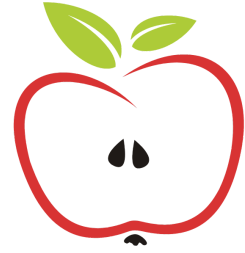


Apple in the Middle

Critical Thinking Questions



Prologue:

- There is mention of a medicine wheel in the prologue in the very first paragraph of the story. What is a medicine wheel? Who typically utilizes a medicine wheel and for what purpose?
- Where are the Turtle Mountains? What clue does this give you about where the story might take place?

Chapters 1-3:

- Who is the main character in the story?
- Apple says she has some odd habits. What are they? Do you have any “odd” habits that make you, you?
- In Chapter 2, Apple explains how she’s always in the middle. What does she mean by that?
- What happened to Apple that made her realize she was different? How did that experience affect Apple?
- On page 17, Apple gives another important piece of information about her. What does she tell you?
- Apple explains her first memory of “multicultural education” when she was in the first grade. What was her experience? What happened?
- Research Squanto. Who is he? What role did he play in history? Do you think it is right or wrong for schools to celebrate how Thanksgiving came to be? Why or why not?
- What plans has Apple’s dad made for her during her summer break?
- How did Apple get her name?

- We all have our own identity and things that make us who we are. Research how you got your name. What makes you who you are? Make a name poster and include words and images that explain your identity.
- Chapter 3 gives a lot of information of where and how the Michif language came to be. Find out what tribe is closest to your school. What is their traditional language? Are there members who still speak the language? To learn more about Chinuk wawa, the traditional language of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, have students reference the Chinuk Wawa: As our elders teach us to speak its dictionary to learn more about its history. Have students discuss the history of native languages in Oregon and then have a whole group discussion with the class to talk about why native languages were banned and illegal and what that meant for tribal communities. Discuss how many tribes have revitalized their native languages, but there are also many who were unable to do so because there were no living speakers and the impact that has on tribal communities.

Chapters 4-6

- In chapter 4 Apple is headed to meet her mother's side of the family who lives on the Chippewa Indian Reservation . Apple describes what she thought she would see as they entered the reservation. What types of things did Apple think she'd see? Have you ever been to an Indian reservation? If not, what do you think a reservation looks like? If you have been to a reservation, what did it look like. Describe it to your group.
- Once you've talked about what an Indian reservation might/does look like go to <https://roundme.com/tour/433498> to take a virtual tour of The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and discuss with your group what types of things you notice and if there's anything new you learned about what a reservation can look like. Did anything surprise you?

- On page 34- at the very end, Apple says she gets a lot of her information about Native Americans from TV. Do you think the media or the television correctly portrays Native Americans? Why or why not?
- What is Apple in the middle of in chapter 5?
- How do you think Apple feels staying in her mom's room while she visits? Why?
- Do you think Apple is in danger at the beginning of chapter 6? Why or why not?
- Apple notices that the dialect of her family is different sounding than what she's used to hearing. What sounds different to her? When you researched the Chinuk wawa language did you notice anything about the letters the language uses? Were you able to hear any of those sounds? If so, were they different from the sounds of the English language?
- On page 46, Apple references the reservation again. This time she says, "Who knew you could cram so many Native Americans into a tiny space? Oh wait, I guess that's what the government did with Indian reservations to begin with. Uncle Sam should be called Uncle Cram." What did she mean by this? Look on the Grand Ronde website at www.grandronde.org to learn about the history of how the tribes ended up on the Grand Ronde reservation and share with your group.
- What is Indian Fry Bread?

Chapter 7-10

- Who do you think is the one putting things through Apple's bedroom window?
- Apple's grandpa explains to her how the tribe looks out for one another and treats everyone as family. This is one example of their culture. Oftentimes in tribal communities everyone jokes that everyone is their cousin because in some way they are related and always look out for one another. Tribal communities also hold elders in high regard and treat them with great respect. An example of one way we show them respect is we always serve them their dinner first at dinners, which may mean allowing them to start the line or we have our youth make a

plate for them. Why do you think tribal communities treat everyone like family? Why are elders treated with great respect?

