



The Outsiders

by S. E. Hinton

Teacher's Guide

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Synopsis

Chapter 1

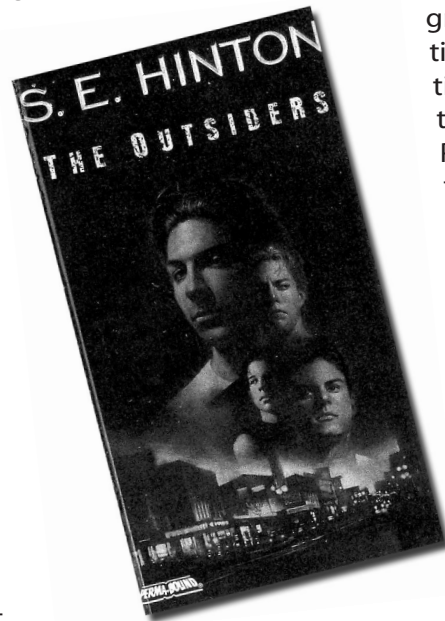
Since the deaths of his parents in a car crash, fourteen-year-old Ponyboy Curtis lives with his brothers, twenty-year-old Darry, who works as a roofer, and sixteen-year-old Sodapop, who works at the DX service station. On a fall night, a Corvair full of Soc boys stops Ponyboy on his way home from a movie and threaten to cut his hair. He bites his attackers, who graze his head with a knife blade and stuff a handkerchief in his mouth. Six older boys rescue him: his two brothers and gang members, Steve Randle, Dallas "Dally" Winston, Keith "Two-Bit" Matthews, and Johnny Cade. Ponyboy resents Darry's criticism that he was careless.

Chapter 2

The next night, Ponyboy meets his friends Johnny, who suffers emotional damage from a beating he received four months earlier from a gang of Socs, and Dally, a hardened juvenile delinquent from New York City's West Side. They fool around at the drugstore, where Dally steals two packs of cigarettes. They move on to the Dingo, a greaser hangout, but leave when a fight breaks out. They sneak into the Nightly Double drive-in movie. Dally, insults two Socs, cheerleader Sherry "Cherry" Valance and Marcia, by using obscene language. Johnny defends the girls. Cherry forces Dally to leave by throwing a Coke in his face. The girls befriend Ponyboy and Johnny because they are alone after a fight with their boyfriends for bringing liquor to the movie. Two-Bit joins them. Cherry and Ponyboy go out for popcorn. Cherry asks what happened to Johnny. Ponyboy tells her how close he came to getting killed. Cherry reminds him that Socs can be dangerous, but have their own troubles.

Chapter 3

After the show, the three boys escort the girls to Two-Bit's car. Cherry admits disliking part of the Soc scene, particularly aloofness to the outside world. She learns that Ponyboy likes to read. When Socs Randy Anderson and Bob Sheldon drive up in a blue Mustang, the group tenses. Two-Bit and Ponyboy argue. When the car passes a second time, Johnny recognizes it and identifies Bob's rings as the weapons that cut him when he was attacked. Bob tries to apologize to Cherry. Marcia's boyfriend insults the greasers. Cherry avoids a fight by getting into the car. She admits her attraction to Dally. The greasers walk back to the vacant lot. After Two-Bit leaves, Ponyboy and Johnny smoke, look at the sky, and fall asleep. When he arrives home at 2:00 A. M., Darry slaps him for being late for curfew. Ponyboy runs away and joins Johnny.



Chapter 4

At the park, Johnny and Ponyboy plan to run away. Five drunken Socs trap them near the fountain around 2:30 A. M. At Bob's command, they hold Ponyboy's head underwater. When he recovers, he realizes that Johnny saved him from drowning by stabbing Bob with a switch-

blade. Terrified, the boys decide they need money and a gun. They locate Dally at Buck Merrill's house, where he gives them a loaded gun, leather jacket, and Buck's shirt. He advises them to take a freight train to Windrixville and proceed to a rural church on Jay Mountain. The runaways follow his instructions. To get directions to the abandoned church, Ponyboy lies to a farmer about playing army. The two fall asleep at the church.

Chapter 5

When Ponyboy awakens, he finds Johnny's message scrawled on the dusty floor. Johnny returns with bologna, bread, a copy of *Gone with the Wind*, cards, soap, and peroxide. He insists they cut their hair and lighten Ponyboy's red mane so they won't

fit police descriptions. For four or five days, they pass the time with bologna sandwiches, candy bars, and games of poker. Ponyboy reads aloud and explains the Civil War to Johnny, who is a poor student. One morning, Ponyboy admires the sunrise. Dally appears on Friday and brings news that the police think the boys have fled to Texas. He hands Ponyboy a letter from Sodapop telling him that Darry is sorry for hitting him and that his picture was in the newspaper. They take Buck's T-bird to a Dairy Queen, where they eat barbecue and banana splits. Dally warns of an all-out war of greasers vs. Socs. Cherry serves as the greasers' spy.

Chapter 6

On his fifth barbecue, Johnny announces that he and Ponyboy are giving themselves up to the police because the killing was self-defense. Dally fears Johnny would be hardened by jail, but Johnny prefers not to live on the run. They return to find the church ablaze from their lighted cigarette. A woman realizes that the fire has trapped five children from a church picnic. Johnny and Ponyboy follow the children's shouts through a window and rescue all five. As the roof caves in, Dally clubs Ponyboy on the back, knocking him out as he douses flames. When Ponyboy comes to, he is in an ambulance with Jerry Wood, the children's supervisor. Ponyboy suffers minor burns, shock, and smoke inhalation; Johnny's back was broken by the roof cave-in. Dally's arm is burned. All three enter a hospital and receive hero treatment. Ponyboy reunites with his brothers. Darry weeps out of love for Ponyboy.

