

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian: Beyond the novel

Choose one of the tasks below. For either task, write at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page.

1. Ten years later: Projecting the characters into the future

How do you imagine Penelope, Rowdy or Junior twenty years in the future? Penelope as a tourist on the Great Wall of China? Rowdy as a basketball pro? Junior as a social scientist?



Illustrate the characters' future lives. Feel free to choose your own scenarios! You may talk about the future of one or multiple character.

Afterwards, **justify** your forecast by giving solid arguments from the novel that prove the likelihood of your future vision.

Solution help:

- Pay attention to the operative verbs in this task. "**Illustrate**" in the language of tasks means to "**make something clear by giving examples**". "**Justify**" asks you to "**give solid reasons for decisions and conclusions**" made earlier. To read up on what the definition of the various task instructions, check pp. 168-169 in your textbook again.

- So in this task you had to elaborate on the future life of your character in detail. Explain and give examples to make your text vivid. It was not enough to say "Junior ends up as successful artist". You also needed to clarify why you consider your forecast to be likely. Make reference to the novel, e.g. by stating that Junior's career at Reardan has proven him to be a very aspirational and persistent person. You could have named specific situations for which this is especially true. For your scenarios, you should have considered the previous events and the character's personality. For example, from what we learned throughout the novel about the unequal life chances of Native Americans and based on our knowledge of the last scene, it remains questionable if Rowdy really turns out to be a professional basketball player after he finally decided to go to an all-white school himself. Unfortunately, history has taught us to assume another course of Rowdy's life. Plus, his character maybe doesn't fit this educational vita. **For your scenarios you should have considered the novel's story to make them realistic, believable and plausible.**

- Your scenarios could have painted a positive or a negative picture. Both ways could have made sense. Junior might have indeed become an artist. Or he might have failed the constant struggle to prove that he is as good as every other (white) person and eventually break down because of all the setbacks he experiences, giving in to alcohol and following the downward spiral so many Indians did before. As long as you justify your scenario logically by referring to the original text, this is an equally acceptable solution as well.

2. Back at Wellpinit High: Writing a graduation speech

Ten years after Junior left Wellpinit High he returns to his old school to deliver a speech to the graduating class. What is his message to them? What has he done since high school? **Write his speech.**



For further help, check out the link I provided dealing with how to write a great speech (<https://www.lovelearningtutors.com/main-blog/2018/4/30/how-to-write-a-speech-english-gcse-exam>). You might also want to remember what we learned about successful speeches earlier this year (cf. Obama, Gates, Zuckerberg).

Solution help:

Have a look at your speech again and compare how many points of this **checklist of writing a good speech** you fulfill.

- Did you **introduce** yourself to the audience?
 - Use your full name.
 - Be very polite.
 - For this task, your language can be less formal since you're talking to students only a few years younger than you.
- Did you make a great **opening statement**?
 - Begin your speech in a way that is catchy and will captivate your target audience. A good opening statement is fairly brief, but uses language techniques to make an immediate impact. This can be: a rhetorical question, a surprising statement, a famous quote.
- Did you **structure** your speech?

- Make it easy for your audience to understand your point and split your speech into three sections: introduction, main body, and conclusion. In each section you're trying to achieve a different aim according to the part type.
- Did you begin every paragraph / start of another part with a **topic sentence**?
- Did you write from the **1st person** and **engage your audience** (e.g. by addressing them directly / asking rhetorical questions, ...)?
- Did you express your **opinion**?
 - Opinions are the element that make a speech interesting. Whatever you are writing a speech about, express yourself. Don't just write about your topic, write what you think about it.
- Did you include **personal details and anecdotes**?
- Did you use **emotional** and **figurative language / stylistic devices**?
- Did you re-read your written speech and check for **language mistakes**?

Sources

pictures: <https://pixabay.com/de/illustrations/was-kommt-als-n%C3%A4chstes-1462747/>, <https://pixabay.com/de/illustrations/lautsprecher-mann-junge-halten-1459128/>

tasks: adapted from Noone, Kathlee (2010). *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian. Teaching Support Kid*. Chicago: Random House. / Becker-Ross, I. und Porteous-Schwieb, G. (2012). *Sherman Alexie. The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian. Teacher's Manual*. Berlin: Cornelsen Verlag.