

Group Reconsideration Recommendation

Book Information

Title	<i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian</i>
Author	Sherman Alexie
Publication Year	2007

ALA's [Library Bill of Rights](#) and the [Freedom to Read Statement](#)

Controversial Materials

- Serve every single student; does not promote one point of view over another
- Cannot reject and remove a resource because an individual or a group has found the material objectionable
- Provide access to material that may be controversial to some patrons, while also providing a process to request reconsideration

Resources consulted (include policies, articles, reviews etc.)

<p>Selection Quality Criteria</p> <p>This book meets these criteria from the Selection Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and enrich the curriculum and/or students' personal interests, extracurricular activities, and learning • Meet high standards in literary, artistic, and aesthetic quality; technical aspects; and physical format • Be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social, emotional, and intellectual development of the students for whom the materials are selected • Incorporate accurate and authentic factual content from authoritative sources • Earn favorable reviews in standard reviewing sources and/or favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel • Nominated and/or received awards and honorable mentions • Exhibit a high degree of potential user appeal and interest • Represent differing viewpoints on controversial issues* • Provide a global perspective and promote diversity by including materials by authors and illustrators of all cultures • Include a variety of resources in physical and virtual formats including print and non-print such as electronic and multimedia (including subscription databases and other online products, e-books, educational games, and other forms of emerging technologies) • Demonstrate physical format, appearance, and durability suitable to their intended use • Balance gaps in the collection utilizing collection analysis data • Balance cost with need
<p>Awards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007 National Book Award for Young People's Literature • 2008 American Indian Youth Literature Awards. American Indian Library Association Best Young Adult Book (rescinded 2018)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2008 American Library Association's Best Books for Young Adults ● School Library Journal "Best Books of 2007" ● 2008 "Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults", Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). ● 2009 "Amazing Audiobooks for Young Adults", YALSA. ● 2009 Odyssey Award "best audiobook for children or young adults"
<p>Reviews</p>	<p>Voice of Youth Advocates (2007) Nerdy, fourteen-year-old Arnold Spirit lives on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Washington state. During his first day at high school, Arnold discovers that his geometry textbook is so old that his mother used it in school. In anger, he throws the book at his teacher and is suspended. Recognizing Arnold's potential, his teacher suggests that Arnold transfer to a school off the reservation. There Arnold attempts to bridge Indian and white cultures-sometimes successfully and sometimes not-while at home, he faces the controversy of leaving the reservation and his own culture. The tension reaches a peak when Arnold returns to his former school for a basketball game as the star player on his new school's team. Alexie's portrayal of reservation life, with the help of a great lineup of supporting characters, is realistic and fantastical and funny and tragic-all at the same time. The story is engaging, but readers will also gain insight into American Indian culture and politics as well as a sense for human nature and the complexities of living in a diverse society. Cartoonist Forney's drawings, appearing throughout the book, enhance the story and could nearly stand alone. It is clear that she and Alexie worked closely together on this project. Recreational readers, especially boys, will enjoy this book, but teachers will also find it filled with lots of material to rouse a good classroom discussion. This first young adult novel by the acclaimed Indian writer whose adult fiction is used in many high school classrooms is based on Alexie's own memoir. -Jenny Ingram. This book would really appeal to high school and junior high boys for casual and interesting reading. People who are interested in reservation life would find that this book gives a wonderful insight to Native American culture. Alexie makes a good storyteller. The pictures in the book give great detail to the story and writing. Within the story, there are two worlds that a boy must distinguish between and live in. 3P 4Q -Daniel Antell, Teen Reviewer.</p> <p>Kirkus (2007) Alexie nimbly blends sharp wit with unapologetic emotion in his first foray into young-adult literature. Fourteen-year-old Junior is a cartoonist and bookworm with a violent but protective best friend Rowdy. Soon after they start freshman year, Junior boldly transfers from a school on the Spokane reservation to one in a tiny white town 22 miles away. Despite his parents' frequent lack of gas money (they're a "poor-ass family"), racism at school and many crushing deaths at home, he manages the year. Rowdy rejects him, feeling betrayed, and their competing basketball teams take on mammoth symbolic proportions. The reservation's poverty and desolate alcoholism offer early mortality and broken dreams, but Junior's knowledge that he must leave is rooted in love and respect for his family and the Spokane tribe. He also realizes how many other tribes he has, from "the tribe of boys who really miss . . . their best friends" to "the tribe of tortilla chips-and-salsa lovers."</p>