Chapter 7

Photographers and police surround the boys, who convince the doctor they are all family. A doctor confides that Dally will recover in a few days, but Johnny may not live. Ponyboy goes home to rest. Darry puts him to bed. On Saturday morning, while Ponyboy cooks breakfast, Two-Bit and Steve display the morning paper, which lauds the trio as heroes. Johnny is charged with manslaughter for stabbing Bob; both he and Ponyboy must appear in juvenile court. Authorities may place Ponyboy and Sodapop in a boys' home. After the older brothers leave for work, Two-Bit and Ponyboy drive to the Tasty Freeze and notice the Mustang following them. Two-Bit stops Ponyboy from starting trouble. Randy takes Ponyboy aside to ask why he saved the children. Randy would have let them

burn. He is not coming to the rumble because he is sick of violence. Ponyboy agrees with Cherry that "Things are tough all over."

Chapter 8

Ponyboy and Two-Bit visit Johnny, who wants another copy of *Gone with the Wind*. He complains of pain and paralysis below the waist. His mother arrives; he refuses to see her. He tries to sit up and faints. His mother calls the boys hoodlums. Ponyboy and Two-Bit visit Dally, who wants to get out of the hospital. He apologizes for knocking Ponyboy out and asks Two-Bit for his prize switchblade. On the way home, Ponyboy and Two-Bit discuss the rumble. Ponyboy sees Cherry at the vacant lot. She reports that the Socs want no weapons. She asks about Johnny, but doesn't visit him out of respect for Bob.

Chapter 9

At 6:30 P. M., Ponyboy arrives home and takes five aspirin for headache. Darry thinks he is too tense for the 7:00 rumble. Before departing, Darry warns his brothers to run from the police. They meet Tim Shepard and his gang and boys from Brumly. Tim explains that Curly will miss the fight because he has been sent to a reformatory for breaking into a liquor store. Dally arrives from the hospital and leads off against Paul Holden. The greasers stampede the Socs; Steve suffers broken ribs, Two-Bit is bleeding from face and hand, and Ponyboy is bruised. While they drive to the hospital to visit Johnny, police stop them for speeding. Dally talks his way out of trouble by claiming to take Ponyboy for treatment. Dally draws a switchblade to force his way into Johnny's room. Before dying, Johnny claims that fighting is useless. Dally flees the room.

Chapter 10

Ponyboy wanders alone for hours, then accepts a ride home with a stranger. He tells the greasers that Johnny is dead and Dally has run away. Dally telephones the Curtis house to confess that police are trailing him for robbing a grocery store. The greasers hurry to the vacant lot. As the Curtis brothers watch, police shoot Dally for menacing them with an empty gun. Ponyboy collapses. He awakens on Tuesday. He is unable to accept Johnny and Dally's deaths. Darry offers him Johnny's book. Ponyboy is too sick to run track.

Chapter 11

During Ponyboy’s week in bed, Randy visits and reminds him of the hearing the next day. Ponyboy fears that Darry will have to give up guardianship of the brothers. He blames himself for Bob’s death and refuses to accept that Johnny is dead. Darry asks Randy to leave.

Chapter 12

At the hearing, Randy, the Socs, and Cherry testify. The greasers refuse to testify to Dally’s criminal acts. Exonerated from the killing, Ponyboy descends into absent-mindedness, clumsiness, and poor concentration. Mr. Syme, his English teacher, offers him a C for the course if he will write a semester theme. Toughened, he faces up to Soc threats. At home, Darry yells at him for wanting to quit school. Sodapop mourns that his girlfriend is unfaithful. Ponyboy and Darry go after Sodapop, who left home rather than hear more fighting. Ponyboy returns to work on his homework. He reaches for his novel and reads a letter from Johnny, which encourages him to find good in the world. Ponyboy decides to write the English theme.

Timeline of the Action

four years earlier The Curtises sell Mickey Mouse, Sodapop’s horse.

eight months earlier Mr. and Mrs. Curtis die in a car crash; Ponyboy begins having nightmares.

spring before the story Socs terrify Johnny.

Saturday night in fall Ponyboy attends a movie.

later Socs threaten to cut his hair. His brothers and gang members rescue him.

Sunday night Ponyboy, Johnny, and Dally sneak into the Nightly Double drive-in movie, where they meet Cherry and Marcia.

after the show The boys escort the girls to Two-Bit’s car, where Two-Bit and Ponyboy argue with Socs. Johnny recognizes Bob’s rings as the weapons that cut him when he was attacked.

after midnight At the vacant lot, Ponyboy and Johnny fall asleep.

2:00 A. M. Darry slaps Ponyboy for being late for curfew.

2:30 A. M. At the park, Johnny rescues Ponyboy from Socs by stabbing Bob.

later They locate Dally at Buck Merrill’s house, where he gives them a loaded gun, money, and instructions on a hide-out.

3:15 A. M. Ponyboy and Johnny take a freight to Windrixville.

that morning A farmer directs Ponyboy to Jay Mountain.

Monday afternoon Johnny buys supplies.

Wednesday Dally tells Sodapop that Johnny and Ponyboy have run away, but conceals their whereabouts.

Friday Dally brings news and an apology from Darry. Dally warns of an all-out war of greasers vs. Socs.

later They return from the Dairy Queen and rescue five children from the burning church. Ponyboy and Dally are burned; Johnny’s back is broken.

Saturday morning Johnny is charged with manslaughter for stabbing Bob. Authorities may place Ponyboy and Sodapop in a boys’ home.

later Two-Bit stops Ponyboy from starting trouble with Socs. They visit Johnny and Dally.

6:30 P. M. Ponyboy is tense before the rumble.

7:00 P. M. Dally arrives from the hospital and leads off against Paul Holden. The greasers stampede the Socs; Steve, Two-Bit, and Ponyboy are injured. Police stop them for speeding.

later Dally flees the hospital after Johnny dies.

that night Dally telephones the Curtis house to confess that police are trailing him for robbing a grocery store.

later Police shoot Dally.

