

Katie Crowell
Dr. Smagorinsky
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Speaking Up: Alienation and Social Responsibility

A six-week conceptual unit for ninth grade

“There is another world, but it is in this one.” — W.B. Yeats

Rationale

Ninth grade students are in the midst of many changes — from middle to high school, from adolescence to adulthood, from playtime to increased responsibility. During this time, students begin to further develop their identities; that is, they begin finding out what kind of adults they will become. Through the observation of their surroundings, students decide what beliefs delineate their value systems and why. Though this can be an exciting time, it can also be scary, with teens being pulled in different directions by peer groups, parents, teachers, and popular culture. Because of these different pulls, adolescence can be a very alienating experience. I believe that examining the different forms of alienation in a language arts class will enable students to engage with their own fears of and experiences with alienation, and help them to understand and deal with these feelings in a more positive way. In addition, the exploration of the theme of alienation through literature that deals both with personal alienation and with greater cultural and social alienation will allow students to make connections between themselves and larger society, aiding in the development of their value systems.

I plan to foster this development in my students through the study of two novels, *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* by Sherman Alexie. Both novels deal with personal isolation, as *Speak* centers around Melinda Sordino, a high school freshman who stops speaking after being raped at a party

the previous summer, and Junior, the narrator of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, is an American Indian who ventures off the Spokane Indian Reservation to go to the white high school in a nearby town. As Melinda struggles with depression and complete alienation from her parents and her peers, Junior is an outcast not only at school, but also on the Reservation. These texts have ramifications not only for the discussions of students' personal feelings, but their treatment of issues such as rape, depression, cultural hegemony, racism, alcoholism and dealing with death will beg students to think in broader terms. Questions about students' responsibility in the treatment of these issues will be key in the development of their belief systems. In his article *Reading for a Better World: Teaching for Social Responsibility With Young Adult Literature*, Steven Wolk (2009) wrote that "social responsibility must go far beyond basic citizenship; it is about shaping human beings with intellectual curiosity, a caring heart, and a belief in the common good. It should be one of the essential purposes for school" (p.665). As students study *Speak* and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, they will begin to question not only who they are, but also the social order and authority structure of the world around them, resulting in a sense of social responsibility.

Why Young Adult Literature?

Some may call into question my use of young adult literature novels as the primary texts for my unit. Though the study of classics, or canonical texts, is certainly important in language and literacy education, I believe that contemporary young adult novels speak to students in ways that the classics cannot. University of Connecticut professor Wendy Glenn (2008) said, "as lovers of literature, we assume that, through books, adolescent

readers may work through their struggles and make sense of themselves and their place in the adult world they will soon enter” (p. 34). But what if they don’t? If students are not interested in the assigned texts, then there is a strong chance that they may not even read them. Alsup (2003) wrote, “YA literature is something that adolescents want to read, as opposed to being forced to read by teachers. Why do they want to read it? Perhaps because it helps them feel as if they are not alone” (p. 160). Thus, I want to introduce my students to texts that they will *want* to read — texts that feature situations, language, and characters they can relate to. I believe that if students see themselves or someone they know reflected in these texts, they will be more likely to read and engage with the novels, with teachers, and with classmates. As a result, my students will be more likely do the work for my class and learn from it.

By using young adult texts, I will also be trying to foster a love of reading in my students. In an argument for reading choice in school, Atwell (2007) wrote, “when we teachers embrace our role as literate grown-ups who help children seek and find delight and enlargement of life in books, they have a good chance of growing into adults who enjoy and love reading” (p. 45). I agree with Atwell, and I think that the freshman year is a critical point in students’ reading development. Ninth-graders are at a transition in their schooling, as they are on the precipice of reading more difficult “adult” texts, and I believe that building a foundation for reading at the beginning of high school will result in increased reading in the upper grades. I have already emphasized the importance of students wanting to read the texts for my unit, but I also think that reading and enjoying these YA books will lead them to read more books in general. If ninth-grade students experience what it is to truly connect with a text assigned in school, then they will be

more likely to read and find the value in the texts that future teachers assign.

Another argument against the use of young adult literature in the classroom is that YA texts are too easy to understand, that they don't challenge the reader. Yet *Speak* is written in an interesting format, with unorthodox paragraph breaks and a nontraditional, vignette-like chapter structure. In addition to its unique structure, the novel employs literary devices such as figurative language, metaphor, foreshadowing, flashback, and symbolism. The *Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* also employs a nontraditional structure, with the protagonist's cartoons populating the pages. The drawings are vehicles for important character development and plot information, and students must decode their meanings in order to better understand the text, synthesizing the words and the cartoons. In effect, the study of these novels meets the Georgia Department of Education's stipulation that students "demonstrate comprehension by identifying evidence (i.e., examples of diction, imagery, point of view, figurative language, symbolism, plot events and main ideas) in a variety of texts," including an understanding that the "student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the structures and elements of fiction" (GPS ELA9RL1). Though students may easily understand these texts, they must go deeper into their language to glean true meaning.

Why *Speak*?

The novel embodies the themes of alienation and social responsibility through Melinda's journey of, quite literally, finding her voice. After her rape, Melinda essentially stops speaking and retreats into her mind, as she is faced with parents who aren't interested, former friends who shun her, and teachers who perceive her silence as a

form of civil disobedience, not a cry for help. Many of the aspects of Melinda's story will resonate with students, as they are the same age and have doubtless experienced anxiety over not having anyone to sit with at lunch, ridicule from peers, loneliness, and frustration with parents. Alsop proposed that students may open up during discussions of *Speak* because "they can talk or write about real problems vicariously and with little personal risk" when they share their thoughts about Melinda's story, in essence "using literature as a tool for thinking about their world" (p. 163). Encouraging this type of thought, both personal and global, is an important part of developing students' sense of social responsibility.

Some may shy away from teaching *Speak* because it deals with the controversial and graphic topic of rape. Yet, this is an issue that teens face on a regular basis. According to RAINN, the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, 1 out of every 6 American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime. In addition, 44 percent of sexual assault and rape victims are under age 18, with 12 percent of girls in grades nine through twelve saying they have been sexually assaulted. These figures show that rape is an issue that teens must confront, and I believe that reading Melinda's story will help victims feel less alone and will raise awareness in others. Melinda does not begin to come to terms with her rape until she speaks about it to others, and as students go down that road with her, they will think about rape, what it is, and what it means to be rape victim, or even a rapist.

Why *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*?

Whereas *Speak* details the personal journey of a ninth grade girl, *The Absolutely*

True Diary of a Part-time Indian follows Junior, a ninth grade boy who has many problems to contend with. In addition to being born with hydrocephalus, or water on the brain, Junior is an outcast on the reservation and an outcast at the white middle class school he travels to attend. Junior must deal with the deaths of his loved ones and with the struggle to form true friendships, aspects of adolescence to which any teen can relate. Junior's bravery in striving to reconcile his two selves parallels Melinda's journey in *Speak*; however, Junior's story will also bring cultural issues into class discussion. The novel details life on the Spokane Indian Reservation, where there is no money for school materials, most families live in poverty, alcoholism runs rampant, and the death rate is high — issues that are not usually discussed in the classroom or in the media. Learning about social problems going on in their own country — about an entire people who are alienated from mainstream American society and culture — will serve as the culmination of the unit. There will be opportunities for greater inquiry into and study of American Indian culture and social problems, resulting in students answering tough questions about who they are, where they came from, and how they ended up where they are.

To conclude, through a six-week unit studying both personal and cultural alienation, students will be forced to ask themselves tough questions about their values and how they choose to relate to the world. Students will be called on to address questions of social responsibility, not only in dealing with big issues like rape and racism, but also in handling smaller issues that affect their everyday lives. From social anxiety to bullying and beyond, this unit's goal is to develop in students an "intellectual curiosity, a caring heart, and a belief in the common good" (Wolk, 2009) through the study of complex and enjoyable literature.

References

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Materials

- Class set of *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson
- Class set of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* by Sherman Alexie
- Copies of the poem “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” by Maya Angelou
- Markers, butcher paper, other various art supplies
- Students need spiral notebooks for their reading logs
- Access to school’s computer lab and library
- A variety of fall leaves

Goals and Accompanying Rubrics

During my unit, students’ major responsibilities will be summary reading quizzes, keeping ongoing reading logs, and constructing original texts for their culminating project. The remainder of the grades will be determined by students’ participation in discussions and completion of certain daily activities and homework assignments and their completion of two in-class group research projects.

Class Breakdown:

10%: Daily activities/class participation/homework assignments

10%: In-class research projects

20%: Reading Quizzes

30%: Reading logs

30%: Culminating project

Note: For reading ease, I will write things I plan to give or show to students in **Helvetica** throughout my unit plan.

Goal #1: Reading Quizzes

I believe students must be held accountable for the assigned reading, and I will do this through reading quizzes. Whenever reading is assigned as homework, there will be a quiz the next day so they can show me that they have completed the reading. Because we are working in 50-minute class periods, I will require that the bulk of the assigned reading be completed outside of class. The quizzes will be pass/fail, wherein I will ask the students to write a summary of the reading (main ideas, plot developments, character developments), and they will respond, in paragraph form, to show me that they have completed the reading. This way, students will be able to focus on the content of the reading without having to worry about minute details that may be on a more traditional question/answer-style quiz. I believe this will encourage them to read, and the quizzes will account for 20 percent of their final grade. Below is a template and rubric I will give them about the quizzes.

