

## Summer Reading Questions for *Flight* English III

General reading instructions: As you read *Flight*, be an active and critical reader. Highlight important events and revealing passages on character, setting, plot, and theme. Write insightful notes in the margins of your book. Draw connections to today's world and to your own experiences.

Answer the following questions briefly but thoroughly in well structured paragraphs, supporting your answers with specific details from the novel. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence, an adequate balance of concrete detail and commentary to answer the question fully, and a concluding statement. Place parenthetical page numbers after the concrete details. (This means that, following each concrete detail you include, there should be a page reference in parentheses, as modeled in the questions below.) If the questions contain references that you do not understand, research any unknown terminology on the internet and explain it in your answer. Answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper, and number your answers. *All answers must be typed. This assignment is due the first day of class.*

1. Why does Zits believe that only drunken Indians pay attention to him and that rich and educated Indians pretend he does not exist (7)? What does this reveal about his self image? Explain how this allows him to be complacent about his life.
2. This novel can be labeled many ways: fantasy, political polemic, or cri-de-coeur, to name a few. Define each of these genres and discuss specifically how *Flight* conforms to each.
3. As revealed in this book, what would Zits consider to be at least two myths about Indians? What is the reality? How do these lines blur?
4. Zits remarks, "Art and Justice fight on opposite sides of the war but they sound exactly like each other. How can you tell the difference between the good guys and the bad guys when they say the same things?" (56). Respond to his question. Consider *what* the good and bad guys say as well as the symbolism of the names Art and Justice.
5. Zits ponders, "Is revenge a circle inside of a circle inside of a circle?" (77). What are the circumstances, and what does he mean? Is retaliation ever just? Explain.
6. Compare Elk and Hammer's request for a respectful burial for the man they have killed to the Indian women's desecrating the corpses of bodies at Little Big Horn.

What distinguishes these two situations? What is the message Alexie conveys through the contrast of these scenarios?

7. When Zits observes Small Saint carrying Bow Boy toward safety, he comments, "In the midst of all this madness and murder, one soldier has refused to participate. He has chosen the opposite of revenge" (93). How does General Mustache respond to this act? How are he characterize Small Saint and Bow Boy? Does it matter whether Small Saint is saving a child or an adult? What would happen to an American soldier today in Iraq if he/she chose not to participate in the violence of the war?
8. What is the common denominator in how each of Zits's incarnations ends, as he "time travels" from one place to another? What does his falling asleep say about his potential for violence? What does it allow Zits and the reader to realize?
9. When Zits turns himself in, he tells Officer Dave, "I want you to know that I respect you" (163). How has Zits struggled with the concept of respect earlier when he was in his father's body? What was the message about how one affords respect to someone else? How do you feel that respect can be demonstrated effectively to others?
10. Throughout the novel, Zits has worried about his need to connect with his Indian heritage, but at the end he settles in gratefully with a white family. What do you think this resolution suggests? What do his final words, "My real name is Michael. Please, call me Michael" (181), imply? What is the author's message?