Tuesday Ponyboy awakens after three days.

a week later At the hearing, Ponyboy is exonerated.

later Mr. Syme offers Ponyboy a C for the course if he will write a semester theme.

Author Sketch

Born Susan "Susie" Eloise to Grady and Lillian Hinton on July 22, 1949, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the author began reading cans and labels at an early age and started writing at eight. She read Jane Austen, Mary Renault, Shirley Jackson, and F. Scott Fitzgerald as well as the novels of Kurt Vonnegut and stories of J. D. Salinger. While enrolled at Will Rogers High school in 1963, she decided to fill a need for adolescent fiction by writing her own novel. At age 15, while recovering from her father's death, she composed *The Outsiders* and based it on local violence. The work, published under her initials in 1967, produced a revolution in teen fiction.



Hinton continued writing and completed *That Was Then, This Is Now* while attending the University of Tulsa. In 1970, after switching from a major in journalism, she earned a B. S. in education. She married mail order businessman David Inhofe, father of Nicholas David. After living in Spain, she settled in California and produced screenplays, television scripts, advertising, more teen novels, and two children's picture books.

Critic's Corner

Hinton's accomplishments with plot and character have won her a place on the ALA "Best of the Best, Alive in '75" list. In explanation of her tomboyish use of strong male point of view, she remarked, "I go straight from thinking about my narrator to being him. Like Lon Chaney becoming the werewolf." In 1988, *The Outsiders* again placed on the ALA list of standard YA works. The groundswell that arose from the novel's new realism influenced authors M. E. Kerr, Paula Danziger, Richard Peck, Robert Cormier, and Paul Zindel. Hinton continues to write on youthful themes in casual, child-centered lingo on the subject of teen problems. In subsequent years, she has won *New York Herald Tribune* and *Chicago Tribune* citations, Media & Methods Maxi award, Massachusetts Children's Book Award, Young Adult Services Division School Library Journal Author Achievement Award, New York Public Library award, California Young Reader Medal, Sue Hefly Award, California Reading Association citation, Golden Archer award, and

Land of Enchantment award from the New Mexico Library Association.

Hinton's works, which center on complex lower-class protagonists, continue to receive mixed reviews, but critics generally agree that she speaks directly to youth. Some critics decry the glorification of violence and gang behavior and imply that Hinton's books encourage young readers to emulate macho delinquents. Others accuse her of producing bleak, immature, and underdeveloped themes. Critics Geoff Fox and George Walsh admire her immediacy and self-determination, a quality in Ponyboy Curtis, a recurrent character. Bolstering her influence are the successful teen films: *The Outsiders* (1983), *That Was Then, This Is Now* (1985), *Rumble Fish* (1983), and *Tex* (1982).

Hinton's Other Works

That Was Then, This Is Now, 1971

Rumble Fish, 1975

Tex, 1979

Taming the Star Runner, 1988

Big David, Little David, 1995

The Puppy Sister, 1995

Hawkes Harbor, 2004

Related Reading

Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Avi, *The True Confession of Charlotte Doyle*

William Armstrong, *Souder*

Forrest Carter, *The Education of Little Tree*

Ernest Gaines, *A Lesson Before Dying*

Carson McCullers, *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* and *Member of the Wedding*

Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With The Wind*

Cynthia Rylant, *Missing May*

Irving Shulman, *West Side Story*

Betty Smith, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*

John van Druten, *I Remember Mama*

James Vance Walker, *Walkabout*

Yoko Kawashima Watkins, *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*

Ruth White, *Belle Prater's Boy*

David Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade*

Richard Wright, *Black Boy*

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General Objectives

1. To analyze a novel and identify theme, characters, plot, setting, tone, and mood
2. To discuss the outlook and expectations of lower-middle-class people
3. To define loyalty
4. To evaluate the role of rebellion and exhibitionism in adolescence
5. To discuss how loss of parents affects a family
6. To examine the importance of belonging and acceptance to emotional stability
7. To discuss the theme of vulnerability
8. To account for the importance of compassion in human relations
9. To enumerate minor conflicts that echo the major conflict of the story
10. To characterize the effect of first person point of view

11. To enumerate date and settings and passage of time
12. To predict whether gang relationships will remain stable

Specific Objectives

1. To explain the repetition of “Things are rough all over”
2. To discuss Ponyboy’s attempts to cope with maturity
3. To comprehend Ponyboy’s friendships
4. To contrast Sodapop’s normalcy with Ponyboy’s maladjustment
5. To express interaction between teenagers and the court, media, hospital, police, and school
6. To contrast Ponyboy and Dally as problem solvers
7. To comment on relationships between male and female teens
8. To name admirable character traits in the major characters
9. To discuss Ponyboy’s response to loss
10. To account for acts of heroism
11. To explain the significance of the title
12. To analyze the symbolism of the fountain, church on the hill, blue rings, switchblade, and poem

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of S. E. Hinton’s fiction, present the following terms and applications:

Bildungsroman: literally a “formation novel,” which describes the coming-of-age of an untried or naive youth. Hinton focuses on Ponyboy Curtis to express his naivete, confusion, and lack of judgment. By placing him in tight situations when he must choose his companions, rescuers, and fights, she puts him on the edge, where he must determine when to fight and what to fight for. Countering violence, she displays tender moments when his brothers care for him and when he impresses Cherry Valance with his kindness and frank concern for Johnny. At the end of the plot, which covers only a few weeks, Ponyboy demonstrates the quality of his character and his ability to recover from multiple loss and grief. Although he is far from mature, he has chosen school over life on the run and loyalty to brothers over protracted gang warfare.