Reading Quiz

(Title of reading goes here)

For the reading I assigned you as homework, I want you to write a brief summary of the story that *proves to me that you read it*. The following tips may help you generate a summary that provides ample evidence of your reading:

- Who were the characters / people in the reading?
- What did they do?
- What was/were the setting(s)? Describe some key characteristics of the setting.
- What else happened in the reading that may not have involved the characters?
- What are some key details in the beginning, middle, and end of the reading?

Rubric for Reading Quizzes (Will be given to students)

You will receive a grade of *pass* for your reading quiz if it proves to me that you did the reading by providing evidence of relevant details (characters, setting, plot) throughout the entire reading (beginning, middle, end). Some details may be sketchy or confused, but there is evidence that they were discovered through reading.

You will receive a grade of *fail* for your reading quiz if it is returned to me blank, it has material that is clearly made up (i.e. inventing a character that doesn't exist), or it provides insufficient evidence that you did the *entire* reading.

- Template and rubric borrowed from Joshua S. Dyer's unit, **Science Fiction: Critiquing the Present, Exploring the Future**

Goal #2: In-class research projects

These two group projects, each worth 5 percent of students' final grade, will be completed entirely in class. My aim in assigning them is to get students to interact with the social issues presented in *Speak* and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* while at the same time fostering research skills. During the completion of the two projects, students will spend class time in the library and/or the computer lab and they will devise ways to present their work to the rest of the class. In addition, the projects will help students go beyond just working with their peers in discussion groups, because they will have to produce something together for a grade. Each group member will fill out peer evaluation forms for their group members, and students' individual grades will be derived from the average of the group grade and the peer evaluation grade. Below are descriptions and rubrics for the projects.

Project One: *Speak*

Over the next two days, the members of your group are responsible for researching one of the following topics and making a handout that you will present to the rest of class:

1. Maya Angelou's experience with rape
2. Suffragettes and women fighting to get the right to vote in the United States
3. Cutting/self-mutilation
4. Sexual assault and date rape
5. Extended metaphor

In addition to an overview, or explanation, of your topic, your handouts must provide answers to the following questions:

- What issues and facts are intertwined with your topic?
- How does your topic relate to today's society? Is it a big issue? (Extended metaphor group does not have to answer)
- Did you find any statistical information in relation to your topic? If so, what?
- For the extended metaphor group, what are some specific and famous examples of extended metaphor?
- How does your topic relate to Melinda in *Speak*? Is your topic represented in the novel?
- Why do you think Laurie Halse Anderson included your topic in the novel?
- Does being more informed on your topic enhance your understanding of Melinda and/or the novel's message? Use specific examples from the text.

You must also turn in a list of references with your handout. To help you with your research, use the **Internet Citation Checklist** worksheet you received during library orientation. Keep in mind that your group has only two days to complete this project, so be sure to divide the work up accordingly. At the end of the project, group members will evaluate each other, so everyone should do equal parts of the work!

Project Two: *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*

In order to better understand the issues Junior deals with in his daily life in Wellpinit, your group must choose one of the following topics to research. We will go to the library tomorrow so you can research your topic. After you have learned about your topic, each group should devise a creative way to synthesize your information and Junior's observations from the text and present the topic to the class. You can create posters, power point presentations, overhead transparencies, draw cartoons like Junior — the sky is the limit. You will have three class days to complete this project. Group presentations will be next Tuesday (Day 27).

- A.** Research the history of the Spokane Indians. How many different tribes did they include? What was the extent of the area they once lived in? How and why has that changed?
- B.** Research the problem of alcoholism in Native American populations. What do experts state as the cause? Is it physical or psychological? Are there programs in place to try to deal with it? How does it differ from alcoholism in other portions of the country? Can you think of any ways to help?
- C.** Research reservations. How many are there? Where are they located? How many people are living on them? How does poverty affect life there? Are there programs in place to try to deal with it? Can you think of any ways to help?
- D.** Research the suicide and death rates in Native American populations. How do these rates differ from those in other portions of the population? What do experts state as the cause(s)? Are there programs in place to try to deal with it? Can you think of any ways to help?
- E.** Research Sherman Alexie. Where did he grow up? What other works has he written? What awards has he won? To what extent is *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* autobiographical?

Before you begin your research, go through *The Absolutely True Diary...* and find specific examples from Junior that showcase these issues. Your group must also turn in a list of references with the project. To help you with your research, use the **Internet Citation Checklist** worksheet you received during library orientation. At the end of the project, group members will evaluate each other, so everyone should do equal parts of the work!

In-class Research Project Rubric and Peer Evaluation Form

Group Project Rubric

Projects receiving a grade of “A” will:

- Include thorough research with references
- Answer all applicable questions
- Organize and present information in ways that enhance the audience’s knowledge of the topic (both in the group’s product and presentation)
- Include thoughtful and detailed analysis of the topic in concert with evidence from the text

Projects receiving a grade of “B” will:

- Include thorough research with references
- Answer most applicable questions
- Organize and present information in ways that add to the audience’s knowledge of the topic (both in the group’s product and presentation)
- Include thoughtful analysis of the topic in concert with some evidence from the text

Projects receiving a grade of “C” will:

- Include research and references
- Answer some applicable questions
- Organize and present information in ways that aid the audience’s knowledge of the topic (both in the group’s product and presentation)
- Include analysis of the topic in concert with a few examples from the text

Projects receiving a grade of “D”:

- Include some research and a few references
- Do not answer most applicable questions
- Present information in ways that do not inform the audience about the topic (both in the group’s product and presentation)
- Do not include analysis of the topic or evidence from the text

Projects receiving a grade of “F”:

- Include little research and no references
- Do not answer questions
- Present information in ways that detract from the audience’s knowledge of the topic (both in the group’s product and presentation)
- Do not include analysis of the topic or evidence from the text

Peer Evaluation Form

Please rate yourself and your team members on the contributions that were made in preparing and submitting your group project. *Your ratings will not be disclosed to other students.* Be honest in this evaluation!

In rating yourself and your peers, use a one to five point scale, where

5 = Superior

4 = Above Average

3 = Average

2 = below average

1 = weak

Insert **your name** in the first section and your peers' names in the remaining sections.

Name:

Participated in group discussions or meetings:

Helped keep the group focused on the task:

Contributed useful ideas:

Quantity of work done:

Quality of work done:

Name:

Participated in group discussions or meetings:

Helped keep the group focused on the task:

Contributed useful ideas:

Quantity of work done:

Quality of work done:

Name:

Participated in group discussions or meetings:

Helped keep the group focused on the task:

Contributed useful ideas:

Quantity of work done:

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Name:

Participated in group discussions or meetings:

Helped keep the group focused on the task:

Contributed useful ideas:

Quantity of work done:

Quality of work done:

Name:

Participated in group discussions or meetings:

Helped keep the group focused on the task:

Contributed useful ideas:

Quantity of work done:

Quality of work done:

Goal #3: Reading Logs

The reading logs will be a way for the students to go deeper into the readings, and to show me that they are comprehending more than just plot synopsis. In addition, the logs will help me to see where my students are as writers and what they need special help with, while at the same time functioning as practice in narrative writing, which will be a big part of the students' culminating project. Through the logs, students will be required to respond in detail to passages in the readings that they choose, to passages in the readings that I choose, to prompts that I give them, or to real-world events that they believe relate to the readings. These types of response will result not only in a deeper understanding of the readings, but also in themselves and the world around them. Students will turn in their logs every Friday and receive weekly grades. At the end of the unit, I will average the weekly grades to determine the final reading log grade. Below is a description and rubric for the reading log.

Reading Logs

Throughout the next 6 weeks, we will explore the themes of alienation, identity, and social responsibility. You will be required to keep a reading log in response to the literature we are studying during this unit. You should use the log as a forum to:

- Express your personal response to the reading through the use of specific passages, character studies, and plot developments
- Develop your own interpretation of what is happening in the text using your inferential reading skills and knowledge of language. Are there many levels of meaning in the text?
 - Pose questions about the reading, and look for your own answers
 - Examine and discuss the motivations of characters in the novels, and/or the author's motivations in writing the novel. For example, what possible goals did the author have in writing the work?
 - Evaluate the writing. What is or is not effective about the text? Why or why not?
 - How does the text relate to current events or to greater societal/cultural issues? How does it relate to you personally?

