Ms. Mutama

**Discovering Theme**

What is theme in a novel and why is it important? A theme is a key or central idea that resurfaces throughout the novel and points towards a **universally** experienced aspect or condition about human nature or society. It is an anchor point from which the story revolves around or is developed from.

* Emotional states - love, curiosity, jealousy
* Beliefs about life - racism, equality
* Situations and experiences - discrimination
* Values - dedication, loyalty, trust, friendship
* Actions - betrayal, revenge

A novel will hold many themes. Themes can be open-ended in the sense that they help you think about a topic but do not necessarily tell you what to think. We are connected to the books, films and television shows we watch because of the widespread ideas they portray about life. Some common themes, for example, in the film *The Avengers* are - identity, good vs evil, perseverance, justice and judgement.

What themes do you see in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian?* Are there other themes you notice besides the ones below?

Individual vs community

Poverty and disadvantage

Privilege and power

Racism and discrimination

Understanding identity

Hopes, dreams, and loss

Self-esteem

Standing up for oneself

Theme Activity - Chapters 4-8

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

1. Chapter 5: Hope Against Hope (p.35)
2. What possible theme(s) do you discover in this passage?
3. What does Mr. P mean when he says “we were supposed to make you give up being Indian?” (35). What effect would losing one’s songs, stories, and language have on a group of people?

2. Chapter 6: Go Means Go (p.45)

1. What possible theme(s) do you discover in this passage?
2. Is there any value in stepping away from others to follow your own path? Why/Why not?

3. Chapter 7: Rowdy Sings the Blues (p.51)

1. What possible theme(s) do you discover in this passage?
2. Why is Junior’s decision to leave to go to another school such a betrayal for Rowdy?

4. Chapter 8: How to Fight Monsters (p. 54) - Part 1

* A) What possible theme(s) do you discover in this passage?
* B) What is the significance of the drawing where Junior is depicted as both White and Indian? When have you felt a part of two different worlds?

5. Chapter 8: How to Fight Monsters (p.63, 65-66) - Part 2

A) What possible theme(s) do you discover in this passage?

B) Why is Junior shocked when Roger declines his invitation to fight?