Climax: the height of an action, a crisis or turning point from which all behaviors or attitudes are permanently altered and nothing can ever be what it once was. The novel appears to reach a climax with Bob’s death, but the most dramatic height of behavior is the trio’s decision to rescue the children from the burning church. Once Johnny is mortally injured and the trio returns to town to face legal consequences from Bob’s death, Ponyboy is forever changed. His overwhelming grief causes him to repress Johnny’s death and Dally’s self-sacrifice. It takes Johnny’s letter in the paperback book to re-center Ponyboy’s thinking about making choices and suffering the consequences of actions.

Symbol: a concrete object that stands for a complex or abstract idea or relationship and implies more than the literal meaning of the word or words, for example, the colors green and gold, which elucidate Hinton’s study of immaturity and evolving character. Johnny’s letter reminds Ponyboy that their rescue of children from the church was a worthwhile endangerment of life. The greenness of the children contrasts the gold of character that the reporters admire in the heroes at the hospital. Ironically, out of respect for the gold in human character, Johnny asks Ponyboy to direct Dally to a sunset without realizing that Dally is too corrupted from juvenile delinquency and gang life to survive in a normal setting.

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in S. E. Hinton’s *The Outsiders* should include these aspects:

Themes

- maturity
- camaraderie
- violence
- values
- bias
- character
- selflessness
- heroism
- loss
- grief

Motifs

- loss of family members
- learning to compromise
- coping with challenge
- comprehending legal entanglements
- defending the vulnerable

The Importance of Setting

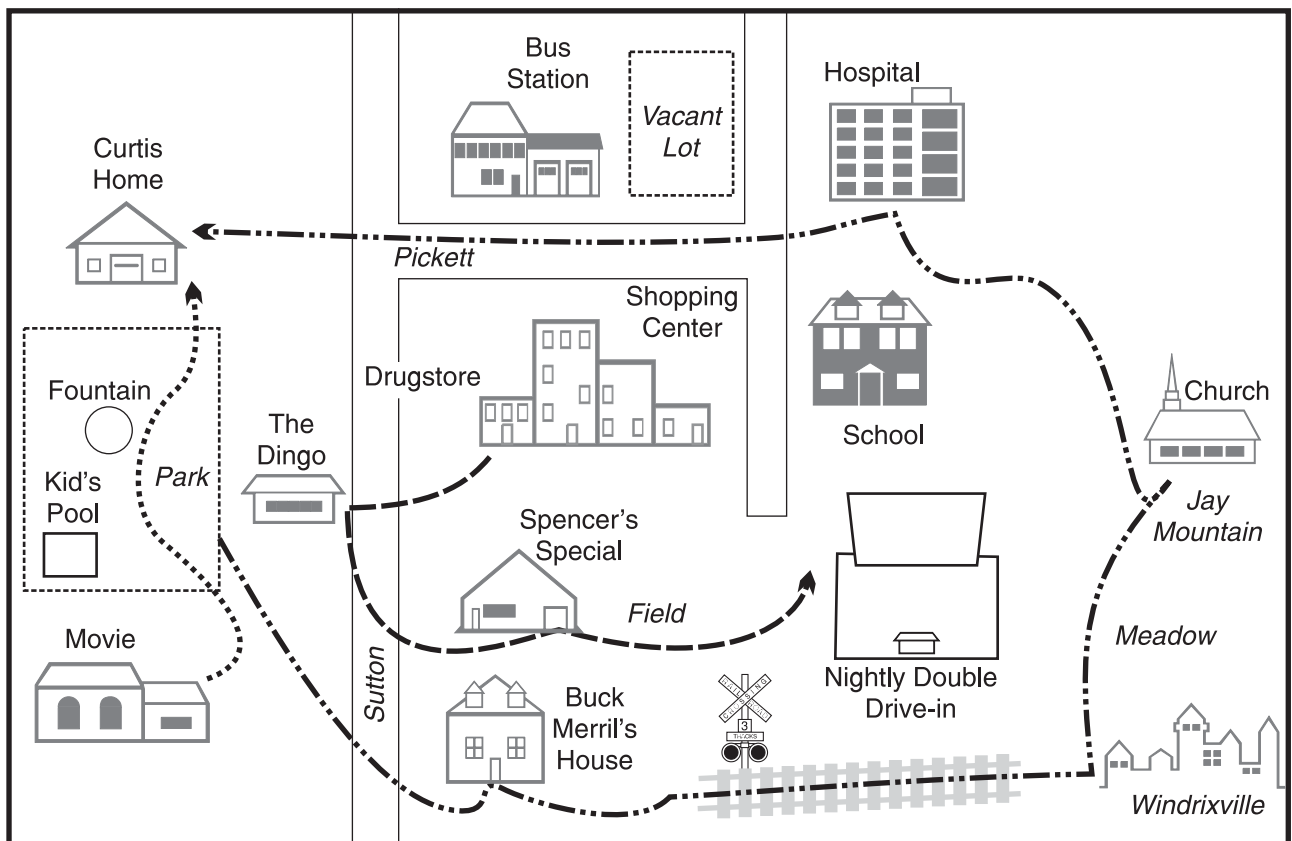
The milieu of *The Outsiders* could be any urban area where boys live out their fantasies on the street or privileged kids drive around in impressive cars. By moving from movie theater to vacant lot to fountain in the park to drugstore at the shopping center to Tasty Freeze, Hinton maintains reader interest in the raffish lifestyle of gang members, who appear to live for the titillation, thrill, and pleasure of the moment. She dramatizes Bob’s death by forcing Johnny to action when he sees Ponyboy drowning in the fountain. Nearby she places the children’s pool, a reminder of how close the characters are to their own childhood. Her return to country road, freight train, school, home, courtroom, and hospital illustrate to the reader that the boys can act out territorial spite, but must ultimately return to the greater sphere of the community to learn to live like regular citizens.