Because this is your personal log, you do not have to comply with the conventions of textbook English or formal style. However, there are rules to which you must adhere. You must turn in your log once a week, and write a minimum of 400 words per week. Points will be deducted from late logs without the minimum number of words. Entries may be handwritten or typed, with the stipulation that handwritten entries must be legible! If entries are illegible, I will ask you to rewrite them or type them up. If there are entries you do not want me to read, write an X at the top of the page. **Remember that I am required to share any thoughts or suggestions of violence, suicide, family abuse, substance abuse, or other harmful behavior with the school counselors.**

Reading Log Rubric (will not be given to students)

Each week, I will grade the reading logs based upon the following criteria:

Reading log entries receiving a grade of “A” will:

- Be turned in once a week and meet word count requirement
- Be written in an integrated and thoughtful way
- Infer the main idea
- Include some details to show comprehension of the events in the text
- Question the author’s purpose
- Make predictions
- Pose questions that extend beyond the text
- Make text-to-world and/or text-to-self connections

Reading log entries receiving a grade of “B” will:

- Be turned in once a week and meet word count requirement
- Be fairly thoughtful
- Pose questions
- Make text-to-self/text-to-text/text-to-world connection(s)
- Possibly have minor inaccuracies

Reading log entries receiving a grade of “C”:

- Will be turned in once a week and meet word count requirement
- Will retell reading in own words, but may not go further in examination of text
- Will include too many details
- May ask a question
- May make a prediction
- Will have many inaccuracies

Reading log entries receiving a grade of “D” will:

- Be turned in once a week, may not meet word count requirement
- Retell reading
- Have many inaccuracies

Reading log entries receiving a grade of “F”:

- Are not turned in once a week, do not meet word count requirement
- Copy from text or have no entry

Goal #4: Culminating Project

The culminating project will be a way for the students to synthesize what they have learned from the readings and their reflections upon the readings. Worth 30 percent of their grade, the project will require them to deal with the topics of alienation and social responsibility in the readings, but also in their own lives. The project will also give them a choice as to how to explore and comment on these themes. Below is a description and rubrics for the project.

Final Project

Throughout the past 5 weeks, we have explored the topics of alienation and social responsibility. As Melinda finds her voice, both literally and figuratively, through art and self-reliance in *Speak*, and as Junior negotiates the boundaries between his alienation both on the reservation and at Reardan through drawing in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, you have learned more about how alienation — or the fear of it — may have influenced you and your peers. You have also learned to think about the social ramifications of alienation and examine both your actions and others’.

To show what you have learned, create an original text showing how you have dealt with alienation — either your own or someone else’s — in your own life. The text must relate to the literature, but it also must depict or express one (or more) of your own experiences. If you choose to write about someone else, be sure to explore your role in the situation: Were you responsible for the alienation? Did you stand up for or try to help that person? Why or why not? How did it make you feel?

You have three choices of how to accomplish this task:

1. Your text can be a first-person narrative describing your experience. Narrative papers should be between 4 and 5 double-spaced typed pages and conform to the conventions of formal grammar and MLA style. Your narrative must not only tell your story, but also reflect upon the literature you have read, and include at least one quote from either *Speak*, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* or both.
2. Using Melinda’s tree in *Speak* as an example, represent your story of alienation by creating your own tree. You can fashion any type of tree you want, with any type of medium. It could be a collage, painting, sculpture,

- etc. In addition to the tree, you must write a 2-page double-spaced typed narrative essay explaining how the tree communicates your journey. The essay must conform to the conventions of formal grammar and style and connect your tree to the text(s).
3. Throughout *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, Junior draws cartoons to express himself, “because words are too unpredictable ... because words are too limited.” You can tell your story by making a cartoon. The cartoon can be a type of comic book or graphic novel, or it can be one image. You can use dialogue or words to represent an interior monologue or to label your drawing(s), but you don’t have to. In addition to your cartoon, you must write a 2-page double-spaced narrative essay explaining how the cartoon/comic communicates your journey. The essay must conform to the conventions of formal grammar and style and connect your cartoon to the text(s).

Final Project Rubrics

Narrative paper:

A final project earning a grade of “A” will:

- Be turned in on-time
- Meet length requirements
- Clearly weave together the author’s reflections on his or her own experiences and the text(s) in order to fully illustrate an understanding of the themes of alienation and social responsibility
- Show understanding of texts and depth of theme, wherein evidence of growth and knowledge gained is clear through the use of specific, thought-out evidence

A final project earning a grade of “B” will:

- Be turned in on-time
- Meet length requirements
- Endeavor to weave together the author’s reflections on his or her own experiences and the text(s) in order to fully illustrate an understanding of the themes of alienation and social responsibility
- Endeavors to show understanding of texts and depth of theme, wherein evidence of growth and knowledge gained is clear through the use of specific, thought-out evidence

A final project earning a grade of “C” will:

- Be turned in on-time
- Meet length requirements
- Contain the author’s reflections on his or her own experiences and the text(s) in order to illustrate the themes of alienation and social responsibility
- Somewhat show understanding of texts and depth of theme, with evidence of growth and knowledge gained displayed through the use of specific evidence

A final project earning a grade of “D”:

- Will be turned in on-time
- Does not meet length requirements
- Attempts to include the author’s reflections on his or her own experiences and the text(s) in order to illustrate an understanding of the themes of alienation and social responsibility
- Does not show understanding of texts and depth of theme; evidence of growth and knowledge gained is not clear; does not use specific evidence from the texts

A final project earning a grade of “F”:

- Is not turned in on-time
- Does not meet length requirements
- Does not contain or synthesize the author’s reflections on his or her own experiences and the text(s) in order to illustrate an understanding of the themes of alienation and social responsibility
- Does not show understanding of texts and depth of theme; includes no evidence of growth and knowledge gained; does not use specific evidence from the texts

Tree/Cartoon:

A final project earning a grade of “A” will:

- Be turned in on-time
- Display imagination and depth of thought
- Show understanding of texts and depth of theme, wherein evidence of growth and knowledge gained is clear
- Accompanying essay clearly explains how text relates to theme, meets length requirement
- Show obvious effort put forth in creation of the text and essay

A final project earning a grade of “B” will:

- Be turned in on-time
- Somewhat display imagination and depth of thought
- Show some understanding of texts and depth of theme, wherein evidence of growth and knowledge gained may be sketchy
- Accompanying essay explains how text relates to theme, meets length requirement
- Show effort put forth in creation of the text and essay

A final project earning a grade of “C” will:

- Be turned in on-time
- Not display imagination and depth of thought
- Show some understanding of texts and theme. Evidence of growth and knowledge gained may be sketchy
- Accompanying essay does not explain well how text relates to theme, may wander off-topic, meets length requirement
- Shows minimum effort put forth in creation of the text and essay

A final project earning a grade of “D” will:

- Be turned in on-time
- Not display imagination and depth of thought
- Show neither understanding of texts and theme nor evidence of growth and knowledge gained
- Accompanying essay does not explain how text relates to theme, wanders off-topic, does not meet length requirement
- Minimum effort not put forth in creation of the text and essay

A final project earning a grade of “F” will:

- Not be turned in on-time
- Not display imagination and depth of thought
- Show neither understanding of texts and theme nor evidence of growth and knowledge gained
- Accompanying essay does not explain how text relates to theme, does not meet length requirement, and is frequently or entirely off-topic
- Minimum effort not put forth in creation of the text and essay

Daily Lesson Plans

Note: Lesson plans are based on 6 weeks of 50-minute class periods. Also, for easier organization, I'm going to say we're starting the unit on a Monday.

Day One (Monday):

5 minutes: Housekeeping, take attendance, settling in.

10 minutes: Pass out copies of the introductory activity survey, have students fill it out. Stress that there are no right or wrong answers.

Each of the following statements expresses an opinion. Rate each statement from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

1. If a person is raped, it's his or her own fault.
2. High school is more about socializing than learning.
3. Being diagnosed as "depressed" is just making excuses to feel sorry for yourself.
4. I "dropped" one of my best friends from elementary/middle school because he or she is not cool enough to be in my new group of friends.
5. If I saw someone without any friends sitting alone at lunch, I might not invite him or her to sit with me because I'd be afraid of what my friends would think.
6. I think that attempting to commit suicide is really only a cry for attention.
7. I often feel that the person I seem like on the outside and the person I am on the inside are two very different people.
8. I think cultural/ethnic stereotypes are okay because they are based in truth.
9. Creating art can be a great way to express thoughts and feelings.
10. Poor people are just lazy and need to get jobs.
11. The American class system is fair.
12. Racism is no longer a problem in America.

10 minutes: Get students to break into groups of 4 and discuss their answers to the survey. Stress that they do not have to share any information or stories that make them uncomfortable.

15 minutes: Bring the class together for a big group discussion of their answers. Ask what the groups discussed and how they feel about disagreements and the issues touched upon in the survey.

5 minutes: Explain that we will be spending the next six weeks discussing issues of alienation and social responsibility and that during that time we will be concentrating on

the books *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* by Sherman Alexie.

5 minutes: Distribute this assignment:

For homework, you are to look up each of these words or phrases both in a dictionary and on the Internet. Write down the definitions and then use each word in a sentence.

1. Alienation
2. Depression
3. Speak
4. Anxiety
5. Interior monologue
6. Irony
7. Social responsibility
8. Clique
9. Symbolism
10. Motif

Day Two:

5 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance.

20 minutes: Pass out reading log assignment, discuss my expectations and then tell students that this week they do not have to write in the logs. Also tell them that though they do not have to, it may suit them best to have a separate notebook that will serve as their reading log.

Reading Logs

Throughout the next 6 weeks, we will explore the themes of alienation, identity, and social responsibility. You will be required to keep a reading log in response to the literature we are studying during this unit. You should use the log as a forum to:

- Express your personal response to the reading through the use of specific passages, character studies, and plot developments
- Develop your own interpretation of what is happening in the text using your reading inferential reading skills and knowledge of language. Are there many levels of meaning in the text?
 - Pose questions about the reading, and look for your own answers
 - Examine and discuss the motivations of characters in the novels, and/or the author's motivations in writing the novel. For example, what possible goals did the author have in writing the work?

- Evaluate the writing. What is or is not effective about the text? Why or why not?
- How does the text relate to current events or to greater societal/cultural issues? How does it relate to you personally?

