“Superman and Me” by Sherman Alexie Discussion Notes

1. How does Alexie establish context and introduce himself in the first paragraph? Annotate the paragraph for this.
2. Discuss the sentence: “We lived on a combination of irregular paychecks, hope, fear, and government surplus food” (paragraph 1) What is its effect?
3. Look at how many sentences include lists in paragraph 2. Usually, a writer tries to vary their sentence structure, but here Alexie overuses this listing pattern. What effect does it have?
4. Look at the comparison made in paragraph three. How does he broaden this comparison to more things in his life?
5. Explain the contrast of the words “prodigy” and “oddity” in paragraph 5.
6. In paragraph 7, Alexie deliberately uses a number of short, simple sentences. Find them and underline them. What effect do you think he is trying to achieve?
7. The 8th paragraph in the narrative is divided into two distinct sections. Why? How would you describe its arrangement? How does it suit Alexie’s overall purpose?
8. Discuss Alexie’s use of parallel structure and repetition in the last two paragraphs. Pay particular attention to the last sentence in each.
9. Who is Alexie’s audience in this narrative? What is his overall purpose?
10. Find at least two connections from this narrative to “Indian Education”.

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