unusual: not someone to choose for a buddy. They might report his family to an animal abuse hotline. They might even think that Junior and his Tribe choose to live in such poverty on a reservation because they don't really want to live any other way.

Every group of people has *stereotypes*; this attitude is a *stereotype* of American Indians.

Activity One: How was YOUR year?

In cooperative learning groups:

- Research and compare/contrast the American Indian's life experiences to other populations within the same time period throughout the United States and the world.
- Use the Ziibiwing Center Comparative Timeline to explore the years 1780-1860, 1860-1900 or 1900-1950. You may use other internet sources for reference as well.
- Create large wall posters of Tweets or Facebook posts an American Indian teen as well as teens from other locations in the U.S./world might have posted.
- Use the provided graphic organizer, "How Was YOUR Year?" as a template for your posters.

Get Creative!

Not many of us like to work on boring white paper, with boring pencil scratches on it. Not many of us like to look at boring, scratchy work. Please have fun. Be creative with your table. Incorporate color and symbols that represent and reflect the feelings of your imagined Tweets and Facebook posts.



How was YOUR year?

	American Indian teen	Other U.S. Teen	Other World Teen
Year:			
Geographic Location:			
Post:			
Reasons for feelings behind words of post:			

Prepare to Present

After your wall art is completed, your group will present your findings to the class. You are temporary experts for this time-period so make sure you are complete in letting others know the Who-What-When-Why-Where-How of your work.



Individual Work

On your own you will be responsible for writing a summary of your group's work that explains why a single point in history doesn't have a universal definition. Make certain to support your statements with evidence from your research.



* Extra credit or alternative idea