Because this is your personal log, you do not have to comply with the conventions of textbook English or formal style. However, there are rules to which you must adhere. You must turn in your log once a week, and write a minimum of 400 words per week. Points will be deducted from late logs without the minimum number of words. Entries may be handwritten or typed, with the stipulation that handwritten entries must be legible! If entries are illegible, I will ask you to rewrite them or type them up. If there are entries you do not want me to read, write an X at the top of the page. **Remember that I am required to share any thoughts or suggestions of violence, suicide, family abuse, substance abuse, or other harmful behavior with the school counselors.**

Then I will pass out a preliminary version of the final project assignment. I will pass out a more detailed version of the assignment nearer to the due date. Right now I will briefly go over the assignment to get them thinking about what they want to do for their project as we go through the unit. I will also answer any questions and inform students that we are going to be working on their writing throughout the unit.

Final Project

Throughout the next 6 weeks, we will explore the topics of alienation and social responsibility through reading *Speak* and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*. As you learn more about your own identities and how alienating experiences influence who you are and how you see yourself in relation to greater society, think about how to express these ideas through writing and art.

To show what you have learned, you will create an original text showing how you have dealt with alienation and/or social responsibility in your own life. The text must relate to the literature, but it also must depict or express one (or more) of your own experiences. You have three choices of how to accomplish this task:

1. Your text can be a first-person narrative describing your experience. Narrative papers should be between 4 and 5 double-spaced typed pages and conform to the conventions of formal grammar and MLA style. In describing your journey, your narrative must also reflect upon the literature you have read, and include at least one quote from either *Speak*, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* or both.
2. Using Melinda's tree in *Speak* as an example, represent your alienating experience(s) by creating your own tree. You can fashion any type of tree you want, with any type of medium. It could be a collage, painting, sculpture, etc. In addition to the tree, you must write a 2-page double-

spaced typed essay explaining how the tree communicates your journey. The essay must conform to the conventions of formal grammar and style and connect your tree to the text(s).

3. Throughout *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, Junior draws cartoons to express himself. You can tell your story by making a cartoon. The cartoon can be a type of comic book or graphic novel, or it can be one image. You can use dialogue or words representing an inner monologue or labeling your drawings, but you don't have to. In addition to your comic, you must write a 2-page double-spaced essay explaining how the cartoon/comic communicates your struggle. The essay must conform to the conventions of formal grammar and style and connect your cartoon to the text.

5 minutes: Pass out copies of *Speak* and assign "First Marking Period" section (p. 1-46) to be completed by Day 4 (Thursday) for a quiz.

20 minutes: Students take out their homework. As a class, the students discuss and compare their differing definitions of each word in order to come up with class definitions for each word. I write the words and definitions on a sheet of butcher paper and hang it on the wall as a reference guide for the unit. Then students turn in their homework.

Day Three:

5 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance, settling in, return homework.

30 minutes: Pass out this prompt and have students complete the assignment. Walk around and answer any questions they may have while writing.

Over the next six weeks, we will be dealing with issues of alienation. To get yourself thinking about this topic, write about a personal experience you've had in which ...

1. You felt alienated or isolated
2. You witnessed someone else's alienation.
3. You contributed to someone else's alienation.

Make sure that you explain your experience clearly and express how it made you feel and how the experience changed the way you look at the world. If you contributed to someone else's isolation, what were the consequences for that person? For you? Write at least one double-spaced handwritten page, front and back.

5 minutes: Collect the assignment and tell them that they can either choose to expand upon what they have written for their final project or write about something else. I say that, either way, we will be working with these papers throughout the unit.

I will use this writing assignment as a tool to see where my students are as writers and what I need to work on specifically with them. In addition, I will be using this writing exercise to scaffold narrative writing throughout the next five weeks, culminating in the students' completion of the final project.

10 minutes: Remind students that they will have a quiz on the first part of *Speak* the next day and give them remainder of class to read quietly.

Day Four:

5 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance, settling in. Assign part two of *Speak*, “Second Marking Period” (p. 49-92) for another quiz next Tuesday (Day 7).

20 minutes: Pass out and explain summary reading quiz and rubric, give students 15 minutes to complete quiz on a separate sheet of paper.

Reading Quiz

Speak

For the reading I assigned you as homework, I want you to write a brief summary of the story that *proves to me that you read it*. The following tips may help you generate a summary that provides ample evidence of your reading:

- Who were the characters / people in the reading?
- What did they do?
- What was/were the setting(s)? Describe some key characteristics of the setting.
- What else happened in the reading that may not have involved the characters?
- What are some key details in the beginning, middle, and end of the reading?

Rubric for Reading Quizzes (To be given to students)

You will receive a grade of *pass* for your reading quiz if it proves to me that you did the reading by providing evidence of relevant details (characters, setting, plot) throughout the entire reading (beginning, middle, end). Some details may be sketchy or confused, but there is evidence that they were discovered through reading.

You will receive a grade of *fail* for your reading quiz if it is returned to me blank, it has material that is clearly made up (i.e. inventing a character that doesn't exist), or it provides insufficient evidence that you did the *entire* reading.

- Template and rubric borrowed from Joshua S. Dyer's unit, **Science Fiction: Critiquing the Present, Exploring the Future**

25 minutes: Divide class up into 6 groups, and give each group a sheet with a different passage from the reading assignment. Each sheet will have questions specific to that passage for the group to answer. The groups will then spend the rest of class discussing the passage and the questions, writing down their answers, and preparing to present their analysis of the passage to the rest of the class the next day.

Passage 1:

Rachel Bruin, my ex-best friend. She stares at something above my left ear. Words climb up my throat. This was the girl who suffered through Brownies with me, who taught me how to swim, who understood about my parents, who didn't make fun of my bedroom. If there is anyone in the entire galaxy I am dying to tell what really happened, it's Rachel. My throat burns.

Her eyes meet mine for a second. "I hate you," she mouths silently. She turns her back to me and laughs with her friends. I bite my lip. I am not going to think about it. It was ugly, but it's over, and I'm not going to think about it. My lip bleeds a little. It tastes like metal. I need to sit down.

Questions:

1. What does this passage tell us about Melinda's situation at school? At home?
2. What insight does this passage give into who Melinda was before her ninth grade year?
3. Have you ever been rejected by a friend like this? Have you ever done the rejecting or witnessed such rejection? What was your reaction?
4. Though Melinda decides not "to think about it," what action shows that she is thinking about it?
5. What is "it"? Are there many levels of meaning here?

Passage 2:

THE FIRST TEN LIES THEY TELL YOU IN HIGH SCHOOL:

1. We are here to help you.
2. You will have enough time to get to your class before the bell rings.
3. The dress code will be enforced.
4. No smoking is allowed on school grounds.
5. Our football team will win the championship this year.
6. We expect more of you here.
7. Guidance counselors are always available to listen.
8. Your schedule was created with your needs in mind.
9. Your locker combination is private.
10. These will be the years you look back on fondly.

My first class is biology. I can't find it and get my first demerit for wandering the hall. It is 8:50 in the morning. Only 699 days and 7 class periods until graduation.

Questions:

1. As a ninth-grader, which components of this list ring true for you?
2. What insight does this passage give you into how Melinda sees adults?
3. How does the author contrast the items on the list with Melinda's actual high school experience?
4. Do you think Melinda is judging her school experience too harshly at such an early time? Why or why not?

Passage 3:

My room belongs to an alien. It is a postcard of who I was in fifth grade. I went through a demented phase when I thought that roses should cover everything and pink was a great color. It was all Rachel's fault. She begged her mom to let her do her room over, so we all ended up with new rooms. Nicole refused to put the stupid little skirt around her nightstand and Ivy had gone way over the top, as usual. Jessica did hers in a desert 'n' cowdudes theme. My room was stuck in the middle, a bit stolen from everyone else. The only things that were really mine were my stuffed-rabbit collection from when I was a little kid and my canopy bed. No matter how much Nicole teased me, I wouldn't take the canopy down. I'm thinking about changing the rose wallpaper, but then Mom would get involved and Dad would measure the walls and they would argue about paint color. I don't know what I want it to look like, anyway.

Questions:

1. What does this passage tell you about what Melinda used to be like, especially in relation to her friends?
2. Is there any significance in Melinda not knowing what to do with her room now that she is more solitary?
3. What does this passage reveal about Melinda's attitude toward her parents? Why would she not want them to be involved in changing her room?
4. What should a person's room say about that person? Why?
5. Why does Melinda include the details about the stuffed rabbits and the canopy bed? What does it tell us about her?

Passage 4:

"You will each pick a piece of paper out of the globe." He walks around the room so we can pull red scraps from the center of the earth. "On the paper you

will find one word, the name of an object. I hope you like it. You will spend the rest of the year learning how to turn that object into a piece of art. You will sculpt it. You will sketch it, papier-mâché it, carve it. If the computer teacher is talking to me this year, you can use the lab for computer-aided designs. But there's a catch — by the end of the year, you must figure out how to make your object say something, express an emotion, speak to every person who looks at it."

Some people groan. My stomach flutters. Can he really let us do this? It sounds like too much fun. He stops at my table. I plunge my hand into the bottom of the globe and fish out my paper. "Tree." Tree? It's too easy. I learned how to draw a tree in second grade. I reach for another piece of paper. Mr. Freeman shakes his head. "Ah-ah-ah," he says. "You just chose your destiny, you can't change that."

