

5. In paragraph 7, Alexie deliberately uses a number of short, simple sentences. What effect do you think he is trying to achieve?
6. This eight-paragraph essay is divided into two distinct sections. Why? How would you describe its arrangement? How does it suit Alexie's overall purpose?
7. Discuss Alexie's use of parallel structure and repetition in the last two paragraphs. Pay particular attention to the final sentence in each.
8. Who is the audience for this essay? Cite specific passages to support your response.
9. What is your first memory of books and reading? Do you associate it with a specific person or setting? How has your early experience affected your attitude toward books and reading?
10. Alexie writes that he read to save his life, and many others have written that books opened up worlds and possibilities that gave them a new life. Do you believe that reading and books can still have that power? Explain.
11. Will you read books—plain old two-dimensional print texts with pictures—to your children? During these times of Kindles and e-books and iPads and other electronic means of presenting what traditionally existed on paper, do you think that books per se will be important to the next generation? Explain the reasons for your view.

Exploring the Text

1. What figure of speech is the following: “We lived on a combination of irregular paychecks, hope, fear and government surplus food” (para. 1)? What is its effect?
2. In what ways does the description of Sherman Alexie’s father play against stereotypes of Native Americans?
3. What is the effect of Alexie’s analogy of a paragraph to a fence (para. 3)?
4. What does Alexie mean when he describes “an Indian boy” who “grows into a man who often speaks of his childhood in the third-person” (para. 5)?