For Ponyboy’s internal setting, Hinton vivifies his nightmares and the moments he awakens to find Johnny sharing their flight from police or the time he rouses from concussion-induced sleep to the soothing sounds of Sodapop by his bed. More down-to-earth than wish-fulfillment, Ponyboy’s perception of events around him moves toward an adult understanding of life. He sees the work places of his brothers and realizes that Darry and Sodapop sacrifice to keep the family together. Retreating from the empty glory of the vacant lot, Ponyboy chooses school as the appropriate place to develop an adult perspective.

Cross-Curricular Sources

For more information about character, growing up, gang warfare, juvenile delinquency, and other subjects and issues deriving from the novel, consult these sources:

- Acting on Your Values*, Rosen Publishing Group
- Characters in Crisis*, Center for Humanities
- Proud to Be Me* (video), Zenger
- No Man Is an Island*, Center for the Humanities
- Stand Tall*, AGS Media



Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each. Title and page numbers are given so that you can note the context from which the item is taken.

1. We're poorer than the Socs and the middle class. (Chapter 1, p. 3)
(Ponyboy, the central intelligence in the novel, tries to differentiate between greasers and Socs. He begins with financial and class differences, noting that the expensively-dressed Socs drive Corvairs and Mustangs, come from privileged homes, and have more money to spend. He also notes that after they commit violence, they "get editorials in the paper for being a public disgrace one day and asset to society the next." He admits that greasers, in contrast, act "like hoods" by stealing, driving jalopies, robbing gas stations, and participating in gang fights.)
2. ... I wanted to start bawling, but you just don't say that to Darry. (Chap. 1, p. 7)
(To Ponyboy, Darry is larger than life—an older brother, gang warrior, full time roofing worker, and father figure. When the rumble begins, Darry leads the way, just as he disciplines his brothers and takes command of the situation when Ponyboy falls asleep on the car seat and carries him to bed. Ponyboy, who discerns the cool, hardened exterior of masculinity and adult responsibility about his brother, withholds his own emotions, even though the Socs have scared him badly by holding a knife to his head.)
3. "You don't ever think," Darry broke in, "not at home or anywhere when it counts." (Chap. 1, p. 13)
(Darry, who wearies of his parental role, recognizes that Ponyboy is intelligent, but he forgets that at fourteen, Ponyboy is unable to reason as well as a grown man. Darry's confusion of intelligence with experience shows in his next comment: "You must think at school, with all those good grades you bring home, and you've always got your nose in a book, but do you ever use your head for common sense? No sirree, bub." Later, Ponyboy dimly perceives that Darry's relationship with Sodapop is different because Soda is not academically oriented. Ponyboy, however, still has a chance at a good education. Having missed his own chance, Darry hopes for a better education for his little brother.)
4. You greasers have a different set of values. (Chap. 2, p. 38)
(In her frank discussion with Ponyboy, Cherry pursues the ques-

tion of how Socs differ from greasers. She realizes that Socs value a cool exterior, which is decked in trendy clothes and paired with expensive vehicles, jewelry, and other trappings of the rich. In contrast, she senses that greasers, who have little external symbolism, display the emotions they feel inside. Rather than berate Ponyboy for the difference, she denigrates herself for being too cool, too aloof, and too eager to say the right thing at the right time.)

5. Nature's first green is gold. (Chap. 5, p. 77)
(The poem that Ponyboy cites describes the evanescence of nature—the fact that green things live briefly, then die. Frost compares the corruption of nature to human corruption in the Garden of Eden, which "sank to grief." He concludes that the natural order of things is for dawn to pass into day and all living things to complete their cycle. Shortly, the verse proves prophetic after Johnny helps rescue the children, then falls under the weight of the collapsing roof and later dies of his injuries.)
6. Suddenly I realized, horrified, that Darry was crying. (Chap. 6, p. 98)
(On his return from Windrixville, Ponyboy is thrilled to learn that his brothers are waiting to see him. He connects first with Sodapop, who is easy to love. Darry, less open with affection, leans in the doorway and cries for his brother. Ponyboy recalls that his brother had not wept even when their parents were killed. The realization that Darry cares for him marks a height of understanding between the brothers. As Ponyboy hugs his brother, he hears Darry's heartbeat and "knew everything was going to be okay now. I had taken the long way around, but I was finally home. To stay.")
7. I had a nightmare the night of Mom and Dad's funeral. (Chap. 7, p. 110)
(Darry and Ponyboy share a tendency toward nightmares. Ponyboy often wakes up screaming, but is unable to remember the details of his dreams. He recalls his torment: "Night after night, for weeks on end, I would dream this dream and wake up in a cold sweat or screaming." A doctor concludes that he has "too much imagination" and suggests more activity—study, reading, drawing, and football. Still, the memory of those terrible nightmares stays with Ponyboy long after the visions fade.")
8. It was their fault Bob was dead; their fault Johnny was dying; their fault Soda and I might get put in a boys' home. I hated them as bitterly and as contemptuously as Dally Winston hated. (Chap. 7, p. 114-115)
(Shortly before the rumble is to start at 7 P.M., Ponyboy's head is aching. As he and Two-Bit seek refreshment at the Tasty Freeze, they see Randy Anderson and the tall boy who tried to drown Ponyboy at the park fountain. Ponyboy's feelings, usually

lighter and less vindictive, coalesce into a bitter contempt. Like Dally, the most hardened member of the gang, Ponyboy vents dark emotion. At this point, he would willingly commit murder.)