Questions:

1. Why do you think Mr. Freeman uses a globe to hold the papers?
2. Do you think art can express emotions? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think the author has Mr. Freeman use the word "speak" in connection with the art project? What do you think Melinda's art project will signify?
4. Why do you think Melinda is unhappy with her word being "tree"?
5. Do you think "tree" is a good word for Melinda to explore? Why or why not?

Passage 5:

You don't understand, my headvoice answers. Too bad she can't hear it. My throat squeezes shut, as if two hands of black fingernails have clamped on my windpipe. I have worked so hard to forget every second of that stupid party, and here I am in the middle of a hostile crowd that hates me for what I had to do. I can't tell them what really happened. I can't even look at that part myself. An animal noise rustles in my stomach.

Questions:

1. Here Melinda refers to her "headvoice." Why can Melinda speak in her mind, but not aloud?
2. What are some possibilities for what "really happened" to Melinda? Why has it caused her to find speaking difficult?
3. Why does Melinda want to forget her past trauma? Does it seem to be doing her any good?
4. Why does the author describe the sounds coming from Melinda's stomach as an "animal noise"? What effect does the description create?

Passage 6:

It's as if [the Merryweather cheerleaders] operate in two realities simultaneously. In one universe, they are gorgeous, straight-teethed, long-legged, wrapped in designer fashions, and given sports cars on their sixteenth birthdays. Teachers smile at them and grade them on the curve. They know the first names of the staff. They are the Pride of the Trojans. Oops — I mean Pride of the Blue Devils.

In Universe #2, they throw parties wild enough to attract college students. They worship in the stink of Eau de Jocque. They rent beach houses in Cancun during Spring Break and get group-rate abortions before the prom.

But they are so cute. And they cheer on our boys, inciting them to violence and, we hope, victory. These are our role models — the Girls Who Have It All. I bet none of them ever stutter or screw up or feel like their brains are dissolving into marshmallow fluff. They all have beautiful lips, carefully outlined in red and polished to a shine.

Questions:

1. What does this passage reveal about Melinda's attitude toward the other students at school?
2. Is Melinda's assessment of the cheerleaders necessarily correct?
3. What does Melinda reveal about how her outsider status and physical appearance make her feel about her peers? Why does she focus on the cheerleaders' perfectly red, polished lips?
4. Does this passage reveal any truths about the high school class system, the haves and have-nots, the "Girls Who Have It All"?

Day Five:

5 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance, hand back quizzes.

5 minutes: Students get back in groups and finalize what they are going to present to the class.

35 minutes: Groups present their passages and answers to questions to the class. Each group reads their passage aloud and then discusses the questions, and then the whole class participates in a discussion of that passage.

5 minutes: For homework, tell students to choose their own passage from the reading and write about it, using the reading log directions as a guide in asking their own questions. The assignment will serve as their first reading log entry!

Week 2

Day Six (Monday)

5 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance, collect reading logs.

10 minutes: In order to begin scaffolding narrative writing, I lead off with a whole-class discussion.

- I will first ask my students about the narrative structure of *Speak*. After reading aloud from the first page, I will ask them who the narrator of the story is, and what effect that has on the story.
- Then I will ask how the book uses interior monologue, one of our class vocabulary words
- Finally, I will tell the class that for their final project, I want them to be able to chronicle stories from their lives like Melinda does in *Speak*. I will explain that their personal narrative should be a first-person story from their lives, like the one they wrote on Day Three, but longer and more detailed. So, during the next five weeks, we will be doing exercises to help them accomplish these goals.

20 minutes: I will inform students that we are going to begin with an activity to help them incorporate details into their writing. In order to do this, I will divide the students up into groups of five and (in keeping with the tree motif in the novel) give each group a different type of leaf. Each group will be tasked with writing a description of their leaf so that someone who had never seen it before could pick it out of a group of leaves.

10 minutes: I will collect and redistribute the groups' descriptions and have each group pick which leaf has been described to them.

5 minutes: Tell students to be thinking about how they can use details in order to make their stories better and remind them of the *Speak* quiz the next day.

Day Seven

5 minutes: Attendance, hand back reading logs and remind students that they are due again on Friday. Assign part three of *Speak*, "Third Marking Period" (p. 93-137) for another quiz on Monday (Day 11).

10 minutes: Summary reading quiz

15 minutes: Divide students into five groups and assign each group a page range from "Second Marking Period." (Group 1: p. 49-56; Group 2: p. 57-65; Group 3: p. 65-72; Group 4: p. 73-80; Group 5: p. 80-92). I will project this on the overhead projector:

Choose a passage from your assigned page range that you think showcases Melinda's inner struggle with what has happened to her. In your reading log, answer these questions:

- In your opinion, why is the passage important? Funny? Serious?
- Does the passage have an emotional impact? Does it give you clues as to what Melinda's secret is?
- What does the passage show you about Melinda? Does the passage display any sort of conflict?

Come up with two questions about your passage to share with the class.

15 minutes: Groups get together, share their passages, and discuss their questions. Each group chooses two passages and two questions for each passage that they find most important to pose to the whole class the next day.

5 minutes: Switching gears, I will hand back the writing prompts from Day Three. There are no grades, just comments. For homework, students should reread their writing and think about what types of details, or what information, would make their stories better. After this brainstorming, the students should formulate three specific details they would like to add. Then, keeping in mind what it was like to describe the leaves on Day Six, they are to add these three details to their stories and turn them back in to me on Day 8.

Day Eight

5 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance, hand back quizzes, collect homework.

15 minutes: Groups finalize their passages and questions.

30 minutes: Groups share their passages and pose their questions during a student-led whole-class reading discussion. Students will have to interact with the text, quoting and explaining specific passages, and with each other, as they construct the passages' meaning.

Day Nine

5 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance, remind students that reading logs are due the next day.

15 minutes: Turn to page 50 in *Speak* and I read aloud passage about Melinda receiving the poster of Maya Angelou from the librarian. Ask the class what, if anything, they know about Maya Angelou. Verbally give a brief biographical sketch of Angelou and her accomplishments and then pass out copies of her poem, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings." Ask a student to read the poem aloud as everyone else follows along.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
by: Maya Angelou

The free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wings
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with fearful trill
of the things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill for the caged bird
sings of freedom

The free bird thinks of another breeze
an the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright lawn
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill

for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

15 minutes: Students pair up and answer four questions, using specific evidence from the poem and from *Speak*:

1. What do you think this poem is about?
2. How can you relate this poem to Melinda and her situation?
3. If Melinda is like the “caged bird” of the poem, then who imprisons her? Teachers? Parents? Former friends? IT? Herself? Why or why not?
4. In your opinion, why is Maya Angelou the figure on Melinda’s wall in her closet sanctuary? What does that tell us about Angelou? Melinda?

15 minutes: Using students’ answers to the above questions as a guide, the whole class discusses the poem and how it relates to Melinda and to *Speak*. Students turn in their answers to the questions for a daily grade.

Day 10

5 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance, collect reading logs, return graded Angelou activity.

15 minutes: Hand back students’ writing assignments from Day 3 with my comments on the details they added. Introduce topic of writing dialogue by telling students that adding conversation can be a good way to use details in writing and that the correct use of dialogue can enhance the action in stories and make them more real. Distribute “Writing Dialogue” handout and go over it with the class. Tell students they should keep the sheet as a resource for when they write.

Writing Dialogue

In writing dialogue, writers use attribution, or dialogue tags, in order to identify which person is speaking. Below are some of the basic rules of writing and punctuating dialogue.

- Quotation marks indicate that what is within them is exactly what the character said, and ending punctuation marks go inside the quotation marks.

Example: "I want to go to the store."

- The dialogue tag, or attribution, is a part of the sentence that includes the quote. If the tag follows the quote, the first word is not capitalized. If the tag precedes the quote, the first word of the quote is capitalized. Also, a comma separates the attribution and the quote.

Examples: "I want to go to the store," she said.

Lucy said, "I want to go to the store."

- A dialogue tag can interrupt a line of dialogue. When the dialogue continues after the interruption, the first word between the quotation marks is not capitalized. Notice the comma after the first part of the quote and after the dialogue tag.

Example: "I wanted to go to the store," Lucy said, "but it was raining outside."

- If the dialogue tag is placed between two separate sentences of dialogue, then a period belongs before the second opening set of quotation marks. The word beginning the second set of quotation marks must be capitalized.

Example: "It's raining outside," Mark said. "Let's go later."

- Question marks come before the ending quotation mark if it belongs to the dialogue. If it belongs to the speaker, the quotation mark comes after the ending quotation mark.

Examples: "Mark, do you want to go to the store?" Lucy asked.

What did he mean when he said, "I'll see you around"?

- When writing a conversation between two or more people, begin a new paragraph each time a new person speaks, even if this makes for short paragraphs.

Example: "I want to go to the store," Lucy said.

"But it's raining outside," Mark said. "Let's go later."

"No, I want to go now!" Lucy replied.

"Then let's go," Mark said with a sigh.

- If a writer summarizes what a character says, then those words are not placed within quotation marks.

Example: Lucy told Mark that she wanted to go to the store.

Note: In dramas (plays), dialogue is set off simply by a character's name and a colon.

Example: LUCY: I want to go to the store.
 MARK: But it's raining outside. Let's go later.
 LUCY: No, I want to go now!
 MARK: Then let's go.