- On page 63 Apple is talking about when her white side of the family met her Native side of the family. On one line she says, “Think about it: my very white family met some Indians for the first time. Sort of like Columbus’s first encounter with the Natives. Only this time it was an uptight white family meeting a mountain-sized Native with an awesome Aussie accent. And this time we can’t say that the whites “discovered” anything since the Aussies were here first! (Er, wait, that’s not right either.) And *this* time the whites actually left the Natives where they were. There is a lot to unpack in these few sentences.
 - What do we know about Columbus’s first encounter with Natives? What is the *real* story?
 - Why is “discovered” in quotation marks in the sentence?
 - Why does Apple say, “at this time the whites actually left the Natives where they were” ?
- Apple’s grandpa tells her that the Michif people have a few different names they call themselves. Why is that? Look go to www.grandronde.org and look up “Our story”. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is made up of 27 different tribes and bands. The tribes were all called something different before being moved to the reservation, such as the Umpqua, Rogue River, Molalla, etc. But once the tribe became a confederation we started to call ourselves Grand Ronde.
- What are juneberries? Where do you get juneberries?
- Look up what are some first foods for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and report back to the tribe one first food, where you find it and how it’s eaten.
- A new item has been dropped in Apple’s window. What was it this time? Who do you think left it? Why?

Chapter 11-13

- What is sage to Native communities?
- What does Apple's grandpa scold her for on page 81? What does he tell her about Native people and gifts?
- Who is Apple going to see about her dreams she keeps having?
- Chapter 12 gives another example of how tribal communities show respect for their elders. What example is given?
- What gift does Apple's grandma say she needs to get for Aunt Auber? What's the importance of gift giving in tribal communities?
- What does Karl have against Apple?
- What does Apple learn about her name and what it means in the tribal community?
- Apple is offended that Karl is telling her who she is on the inside. Why does this offend her?
- What is Apple so excited to see while they are on their way to Aunt Aubers house?
- What are the mounds really?
- Aunt Aubers keeps calling everyone init. What do you think it means?
- What does Aunt Aubers tell Apple her dream is telling her?
- Why does Apple give her aunt tobacco as a gift?

Chapter 14-17

- What did Apple really give her aunt as a gift?
- What does Apple learn about Karl and her mother?
- Why does Apple feel she's in the middle again on page 111?
- What does "init" mean?
- What does Nezzie say to Apple in the truck ride home that makes Apple feel so good?

- What collection of things does Apple have now of things the mysterious person is leaving her?
- Why do you think it's rude to ask an Indian how Indian they are?
- Explain what blood quantum is?
- What is a powwow?
- Watch the video, "Regalia" at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KvPHZbZ_cjU&list=PLQNxttRKhLKbfRqyvzcw1jnzglc3360di&index=5&t=0s and have a discussion with your group why it is offensive to call regalia a costume.
- Describe Nezzies and Junior's regalia.
- Explain the significance of the shawl Nezzie dances with at powwow.
- Why is Apple afraid of cemeteries?
- On page 127 Apple points out how she has noticed that Native people revere their elders. What's an example that she sees throughout the book? Does this seem to be a recurring theme of the book? Why or why not? Respecting your elders is a cultural norm in Indian country. Is this norm something that happens in your culture?
- Apple is discovering that there is no one way to be Indian. She is learning more and more about her identity. Make a poster of images and words that make up your identity and who you are. Apple describes herself as "part doctor's daughter and part Indian daughter....I'm not the melting pot".
- Describe the powwow in chapter 17.
- What was Apple's experience at her first powwow? Was it positive? Negative? Why?

Chapter 18-22

- Junior tells Karl, "follow the red road." What do you think that means?
- What are ancestors?

- Research what an Indian Boarding school is. Is there one in Oregon? If so, what's its name and history?
- When is it ok to tell stories in Indian country? Why do you think that is?
- Why do you think Karl and his son had a can of green spray paint?
- Chapter 20 gives us a lot of insight about Karl and his "beef" with Apple's mom. What happened? Why is Rafe so upset with Apple too?

Chapter 23-26

- What happened in Apple's dream when she was knocked unconscious?
- What do daisies represent?
- What did Apple learn while in the ER? Who did she meet there?
- What did Grandma mean when she asked Karl, "Isn't your wife allergic to daisies?" Do Apple and her grandma share any certain traits you can think of?
- Apple discovers why she asks weird questions. What is the reason?
- What does Karl think Apple owes him because of her mom?
- What little "gift" has been left for Apple while the window was open when she was sleeping?

Chapter 27-30

- Heartbreak hits Apple- what happened that has broken the whole family's heart?
- What tradition does the tribal community have regarding when a person dies?
- What is the symbolism of Nezzie wearing her moccasins?
- Who gave Apple the gifts? What did each one mean?
- How does Apple "tie up the loose ends" with Karl?
- What is Karl and his son doing by the Turtle Mountain sign?

Chapter 31-33

- How has Apple's first day of school in chapters 1 and 2 compare to her experience in chapter 32?

- What common ground does Apple and Steve find while working together in math class?
- How has Apple grown since the beginning of the book?
- Can you think of a time when you grew from an experience?