9. "I'm sick of it because it doesn't do any good. You can't win, you know that, don't you?" (Chap. 7, p. 117)
(At the moment of Ponyboy's descent into hatred, Randy Anderson, Marcia's boyfriend, pulls Ponyboy aside to talk in private. In his car, Randy credits Ponyboy with heroism, which he read about in the newspaper. Perturbed by the threat of violence between Socs and greasers, Randy admits that he does not intend to come to the rumble. Because of the waste of Bob's life, Randy regrets the anguish of the Sheldon family and the unending feud that keeps one social class at perpetual war with another.)
10. Nobody would write editorials praising Dally. (Chap. 10, p. 154)
(Ponyboy, who has lost both Dally and Johnny, realizes how differently society perceives the two losses. Johnny died "gallant" after committing a heroic act, so people consider him a hero. Dally, who robbed a grocery store and died from police gunfire, perpetuates the label of "violent and young and desperate," which he earned at an ignoble moment in his life. Ponyboy knows the intimate facts about the two victims and recognizes that Dally risked his life to keep the two boys out of trouble. The pain of the moment, on top of the other trauma he has suffered, spins him into unconsciousness.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers with quotations from the novel.

Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. Describe the contrast in settings.
(The novel is set in a town in Oklahoma in places appropriate for teenagers to gather. It begins in the open, where Socs and greasers conflict. Ponyboy, on his way home from a movie, walks alone and unarmed past a typical city park, which is "about two blocks square, with a fountain in the middle and a small swimming pool for the little kids." The next night, Ponyboy accepts an invitation to the Nightly Double drive-in movie. On the way, he and Dally stop in at the drugstore and harass the waitress. They wander on down Sutton to The Dingo, a "pretty rough hangout," where they feel comfortable among other greasers, but exit when a knife fight begins.

After climbing over the back fence and meeting Cherry and Marcia at the movie, Ponyboy, Johnny, and Two-Bit walk the girls toward Two-Bit's car. They confront a blue Mustang, symbol of Soc social class. Johnny and Ponyboy relax with cigarettes in the park, where the blue Mustang returns. Socs assault Ponyboy by holding his head under water in the park fountain. Johnny rescues his friend and stabs Bob.

Fleeing to the only source of help they can count on, the boys run to Buck Merrill's house and interrupt a party to talk with Dally, who gives them money, clothing, and a gun. On his advice, they hop a 3:15 A. M. freight train toward Windrixville and hide from the police in an old abandoned church at the top of Jay Mountain. The fall weather chills them, but they stick it out, even though Ponyboy longs to return home to his brothers. Following a short drive down a red dirt road to a Dairy Queen, the boys return and rescue some children from a fire at the church. Ponyboy is carried away in an ambulance.

At the hospital, Ponyboy is well enough to go home. He joins his brothers in a rumble against the Socs at a vacant lot. At the end of the fight, Ponyboy returns to the hospital to see Johnny. Dally, distraught at Johnny's death, rushes out to rob a grocery store. He telephones the Curtis brothers, who race to the vacant lot to help. There, Ponyboy witnesses Dally's death from police bullets.

The story moves from the Curtis house to the hospital and on to the courtroom, where Ponyboy and Johnny are exonerated for their part in Bob's death. The final events give indistinct pictures of home and school, where Ponyboy works out his turmoil over Johnny's death. Even though these scenes are well suited to teen gathering places, it is characterization and teen dialogue that rule the narrative.)

2. Explain the situation at the Curtis home.
(The Curtis brothers—twenty-year-old Darry, sixteen-year-old Sodapop, and fourteen-year-old Ponyboy—form an alliance after the death of their parents in an automobile accident eight months before the story begins. Darry, an intelligent, well-liked, athletic student, gives up an athletic scholarship in order to work two jobs and take care of his brothers. He grows morose at times from the tedious, repetitive nature of roofing, parenting chores, and the hardheadedness of his brothers. Ponyboy is the most immature of the three and the one in greatest need of guidance. Sodapop, who quit school to work at the DX service station, does his share of home chores and serves as a buffer between his older and younger brothers.

On a domestic level, the boys work out the necessities of keeping house. Each shoulders chores such as washing, ironing, cleaning, cooking, and shopping. Their system is simple: whoever gets up first cooks breakfast. The other two then wash dishes.

In terms of family relationships, Darry, as head of household, comprehends the emotional trauma Ponyboy has suffered in losing his parents. Darry also understands Sodapop's grief at losing his horse, Mickey Mouse, then Sandy. Still, Darry has difficulty accepting the fact that Ponyboy is careless about following directions, such as not wandering the streets alone and tempting fights with the Soc gang. The threat of separation and Ponyboy's placement in a home serves as a unifying device to make all three work harder to keep their family safe and together.)

3. How does Bob Sheldon die?

(While Johnny and Ponyboy relax and cool off in the park at 2:30 A. M., Randy Anderson, Bob Sheldon, and three other Socs in the blue Mustang return and enter greaser territory. Obviously drunk, they stagger toward the greasers. Bob sneers at the boys who "picked up our girls.")

Johnny and Ponyboy, who realize their peril against five Socs, blanch at the insults of "white trash with long hair" and "dirt." Ponyboy, pushed to the limit, spits at the invaders. Bob decides to have David duck him in the fountain. As Ponyboy nears drowning, Johnny intercedes by stabbing Bob. Ponyboy comes to full consciousness and finds Bob "lying there in the moonlight, doubled up and still.")

4. What causes Johnny and Ponyboy to come back to face the police?

*(At the abandoned church, Johnny and Ponyboy weary of bologna sandwiches, reading *Gone with the Wind*, playing poker, and shivering. On the fifth day, Dally arrives in Buck's T-bird and takes them to the Dairy Queen. He brings a letter from Sodapop that deepens Ponyboy's longing for home. Dally discloses that "all-out warfare" between greasers and Socs has broken out in the city and that there is to be a rumble the following night at the vacant lot. He concludes, "If they win, things go on as usual. If we do, they stay outa our territory but good.")*

Well into the conversation, Johnny decides, "We're going back and turn ourselves in." The statement surprises Ponyboy and Dally. Johnny continues, "I ain't got no record with the fuzz and it was self-defense. Ponyboy and Cherry can testify to that. And I don't aim to stay in that church all my life." His logic is both noble and pragmatic—he doesn't want Darry and Soda to worry about Ponyboy and doesn't want to live in hideouts the rest of his life.)