10 minutes: Project part of the “First Amendment” section of *Speak* (p. 55-57) on the overhead projector. Ask the class to use their sheets to identify what types of dialogue are displayed during the passage. Ask students to differentiate between dialogue Melinda summarizes and the direct quotations. Discuss how each enhances the passage. Also, what does Melinda/Anderson convey by setting off direct quotations only with colons?

15 minutes: Students pair up and re-write the dialogue between Mr. Neck and David Petrakis from David’s point of view. The dialogue should become a conversation between the two characters, with a more traditional punctuation style than is displayed in the novel.

5 minutes: Collect dialogue rewrites for a daily grade and remind students about “Third Marking Period” quiz on Monday.

Week Three

Day 11 (Monday)

5 minutes: Attendance; return dialogue activity; return graded reading logs; assign final *Speak* section, “Fourth Marking Period” (p. 141-198), for a quiz on Day 15 (Friday).

10 minutes: Inform students that we’re doing our reading quiz a bit differently today. On a piece of paper, students free write responses to this prompt and turn it in for a quiz grade:

At the end of “Third Marking Period,” you found out exactly what happened to Melinda. Were you surprised, or did you already know? Why was this so traumatic for her? Why won’t Melinda speak? If you had a friend who started acting like Melinda, would you try to help her/him? Why or why not? If so, what would you do?

15 minutes: Harken back to class definition of “depression” posted on the wall. Project list of depression symptoms on overhead projector.

What are symptoms of depression?

According to the National Institute of [Mental Health](#), symptoms of depression may include the following:

- difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions
- fatigue and decreased energy
- feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and/or helplessness
- feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- irritability, restlessness
- loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex
- overeating or appetite loss

- persistent aches or pains, [headaches](#), cramps, or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment
- persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” feelings
- thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts

Invite students to comment on whether, as Heather contends, Melinda is depressed and needs professional help. Brainstorm lists of which symptoms Melinda does/does not display on the dry-erase board.

20 minutes: Ask students to share their responses to the writing prompt and initiate discussion about the harmful effects of rape and the implications of depression.

Note: I will have with me statistics to illustrate how often rape occurs. I will also have these questions on deck in case students’ discussion stalls or they are reluctant to discuss:

- What do you know about rape? What are your impressions of the issue?
- Do you think Melinda’s response is appropriate for what has happened to her? Why or why not?
- Who do you think Melinda should tell, if anyone? Is the rape solely her personal business? What might she gain from speaking about her rape?

Day 12

5 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance.

25 minutes: Students take out their writing activity from Day Three and their Writing Dialogue handout. After rereading their work, they are to look at their own use of dialogue. Project questions on the overhead projector:

Dialogue Usage

Reread your story, and then ask yourself these questions:

- Did I use any dialogue (direct quotation or summarizing)?
- If so, is it correctly punctuated?
- Could I use dialogue anywhere in my story? Would the dialogue make the action more clear?
- Could I use a blend of both summarized and quoted dialogue?
- How can dialogue make my story better?

After answering these questions on their own, students must find a partner, read each other's papers, and discuss where they might add in dialogue and why. They should keep in mind this overarching question: How can dialogue make my story better?

5 minutes: For homework, students must correctly punctuate existing dialogue and/or add dialogue to their papers to enhance their stories.

15 minutes: Students may use time either to read *Speak* or to work on their homework assignment.

Day 13

5 minutes: Attendance, collect homework.

10 minutes: Go over our class definitions of “motif” and “symbolism” that are still displayed in the classroom. Split class into four groups and assign each group a word/idea from list below. Then hand out this assignment:

Four words/ideas:

- Tree/plant life
- Self-mutilation
- Art
- Seasons/weather

Each group must make a case, using the class definitions of “motif” and “symbolism” and evidence from the text, that their word/idea is used as a motif or symbol in *Speak*: Which one, how, and why? Each group must create an artistic rendering that showcases their findings and present it to the class. For example, the tree/plant life group can draw a tree as a way to organize their information. I will provide each group with butcher paper and markers/colored pencils/crayons. **For the first 15 minutes, each group member must work alone with the text to find evidence, but then group members may get together and synthesize their information.**

15 minutes: Group members work alone.

20 minutes: Groups then get together, synthesize their information, and begin artwork.

Day 14

5 minutes: Attendance, housekeeping, remind students that in addition to the final *Speak* quiz, reading logs are due the next day.

20 minutes: Groups finish up their artwork and finalize their presentations.

25 minutes: Each group presents their findings to the class while the other members of the class question and discuss their findings.

Possible questions I could ask if students' discussion stalls:

- **Tree/plant life:** How many times does Melinda focus on trees/plant life in the novel? What is the significance of her explanation of seed germination for her biology test? How does Melinda's development parallel that of a seed?
- **Self-mutilation:** What ways does Melinda mutilate herself? Why do you think she focuses so much on biting her lips? What about cutting her arm? Do you think she wants to keep biting her lips? What does it mean when they bleed? How is that symbolic?
- **Art:** What does art do for Melinda? Why is Mr. Freeman the only adult Melinda seems to relate to? Is it significant that Melinda's longest verbal expression is directed toward Mr. Freeman? What do you make of Melinda's turkey sculpture? Her reaction to Picasso?
- **Seasons/weather:** The harsh Syracuse weather is almost like a character in the novel. Why? How does Melinda change in accordance with the seasons? Which season is worst for her — fall or winter? Why do you think she starts to emerge in spring? Can you think of any other symbols or motifs we have discussed that seem to work alongside seasons/weather?

Day 15

5 minutes: Attendance, housekeeping, collect reading logs.

10 minutes: Summary quiz on "Fourth Marking Period."

30 minutes: Class discussion on the final part of the novel. Because the final section of the novel is very powerful and emotional, I am going to have a total discussion day. I would like to let the students lead the discussion, but I have prepared discussion questions that I can use in case they are stumped or hesitant to speak.

Possible discussion questions*:

1. What's with the constantly changing mascots? What does it represent?
2. There are 10 more lies they tell you in High School (p. 147). Are they lies? How are they different or similar to the first 10 lies that are told earlier in the novel?
3. On page 164 Melinda asks if she was raped. Why isn't she sure? Do you consider what happened to Melinda rape? Why or why not?
4. How does communicating help Melinda overcome her fears and come out of her shell? ("Communication 101," p. 180, "Chat Room," p. 184)
5. On p. 191 we learn that Melinda no longer needs the closet, why not? What is the significance of Andy attacking her there?
6. The book ends with Melinda *speaking* to Mr. Freeman, how has he helped her to *speak* all along? How does Melinda's trouble with trees parallel her trouble with speaking?

** If students are still reluctant to discuss, I will have them pair up and answer questions and then reconvene in the larger group*

5 minutes: Split students into five groups that I have chosen and inform them that on Monday and Tuesday (Days 16 and 17) they will be working in the groups and we will be meeting in the computer lab.

Week Four

Day 16 (Monday — In computer lab)

5 minutes: Attendance, hand back reading logs and quizzes.

10 minutes: After students get into their groups, I will distribute this assignment:

In-Class Research Project

Over the next two days, the members of your group are responsible for researching one of the following topics and making a handout that you will present to the rest of class on Wednesday (Day 18):

6. Maya Angelou's experience with rape
7. Suffragettes and women fighting to get the right to vote in the United States
8. Cutting/self-mutilation
9. Sexual assault and date rape
10. Extended metaphor

In addition to an overview of your topic, your handouts must provide answers to the following questions:

- What issues and facts are intertwined with your topic?
- How does your topic relate to today's society? Is it a big issue? (Extended metaphor group does not have to answer)
- Did you find any statistical information in relation to your topic? If so, what?
- For the extended metaphor group, what are some specific and famous examples of extended metaphor?
- How does your topic relate to Melinda in *Speak*? Is your topic represented in the novel?
- Why do you think Laurie Halse Anderson included your topic in the novel?
- Does being more informed on your topic enhance your understanding of Melinda and/or the novel's message? Use specific examples from the text.

You must also turn in a list of references with your handout. To help you with your research, use the **Internet Citation Checklist** worksheet you received during library orientation. Keep in mind that your group has only two days to complete this project, so be sure to divide the work up accordingly. At the end of the project, group members will evaluate each other, so everyone should do equal parts of the work!

Here is a copy of the **Internet Citation Checklist**:

Use the checklist below to check your Internet citations when you complete your research.

1. I checked the websites I used to make sure they were reliable and from a trustworthy source.
2. I cited the author and title of each website I used.
3. I cited the Web address of each website I used. I double-checked the Web address to make sure it was correct.
4. For each website I used, I noted the copyright date listed on the site.
5. For each website I used, I noted the date I found the information.
6. I checked that I wrote each of my Internet citations in the correct format:

Author. Web Site Title. Web address. Copyright Date. Found on (list date you found the information).

• **Checklist borrowed with permission from:**

Read•Write•Think. http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=983. 2006. Found on Dec. 6, 2009.

35 minutes: Research and group work

Day 17 (In computer lab)

5 minutes: Attendance, housekeeping.

40 minutes: Students finish research and handouts, plan presentations.

5 minutes: Distribute copies of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* and assign p. 1-73 (stop at “Tears of a Clown” chapter) for a quiz on Friday (Day 20).

Day 18

5 minutes: Attendance, housekeeping, remind students to keep writing in reading logs now with *The Absolutely True Diary ...*, hand out and have students fill out Peer Evaluation Forms for group projects.

