Pretty Like a White Boy by Drew Hayden Taylor

Pre-reading activities

1. Write down the word "Identity".   Brainstorm as many words as you can that come to mind when you think of this word.   (try to come up with at least 20-25 words- you can work with a partner)
2. Next, circle all of the words that apply to identity as seen from the outside (by other people, society, cultures etc)
3. Using a different colour circle all the words that apply to identity as it is seen from the inside (by the person to whom the identity belongs).
4. In your journal, write for 10 - 15 minutes about your own identity, as seen from the inside and the outside.     (about half a page)
5. Brainstorm:  What stereotypes are out there about Aboriginal people? (after we watch video)
6. After thinking about all of this, in your opinion, what does it mean to be "Native", then?

After reading the essay Pretty Like a White Boy Pretty Like a White Boy

7 . In the fourth paragraph, the writer states:

“*It wasn’t until I left the Reserve for the big bad city, that I became more aware of the role people expected me to play, and the fact that physically, I didn’t fit in”.*

a) What ‘role’ did he feel people expected him to play?

b)Why did he not fit in?

8. Using a T-chart, show the benefits of being Ojibwe in one column, and the benefits of being Caucasian in the other column.

9. In what ways did the author experience awkward situations when people did not know he was Native? Give at least 2 examples from the essay.

10. The author claims that there is a lot to be said for both Native culture and white culture.

a. According to Taylor, what are 2 contributions of Native Culture?

b. What does he claim are the two most significant contributions from white culture?

11. Look at your T-chart and decide for yourself to which cultural identity Drew Hayden Taylor feels more connected. Be sure to use evidence from the essay to support your opinion.

12. Many First Nations peoples are of mixed blood. Why does this author feel his situation is unique?

13. Look up the definition of “Satire”. Is this essay a satire? Why or why not?

14. In one well-constructed paragraph, describe what you liked or disliked about Drew Taylor’s essay.

Your topic sentence for your paragraph should be something like this:

Drew Hayden Taylor`s essay Pretty Like a White Boy contains elements that some people may like and some that they may dislike.

15. Read the poem "Who Am I?" by Cheryl Blood. What is the major difference in the identity expressed by the author of Pretty Like a White Boy compared with the poem? Explain your answer.

16. Write a one paragraph response to the poem. You may need to reread the poem a few times to help you understand the message the poet is sending. In your paragraph, answer the following questions: What do you think this poem is about? What is the poet saying about who she is? How do you feel about the poem? Does this poem remind you of anything you have read before? Remember - you are responding on a personal level to the poem, describing what you think of it. Write your answer on a separate page and include your name, the date and an appropriate title.