5. How does Ponyboy recover from his friends' deaths?

(Ponyboy's disturbing symptoms appear soon after the deaths of Johnny and Dally. He runs into doors, trips over coffee tables, loses things, and walks home in his stocking feet. His appetite

wanes and he fails to concentrate on homework. Mr. Syme, his English teacher, offers him a deal: If Ponyboy will write a good semester theme, he can pass English with a C. Ponyboy demonstrates little enthusiasm for the offer.

*A blow-up between Darry and Ponyboy causes Sodapop to run away from home to escape constant bickering. The conflict forces Darry to abrade the hurt in Ponyboy that still misses Johnny. Darry reminds his little brother that he can't quit living because of the loss of a friend. Sunk into grief once more, Ponyboy turns to Johnny's copy of *Gone with the Wind*. A letter falls out. Its poignant words about death and the appreciation of life force Ponyboy to see that he is wasting his life. He calls Mr. Syme and gets final instructions on his paper, in which he tells about the span of events that took three lives.)*

Questions 6-8 (Interpretive Level)

6. Explain how Johnny's letter helps Ponyboy see the gang situation more clearly.

(The letter moves Ponyboy's thinking from a deeply personal level to a broader appreciation of boys who "jumped at their own shadows." He envisions boys who "watched sunsets and looked at stars and ached for something better." He wants to help these alienated boys stop hating and learn to find some good in the world before it is too late, as it was for Dally.)

As Ponyboy widens his awareness of other teenagers, he sees that the problem of teen violence is too vast "to be just a personal thing." He perceives that "someone should tell their side of the story, and maybe people would understand then and wouldn't be so quick to judge a boy by the amount of hair oil he wore." At this point, Ponyboy realizes how important this need is to him. He undertakes the writing of the theme as a tribute to Johnny and Dally.)

7. Discuss the importance of social class in the novel.

(The conflict between Socs and greasers begins with privilege. Greasers are kids who make a bad beginning in the world because circumstances are against them. The Curtis brothers, for example, have no parents and have to scramble for a living. There are no dollars left for extras. To fulfill their longing for a little something above subsistence, the boys rely on gang togetherness. Their camaraderie fills in for abusive, neglectful parents, ragged clothes, and lack of social graces. In short, membership gives them a feeling of pride.)

In contrast to the have-nots, the privileged upper middle-class kids band together as the Socs. Delineated by trendy clothing, expensive cars, and other details, they recede from their families by growing aloof and uncaring. Turning to drunkenness, late night carousing, and disorderly conduct for kicks, the Socs, like the greasers, need a sense of unity to bolster their pride.)

8. Explain how violence helps the young people vent their emotions.

(Violence is a natural outlet for youthful high spirits and misguided emotions. When Bob learns that Ponyboy and Johnny have escorted Cherry and Marcia from the drive-in, he naturally wants revenge against boys whom he considers well below him in worth. He chooses humiliation as an appropriate retort to Ponyboy's intrusion on his life. After Bob's death, the whole body of Socs demands satisfaction from the greasers, who are ready for the fracas, even if it means injury, death, or imprisonment.)

Before the fight, however, Randy stands out as a misfit, a dissenter from the group mentality. Rather than fight to maintain pride, Randy wants to run away, a decision which Ponyboy counsels against. The confrontation between Randy and Ponyboy allows Ponyboy to see Randy as an individual, unlabeled as either Soc or greaser. The event helps Ponyboy make the final jump from mindless gang membership to respectable, maturing person.)

Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. Contrast Hinton's depiction of male and female characters.

(One critical complaint about Hinton's characters is her reliance on bigger-than-life male figures, swaggering, fighting, and posturing in masculine glory. Because the book was written during Hinton's own growth years, this aggrandizement of teenage males appears to be a normal manifestation of her own immaturity. However, critics are correct in pointing to the underdevelopment of female characters, such as Cherry, the only girl with a speaking role in the novel. On the periphery hover Evie, Sandy, Marcia, and Sylvia, shadow images who are too thin even to be stereotypes.)

In order to create a realistic teen microcosm, young adult fiction requires a more incisive depiction of both sexes. Possibly, Hinton was aware of her shortcomings, but could not evade her own prejudices and impressions. To be fair to Hinton, it is necessary to admit that other writers create similar masculine bastions with lessened or absent roles for female speakers, as is the case with William Golding's Lord of the Flies, Robert Cormier's The Chocolate War, J. D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye, and John Knowles' A Separate Peace. In each case, like Hinton, their concentration on the coming maturity of males has resulted in classic young adult fiction.)

10. Discuss why young readers identify with this novel.

(Despite its shortcomings and age, The Outsiders obviously makes a strong link with young adult feelings, as evidenced by continued sales and the success of the movie version, for which Susan Hinton oversaw the writing of the screenplay.)

Perhaps readers, whether rural or urban, identify more with emotional trauma, confusion, and alienation than with scenes of gang warfare and lawlessness. The book's sensitive recreation of a fourteen-year-old's coming to knowledge about friends, brothers, loss, and self is believable and moving. Its honesty touches readers and creates a sympathy that buoys the character through wooden scenes that lack realism and motivation. Overall, it is the sincerity of Ponyboy that carries the novel, keeping it at the top among reader favorites.)