Peer Evaluation Form

Please rate yourself and your team members on the contributions that were made in preparing and submitting your group project. *Your ratings will not be disclosed to other students.* Be honest in this evaluation!

In rating yourself and your peers, use a one to five point scale, where

5 = Superior

4 = Above Average

3 = Average

2 = below average

1 = weak

Insert **your name** in the first section and your peers' names in the remaining sections.

Name:

Participated in group discussions or meetings:

Helped keep the group focused on the task:

Contributed useful ideas:

Quantity of work done:

Quality of work done:

Name:

Participated in group discussions or meetings:

Helped keep the group focused on the task:

Contributed useful ideas:

Quantity of work done:

Quality of work done:

Name:

Participated in group discussions or meetings:

Helped keep the group focused on the task:

Contributed useful ideas:

Quantity of work done:

Quality of work done:

Name:

Participated in group discussions or meetings:

Helped keep the group focused on the task:

Contributed useful ideas:

Quantity of work done:

Quality of work done:

Name:

Participated in group discussions or meetings:

Helped keep the group focused on the task:

Contributed useful ideas:

Quantity of work done:

Quality of work done:

40 minutes: Handout presentations, including final *Speak* discussion.

Day 19

5 minutes: Attendance, remind students of quiz the next day, return students' ongoing writing activity (from Day 3 prompt) from the dialogue exercise (I have had them since Day 13 because I feared students would lose them).

20 minutes: Project this passage from *Speak* (p. 57) on the overhead:

I need a lawyer. I showed up every day this semester, sat my butt in every class, did some homework, and didn't cheat on tests. I still get slammed in MISS. There is no way they can punish me for not speaking. It isn't fair. What do they know about me? What do they know about the inside of my head? Flashes of lightning, children crying. Caught in an avalanche, pinned by worry, squirming under the weight of doubt, guilt. Fear.

The walls in MISS are still white. Andy Beast isn't here. Thank God for small favors. A boy with lime-colored hair who looks like he's channeling for an alien species dozes; two Goths in black velvet dresses and artfully torn pantyhose trade Mona Lisa smiles. They cut school to stand in line for killer concert tickets. MISS is a small price to pay for Row 10, seats 21 and 22.

I call on a student to read it aloud. Then I ask the class to point out which sentences or phrases or words indicate Melinda's thoughts. As they shout them out, I underline them. Then I ask them which sentences or words or phrases indicate her feelings, and I underline those in a different color. Then I ask what these sentences, words, and phrases add to the passage. Would it be as effective without them? The class discusses.

Then, we discuss how Melinda goes about describing her feelings. Instead of stating, "I was angry," she uses images of lightning and sounds of children crying. She doesn't say, "I was worried," she is "squirming under the weight of doubt." This displays that there are many ways to use the senses to describe feelings.

25 minutes: I ask the students to take out their writing activity and look for crucial points that would benefit from more evidence of their thoughts and feelings. Then I ask them to add at least one description of inner thought and/or feeling, trying to use the five senses as they do. At the end of class, they turn their papers in.

Day 20

5 minutes: Attendance, assign p. 74-149 (“Tears of a Clown” through “Reindeer Games”) of *The Absolutely True Diary ...* for a quiz on Tuesday (Day 22).

10 minutes: Summary reading quiz.

20 minutes: I have divided the dry-erase board into three different sections, each with a question at the top. I get the students to move their chairs or come sit on the floor near the board. First, I point to our class definitions still posted on the wall and ask the class to consider our definition of alienation, then I proceed to ask them the first question.

Questions:

- In what ways, and from whom, is Junior alienated? Students come up and write their suggestions on the board, making a list.
- What are the results of Junior’s decision to go to Reardan? Again, students come up and write on the board.
- How does Junior experience racism from his classmates at Reardan? For a third time, students write their answers on the board.

Students then defend and question their answers in a discussion.

15 minutes: Back at their desks, students take out their reading logs and respond to this prompt:

What is the significance of Junior’s fistfight with Roger? How do the “rules” of fighting differ between the Reservation and Reardan? How do those differences showcase the bigger differences between Wellpinit and Reardan? Is Junior now living a double life?

Students turn in their reading logs before they leave class.

Week Five

Day 21 (Monday)

5 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance, return reading logs.

10 minutes: Project the “White/Indian” drawing from p. 57 onto the overhead. Ask students to tell me what the cartoon accomplishes, and why Junior uses cartoons in the novel. What information does Junior convey through cartoons that he cannot convey through language? I record students’ suggestions on the board.

35 minutes: Students get into groups of three to four and give each group butcher paper and markers. Ask groups to compare and contrast Junior and Melinda in cartoon form,

like Junior does in “White/Indian.” How are the two characters alike? Different? How does each character experience alienation? Though drawing is a must, students can use language to explain their drawings, like Junior does.

I circulate the class, answering questions and monitoring the students’ behavior. Groups turn in their work at the end of class for a daily grade.

Day 22

5 minutes: Attendance, assign p. 150-198 (“And a Partridge in a Pear Tree” through “Rowdy and I Have a Long and Serious Discussion About Basketball”) of *The Absolutely True Diary* ... for a quiz on Friday (Day 25).

10 minutes: Summary reading quiz.

35 minutes: Writing activity: Students reread “Rowdy Sings the Blues,” p. 48-53. Then, in pairs, students rewrite the chapter from Rowdy’s point of view. Here’s a copy of the assignment:

We know how Junior feels during his conversation/confrontation with Rowdy in “Rowdy Sings the Blues,” but how does Rowdy feel? Why does Rowdy get so angry with his best friend? Why does he punch Junior? Use the same dialogue that Alexie uses in the novel, but be sure to include:

- Rowdy’s interior monologue
- Details displaying Rowdy’s thoughts and feelings
- Description: We have seen cartoons of Junior’s depictions of both Rowdy and himself, but how would Rowdy describe himself? Junior?

Students may finish their rewrites for homework. They are due the next day.

Day 23

5 minutes: Attendance, collect homework.

15 minutes: Hand out final project assignment and go over it. Answer any questions and make sure that the due date is clear (Monday, Day 31). Explain to students that they are to bring in rough drafts of the written portion of their projects to work on next Thursday (Day 29). Hand back writing activity that we have been working on throughout the unit, and inform students that they may choose to use these papers as jumping off points for their final projects, or they may tell an entirely new story, but they should keep in mind all the ways we have learned to improve stories.

Final Project

DUE: Monday (Day 31)

Throughout the past 5 weeks, we have explored the topics of alienation and social responsibility. As Melinda finds her voice, both literally and figuratively, through art and self-reliance in *Speak*, and as Junior negotiates the boundaries between his alienation both on the reservation and at Reardan through drawing in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, you have learned more about how alienation — or the fear of it — may have influenced you and your peers. You have also learned to think about the social ramifications of alienation and examine both your actions and others’.

To show what you have learned, create an original text showing how you have dealt with alienation — either your own or someone else’s — in your own life. The text must relate to the literature, but it also must depict or express one (or more) of your own experiences. If you choose to write about someone else, be sure to explore your role in the situation: Were you responsible for the alienation? Did you stand up for or try to help that person? Why or why not? How did it make you feel?

You have three choices of how to accomplish this task:

1. Your text can be a first-person narrative describing your experience. Narrative papers should be between 4 and 5 double-spaced typed pages and conform to the conventions of formal grammar and MLA style. Your narrative must not only tell your story, but also reflect upon the literature you have read, and include at least one quote from either *Speak*, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* or both.
2. Using Melinda’s tree in *Speak* as an example, represent your story of alienation by creating your own tree. You can fashion any type of tree you want, with any type of medium. It could be a collage, painting, sculpture, etc. In addition to the tree, you must write a 2-page double-spaced typed narrative essay explaining how the tree communicates your journey. The essay must conform to the conventions of formal grammar and style and connect your tree to the text(s).
3. Throughout *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, Junior draws cartoons to express himself, “because words are too unpredictable ... because words are too limited.” You can tell your story by making a cartoon. The cartoon can be a type of comic book or graphic novel, or it can be one image. You can use dialogue or words to represent an interior monologue or to label your drawing(s), but you don’t have to. In addition to your cartoon, you must write a 2-page double-spaced narrative essay explaining how the cartoon/comic communicates your journey. The essay

must conform to the conventions of formal grammar and style and connect your cartoon to the text(s).

25 minutes: Mini lesson on how to correctly quote and cite material from *Speak* and *The Absolutely True Diary ...* in their papers. Distribute this handout and go over it, being sure to answer any questions. Assure them that we will work on this with their rough drafts.

Quoting and Citing Outside Sources

- Long works (books, albums, etc.) are indicated by italics (on a word processor) or underlining (when writing longhand). Quotation marks are used for shorter works, such as poems, songs, and articles.

Examples: Today we finished our discussion of *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson.

Today we read “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” by Maya Angelou.

“A Day in the Life” is my favorite Beatles song.

Direct Quotations

Direct quotations involve incorporating another person's exact words into your own writing. Here are the basic rules:

- Quotation marks always come in pairs. Do not open a quotation and fail to close it at the end of the quoted material.

- Capitalize the first letter of a direct quote when the quoted material is a complete sentence.

Example: Melinda shows how much she has grown and changed when she tells Mr. Freeman, “Let me tell you about it.”

- Do not use a capital letter when the quoted material is a fragment or only a piece of the original material's complete sentence.

