

Freshman Honors English - Summer Reading Assignment #1 – 2009

Text: *Reservation Blues* by Sherman Alexie

ISBN: 978-0-8021-4190-3

Directions: As you read *Reservation Blues* by Sherman Alexie this summer, please follow the directions below.

1. Review all of the accompanying material before you begin reading the book.
2. Do not leave your Summer Reading assignment until the end of the summer. Begin as soon as possible after the Fourth of July.
3. Be an active reader. Do not ignore difficult vocabulary. Look up words you do not understand.
4. Refer to the questions and take notes as you read to help you when you answer the guide questions.
5. Answer the guide questions on loose-leaf notebook paper in complete sentences. If you wish to type, use blank paper and double-space.
6. Be prepared to turn in your guide question responses on the first day of school.
7. Your answers will be graded and returned to you during the first week of school to enable you to study for the test.
8. Bring your text to school to use during class discussions.
9. You will have a test and an in-class timed writing assignment on the text during the first week of school.

Study Guide – *Reservation Blues* by Sherman Alexie

Sherman Alexie can easily be seen as a modern-day Renaissance Man. He has written throughout his life in many genres including poetry, short stories, novels and screenplays. In addition, he has been an editor, a movie producer and director, a musician, a lecturer and a stand-up comedian. Much of this prolific author's work deals with different images of America and questions the modern perception of much of America's history. The struggle between his two major identities that of a Native American with a "White" man's education can be seen in his first work, *Reservation Blues* published in 1995.

Reservation Blues is based on the legend of blues singer and guitarist, Robert Johnson. Robert Johnson allegedly sold his soul to the devil in order to win his great talent with the guitar. *Reservation Blues* tells the story of Johnson's attempts to undo the deal that he has made with the devil on a Spokane Indian Reservation.

GUIDE QUESTIONS

DIRECTIONS: Number each response with the number of the question. Answer each question in complete sentences. Do not copy the questions. Do not copy from the text, unless you are using a short quote to illustrate a point. If you do decide to quote, be certain to use appropriate punctuation. Please skip one line between each numbered answer.

1. Identify the three most important characters in the novel. Describe each character in terms of his or her characterization. Remember: Characterization is the creation of a believable fictional character. What makes each of the three characters unique? What makes each character memorable?
2. Which character described above is the protagonist? What makes this character the protagonist? Remember: The protagonist is the hero or most important character in a work of fiction.
3. Identify one incident in Chapter One that seems improbable or unlikely. Why do you think Alexie included this scene in Chapter One? What tone is he trying to set with this kind of event?
4. How does Thomas the story teller feel about his role as a story teller? How do his feelings and ideas about story telling affect his relationships with other characters?
5. How does the novel use the characters of Betty and Veronica and Chess and Checkers to develop the themes of gender issues and interracial relationships?

6. Quote a statement that reveals how Chess feels about being an Indian. What does your chosen quote prove about Chess's feelings about ethnicity?
7. What does the song "Father and Further" say about the relationship between children and parents? What does the novel say about the effects of absent parents, alcoholism and other problems in families?
8. Identify three diverse elements that interrupt the narrative stream. Remember: The narrative stream is the flow of the story's events. Why might the author have included these elements that many readers complain causes a feeling of "jumping around in the novel"?
9. What is the dramatic purpose of Victor's dream?
10. "My God has Dark Skin," addresses how the Indian identity is complicated by Christianity. What emotions does this song express?
11. One motif in the novel is the images of horse being shot and of horses screaming. Remember: A motif is a recurring element in a work of fiction. How does Junior's dream develop this motif? Use the internet to research George Wright and Phil Sheridan. What is the involvement of Sheridan, Wright and Armstrong in Cavalry Records and what do they do for and to Coyote Springs?
12. "The Reservation's Ten Commandments" from Thomas's journal makes several political allusions. To whom does Thomas refer? What do you think Alexie was trying to accomplish by making these political allusions? Remember: An allusion is a reference to a familiar person, place, thing or event.
13. How does Alexie draw a parallel between the historical and social experiences of blacks and Native Americans?
14. Why do members of the tribe debate Coyote Springs' music? What concerns do the Indians have with the groups' songs?
15. What is your reaction to the lyrics of Betty and Veronica's recording produced by Cavalry Records?
16. Describe the farewell feast with Big Mom and its importance as a conclusion to the entire novel.
17. In a paragraph summarize Alexie's expressed feelings about the themes of power and justice in the novel.