	<p>Junior’s keen cartoons sprinkle the pages as his fluid narration deftly mingles raw feeling with funny, sardonic insight. Our verdict: get it.</p> <p>The Hornbook Guide (2007)</p> <p>The line between dramatic monologue, verse novel, and standup comedy gets unequivocally – and hilariously and triumphantly – bent in this novel about coming of age on the rez. Urged on by a math teacher whose nose he has just broken, Junior, fourteen, decides to make the iffy commute from his Spokane Indian reservation to attend high school in Reardan, a small town twenty miles away. He’s tired of his impoverished circumstances (“Adam and Eve covered their privates with fig leaves; the first Indians covered their privates with their tiny hands”), but while he hopes his new school will offer him a better education, he knows the odds aren’t exactly with him: “What was I doing at Reardan, whose mascot was an Indian, thereby making me the only other Indian in town?” But he makes friends (most notably the class dork Gordy), gets a girlfriend, and even (though short, nearsighted, and slightly disabled from birth defects) lands a spot on the varsity basketball team, which inevitably leads to a showdown with his own home team, led by his former best friend Rowdy. Junior’s narration is intensely alive and rat-a-tat-tat with short paragraphs and one-liners (“If God hadn’t wanted us to masturbate, then God wouldn’t have given us thumbs”). The dominant mode of the novel is comic, even though there’s plenty of sadness, as when Junior’s sister manages to shake off depression long enough to elope – only to die, passed out from drinking, in a fire. Junior’s spirit, though, is unquenchable, and his style inimitable, not least in the take-no-prisoners cartoons he draws (as expertly depicted by comics artist Forney) from his bicultural experience. ROGER SUTTON</p> <p>Publishers Weekly, 08/20/2007</p> <p>Booklist, 08/01/2007</p> <p>Kliatt, 05/01/2008</p> <p>Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books, 10/01/2007</p> <p>School Library Journal, 09/01/2007</p> <p>Kliatt, 09/01/2007</p>
<p>Additional Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Common Sense Media</i> rates 5/5 stars, ages 14+ • Published in 2007 • Recommended grades 7-10 (<i>SLJ</i>, <i>Booklist</i>) • High interest/low (reading) level (RL 4 IL grades 9-12) • Book comes with discussion questions

Group Recommendation

Date of Review:

Have all members of the committee read the material entirely? If not, why?

All have read.

Recommend for Following Collections:

K-5: No
6-7: No
8-9: Yes
10-12: Yes

Justification and comments (include majority and minority positions):

After careful and thoughtful review and discussion of this title in its entirety, the committee decided to retain the book in the collections at the 8-12 grade level.

This multi-award winning novel meets every single criteria of the selection policy for inclusion in the public school library, and most professional reviews indicate it as appropriate for grades 7+. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* details the adolescent protagonist navigating social environments and situations between two vastly different cultures: the Spokane Reservation and a predominantly white school. Moreover, as an indigenous, “own voices” author, Alexie provides an insider’s perspective and analysis of racism and prejudice. This work overwhelming meets the criteria set forth in the ***Library Bill of Rights I and II***:

- *Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.*
- *Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.*

Positive elements include strong lessons learned throughout the novel (e.g., perseverance, determination, taking charge of your own future, and forgiveness). It emphasizes the importance of education; demonstrates the intricacies of family relationships; and depicts the struggle with real-life challenges like violence, alcoholism, and addiction and their effect on self, family, and friends. Sexual references are intended for humor, not explicitly described, and easily skimmable by the reader. The language reflects a historical element and/or attempt to expose the realities of a male adolescent living in his dual world. This novel is highly recommended for reluctant readers.

Reviewing Committee: A District Administrator and District Certified Teacher Librarians

Note: *This document is forwarded to*