Example: Junior says he draws “because words are too limited.”

- If the original quote is too long or you do not think you need to include the whole thing in your paper, you may omit part of it by using an **ellipsis**.

Example: Rachel/Rachelle challenges Hairwoman’s teaching when she says, “I think you are making all this symbolism stuff up. I don’t believe any of it.”

Rachel/Rachelle challenges Hairwoman’s teaching when she says, “I think you are making all this symbolism stuff up. I don’t believe ... it.”

If you use an **ellipsis**, make sure that the words you remove do not alter the

basic meaning of the original quote. Also make sure that the quote's integration and missing material still leave a grammatically correct sentence.

- If the context of your quote might be unclear, you may add a few words to provide clarity. Enclose the added material in brackets.

Example: Melinda shows how much she has grown and changed when she tells Mr. Freeman, "Let me tell you about it [the rape]."

- Use single quotation marks to enclose quotes within another quotation.

Example: "When I asked him if he had seen my purse, my brother said, 'I don't know what you're talking about.'"

- Use a **block quotation** when the quotation extends longer than four typed lines on the page. Block quotations are removed from the main body of the text and indented one inch from the main margin. Also, block quotations do not require quotation marks.

Example: Melinda is overcome with emotion on Christmas morning, and she almost tells her parents about the rape:

I almost tell them right then and there. Tears flood my eyes. They noticed I've been trying to draw. They noticed. I try to swallow the snowball in my throat. This isn't going to be easy. I'm sure they suspect I was at the party. Maybe they even heard about me calling the cops. But I want to tell them everything as we sit there by our plastic Christmas tree while the Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer video plays.

- When you quote a single line of **poetry**, write it like any other short quotation. If the piece of poetry you are quoting crosses up to three lines of the poem itself, you may still type them in your text run together. Show the reader where the poem's line breaks fall by using **slash marks**.

Example: In her poem, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," Maya Angelou writes: "The free bird leaps / on the back of the wind / and floats downstream."

If you quote 4 or more lines of poetry, use a **block quotation**. In this case, you do not need to use slash marks.

Example: In her poem, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," Maya Angelou writes:

The free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wings
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

Indirect Quotations

Indirect quotations are not exact wordings but rather **rephrasings** or **summaries** of another person's words. In this case, it is not necessary to use quotation marks. However, indirect quotations still require proper citations, and you will be committing plagiarism if you fail to do so.

Example: Melinda shows how much she has grown and changed when she offers to tell Mr. Freeman about her rape.

Here are some rules to guide you when you use indirect quotations:

- Use direct quotations when the source material uses language that is particularly striking or notable.
- Use an indirect quotation (or paraphrase) when you merely need to summarize key incidents or details of the text.

Citations

In **MLA format**, both the **author's name** and the **page number** from which the quotation or information has been taken must accompany direct and indirect quotations. The author's name may appear in the sentence, but the page number is always in parenthesis.

Examples: Melinda shows how much she has grown and changed when she tells Mr. Freeman, "Let me tell you about it" (Anderson 198).

Anderson does not have her protagonist speak about her rape until the novel's final line, when Melinda tells Mr. Freeman, "Let me tell you about it" (198).

Melinda shows how much she has grown and changed when she offers to tell Mr. Freeman about her rape (Anderson 198).

Anderson shows how much Melinda has grown and changed when she offers to tell Mr. Freeman about her rape (198).

Here's an example of a **block quotation**:

Melinda is overcome with emotion on Christmas morning, and she almost tells her parents about the rape:

I almost tell them right then and there. Tears flood my eyes. They noticed I've been trying to draw. They noticed. I try to swallow the snowball in my throat. This isn't going to be easy. I'm sure they suspect I was at the party. Maybe they even heard about me calling the cops. But I want to tell them everything as we sit there by our plastic Christmas tree while the Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer video plays. (Anderson 72)

- When citing **poetry**, put the quoted **line numbers** in the parenthesis.

Example: In her poem, “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,” Maya Angelou writes: “The free bird leaps / on the back of the wind / and floats downstream” (1-3).

Example: In her poem, “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,” Maya Angelou writes:

The free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wings
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky. (1-7)

5 minutes: For homework, pass out this assignment:

In reading logs, write about what you would do if ... 1. You experienced culture clash and cultural alienation like Junior, or, 2. You met someone at school who was going through a situation like Junior. What you do to help? Would you want to help? Why or why not? Recall our class definition of social responsibility. How does it relate? Due on Friday (Day 25) as part of reading log.

Day 24

5 minutes: Attendance, remind students that reading logs are due and there is a quiz the next day.

10 minutes: Divide class into five groups (different groups from the last in-class research project) of my choosing and pass out this assignment:

In-class research project #2

In order to better understand the issues Junior deals with in his daily life in Wellpinit, your group must choose one of the following topics to research. We will go to the computer lab tomorrow so you can research your topic. After you have learned about your topic, each group should devise a creative way to synthesize your information and Junior’s observations from the text and present the topic to the class. You can create posters, power point presentations, overhead transparencies, draw cartoons like Junior — the sky is the limit. You will have three class days, one of which will be in the library, to complete this project. Group presentations will be next Tuesday (Day 27).

- A.** Research the history of the Spokane Indians. How many different tribes did they include? What was the extent of the area they once lived in? How and why has that changed?
- B.** Research the problem of alcoholism in Native American populations. What do experts state as the cause? Is it physical or psychological? Are there programs in place to try to deal with it? How does it differ from alcoholism in other portions of the country? Can you think of any ways to help?
- C.** Research reservations. How many are there? Where are they located? How many people are living on them? How does poverty affect life there? Are there programs in place to try to deal with it? Can you think of any ways to help?
- D.** Research the suicide and death rates in Native American populations. How do these rates differ from those in other portions of the population? What do experts state as the cause(s)? Are there programs in place to try to deal with it? Can you think of any ways to help?
- E.** Research Sherman Alexie. Where did he grow up? What other works has he written? What awards has he won? To what extent is *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* autobiographical?

Before you begin your research, go through *The Absolutely Diary...* and find specific examples from Junior that showcase these issues. Groups must also turn in a list of references with the project. To help you with your research, use the **Internet Citation Checklist** worksheet you received during library orientation. At the end of the project, group members will evaluate each other, so everyone should do equal parts of the work!

35 minutes: Students get into groups, decide which topic they would like to research (each one must be represented), and decide how to divide up the work in their groups. They should begin by going through the novel for information/inspiration. Inform them that we will go to the library the next day to research. I will walk around and monitor their progress, see if they are on task, and answer any questions they might have.

Day 25 (In library)

5 minutes: Attendance, collect reading logs, assign final section of *The Absolutely True Diary...* (p. 199-230) for a quiz on Wednesday (Day 28).

10 minutes: Summary reading quiz.

35 minutes: Students research their topics.

Week 6

Day 26 (Monday)

5 minutes: Attendance; return graded reading logs; remind students to turn in reading logs one last time on Friday (Day 30).

45 minutes: Students finish up their in-class projects.

Day 27

5 minutes: Attendance, housekeeping, remind students of final quiz the next day and to bring in rough drafts of final project papers on Thursday (Day 29).

45 minutes: Students present their projects to the class, with discussion along the way.

Day 28

5 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance, students fill out Peer Evaluation Forms for in-class project groups.

10 minutes: Final summary reading quiz.

25 minutes: Finish up discussion of projects, concluding thoughts about *The Absolutely True Diary...*

Possible discussion questions I will ask if students do not want to volunteer their thoughts:

- In the end, Junior reconciles with Rowdy, but he is still left with sadness. He says he “hoped and prayed that [his tribe] would someday forgive me for leaving them. I hoped and prayed that I would someday forgive myself for leaving them.” Why do you think he feels this way? Why won’t Rowdy leave with Junior?
- What did Junior’s story teach you?
- How does Junior overcome his alienation in Reardan?
- Have you learned anything about the Spokane Indians, and American Indian life in general, that you have found shocking?
- Do you feel like we have a responsibility to our fellow human beings to help those less fortunate? How would Junior answer that question?
- Compare and contrast the ways in which Junior and Melinda deal with their respective situations.

10 minutes: Remind students that they need to bring in rough drafts of their final project papers for the next day, give them the remainder of class to work on those drafts as I monitor and answer questions.

Day 29

5 minutes: Attendance, housekeeping.

45 minutes: Divide students into peer review groups that I have chosen. Then divide class in half. One half gets in peer review groups and the other half has conferences with me about their final projects.

- In peer review groups, students take turns reading their papers aloud to the group and then getting feedback and comments from the whole group.
- Students waiting to conference with me should pair up with another member of their peer review group and read each other's papers, and then give feedback.

Projected on the overhead:

All students should look particularly for:

- Detailed writing
- Descriptions of thoughts and feelings, including possible use of the senses
- Correct punctuation and use of dialogue
- Correct citations and quotations from the novels and poem we have read

Day 30

5 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance, collect reading logs, return graded in-class projects.

45 minutes: Same process as Day 29, but with me conferencing with the other half of the class.

Week 7

Day 31 (Monday)

5 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance, students turn in their culminating projects for the alienation and social responsibility unit.

20 minutes: I hand out the same opinionaire from the first day of the unit, and the students fill it out again. Then as a class, we discuss how (if at all), their answers may have changed after reading *Speak* and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*.

25 minutes: Begin the next unit!