Freshman Honors English - Summer Reading Assignment #2 – 2009

Text: *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams

ISBN: 978-0-345-39180-3

Directions: As you read *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* this summer, please follow the directions below.

1. Review all of the accompanying material before you begin reading the book.
2. Do not leave your Summer Reading assignment until the end of the summer. Begin as soon as possible after the Fourth of July.
3. Be an active reader. Do not ignore difficult vocabulary. Look up words you do not understand.
4. Refer to the questions and take notes as you read to help you when you answer the guide questions.
5. Answer the guide questions on loose-leaf notebook paper in complete sentences. If you wish to type, use blank paper and double-space.
6. Be prepared to turn in your guide question responses on the first day of school.
7. Your answers will be graded and returned to you during the first week of school to enable you to study for the test.
8. Bring your text to school to use during class discussions.
9. You will have a test and an in-class timed writing assignment on the text during the first week of school.

Study Guide – *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams

Douglas Adams was a British writer who originally wrote for radio, television and theater. He also wrote scripts for the popular television series, “Dr Who.” He developed the script for “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Universe,” as a radio show and then a television program. The shows were such successes, that he was approached by several publishers and asked to write the novel based on the shows.

The novel has become a multi-media sensation. Adams added four more novels to the series that continued the adventures of Arthur Dent. Now, there is a film, a stage production and a video game all based on the series. The novels have been called, “the ultimate science fiction adventure.”

GUIDE QUESTIONS

DIRECTIONS: Number each response with the number of the question. Answer each question in complete sentences. Do not copy the questions. Do not copy from the text, unless you are using a short quote to illustrate a point. If you do decide to quote, be certain to use appropriate punctuation. Please skip one line between each numbered answer.

1. Describe Arthur Dent. When the novel opens, what is Arthur’s main preoccupation with his home?
2. Describe Arthur’s friend Ford Prefect. What is Ford’s job?
3. Why does Ford insist that Arthur have several quick beers?
4. What two things does Ford have in his satchel that will help the pair as they travel?
5. Why is the world destroyed?
6. What is The Hitch Hiker’s Guide to the Universe in the novel? What advice does the book give for people about to be ejected into space?
7. What amazing coincidence takes place as Ford and Arthur are ejected from the Vogon space ship?
8. How was the Infinity Improbability Drive discovered? What happened to the student who discovered it?
9. Why is Marvin the Robot almost completely useless?
10. Who is the Earth woman who has also been saved from the destruction of the planet? What is Arthur’s history with her?

11. How does Arthur save the inhabitants of The Heart of Gold from the missile attack? Why is it so unlikely that Arthur could rescue the space travelers?
12. Which Earth species is said to be more intelligent than man? This species actually left Earth before its destruction. What was this species final message to man as they left the planet? What is ironic about this message?
13. Slartibartfast tells Arthur that Earth was a luxury planet built on commission. Who commissioned the building of Earth? Why is this ironic?
14. What is the question the inventors ask The Deep Thought Computer? How long will it take for the answer to be stated?
15. What answer does the computer give to the question? Why is the answer unsatisfactory? What does the computer offer to do to make the answer make sense?
16. Why do the mice commission a duplicate copy of Earth?
17. Why do the mice want to slice up Arthur's brain. They do not understand why he would not like to have this happen. How is this an example of supreme irony?
18. How does Marvin accidentally save the Heart of Gold crew from the policemen?
19. What are the three phases that every civilization goes through? How are these three phases particularly important to the adventure that is suggested at the end of the book?
20. In your opinion, what is the meaning of life, the universe and everything?