Questions 11-13 (Creative Level)

11. Explain in a short speech what maturity traits Darry demonstrates at age twenty that Ponyboy lacks at age fourteen.J
12. Explain the significance of the following details to the theme of vulnerability:
 - a. Gone with the Wind
 - b. sleeping next to a brother
 - c. chocolate cake for breakfast
 - d. sale of Mickey Mouse
 - e. arrival of Johnny's mother at the hospital
 - f. Darry's embarrassment at leading the greasers against the Socs
 - g. Sodapop's weeping when Sandy moves to Florida
 - h. Cherry's attraction to Dally
 - i. Johnny's terror of Socs
 - j. "Nothing gold can stay"
13. Select poems what embody ideals that typify Darry, Sodapop, Randy, Cherry, Johnny, Dally, Bob, and Ponyboy. Analyze the poems as simply as Johnny restates Robert Frost's poem.

Across the Curriculum

Science and Health

1. Compose a chalkboard lecture on the causes of emotional distress. List reasons for Ponyboy's nightmares and Johnny's fear of gang violence.
2. Write an extended discussion of the effects of a broken back on feeling, mobility, and survival.
3. Describe aloud the types of wounds the boys receive in the rumble. Explain the dangers of concussion.

4. Suggest improvements to the menus at the Curtis house, particularly at breakfast. List more nutritious foods that would be inexpensive and easier to make than chocolate cake.

Journalism

1. List questions an interviewer, ambulance driver, or police investigator might ask three boys who rescued children from a fire at peril to their lives. Include inquiries about their background, injuries, and plans for the future.

Cinema and Drama

1. View several realistic films and television series on troubled teens, for example, *Tex, That Was Then, This Is Now, Rumble Fish, A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, Lisa Bright and Dark, Member of the Wedding, Daughters of the Dust, The Cross and the Switchblade, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Sounder, and West Side Story*. Discuss with a small group the lasting effects of low self-esteem, rootlessness, and neglect.
2. Write several conversations that are only implied, such as Darry and Sodapop's concern when Ponyboy runs away, Randy's comments about violence, Sandy's goodbye to Sodapop, Mr. Syme's questions about Ponyboy's absences, Johnny's interest in the Civil War, Buck's summons to Dally, and Cherry's explanation to Bob of her interest in greasers.

Geography

1. Compose a first person account of flight by freight train at 3:15 A.M., the view from Jay Mountain, and the beauties of a sunrise over the mist-covered valley.

Art

1. Using desk-top publishing or other artistic media, design a brochure naming requirements for receiving an athletic scholarship, advertisement for the DX station or a roofing service, list of rules for track meets, instructions for peroxidizing hair, movie poster featuring Paul Newman, schematic drawing of the structure of the abandoned church, first aid for near-drowning or knife wound, list of laws concerning guardianship of orphans or self-defense, business card for the doctor or manager of The Dingo, headstone for Johnny or the Curtises, bus schedule from the hospital and fees per fare, bill of sale for Mickey

Mouse, or newspaper headline about the stabbing in the park or Dally's death in the vacant lot.

2. Draw a story board for a movie version of *The Outsiders*. Show how the action would suit the usual hangouts of the Socs and greasers, neutral territory at the movies, Tasty Freeze, freight train, school, and the Curtis home.
3. Draw a character web representing the interconnectedness of members of the greasers and Socs and the link from both sides to Cherry, Johnny, Two-Bit, Ponyboy, and Randy.

Economics

1. Describe in a short speech the effect of pride, money, education, prestige, and status on Socs. Explain why greasers hate boys in checked shirts and boys who date cheerleaders and suspect people who drive Mustangs and Sting Rays.
2. Write a theme in which you explain Darry's rapid development from older teen to guardian of younger brothers. Note the price he pays for abandoning an opportunity to go to college. Estimate what a roofer earns and how much Darry spends on Sodapop and Ponyboy.

Social Studies and Current Events

1. Lead a debate about whether Darry's brothers should be placed in a foster home or halfway house. List reasons why a judge might assume that Darry is not a firm disciplinarian.
2. Amplify the background elements of the story, particularly gang fights, teen pregnancy, delinquency, poor school records, run-aways, and trouble with the police.

Psychology

1. Compose chalkboard definitions of nightmares, denial, grief, loss, trauma, hero worship, and adolescence. Apply each to Ponyboy.
2. Explain to a small group what survival techniques help Ponyboy and Johnny get out of town and hide in the church for five days while living on bologna sandwiches.

3. Make an oral report on the importance of family loyalty. Contrast the home atmosphere that depresses Johnny with the fighting and arguments that cause Sodapop to leave home.
4. Organize a discussion of nightmares. Why would the Curtises' sudden death cause Ponyboy to have unfathomable dreams and need to sleep next to his brother?

Mathematics and Computers

1. Using desktop publishing, create a family tree of the Curtis family. Show where Sandy and her grandmother belong.
2. Create a bulletin board illustrating current census figures concerning juvenile delinquency, drop-outs, and gang fighting, particularly for Oklahoma and the rest of the American Southwest.

Language Arts

1. Compose individual posters explaining these terms: rumble, switchblade, West Side, reformatory, hearing, boys' home, spinal injury, concussion, paralysis, slang, Paul Newman, *Gone with the Wind*, and Robert Frost.
2. Compose a short speech in which you account for gang members' disillusion with rumbles.
3. Read aloud images from the novel that appeal to the five senses, such as "All the lower valley was covered with mist, and sometimes little pieces of it broke off and floated away in small clouds," and "To my surprise, the ground blurred and I felt tears running down my cheeks."
4. Note how a minor character elucidates the themes of heroism, safety, maturity, and violence, particularly Jerry, Curly, Cherry, farmer, parents of the children rescued from the church, and the driver who offers Ponyboy a ride.
5. Compose a short segment of dialogue in which you become a peripheral character in the novel. Consider taking the role of teacher, police officer, onlooker, picnicker, farmer, journalist, train conductor, drugstore owner, nurse, judge, or parent of a Soc.

6. Memorize and recite Robert Frost's "Nothing Gold Can Stay." Explain its implications for an immature teenager.

Education

Brainstorm ways that classroom teachers can assist students in coping with personal and family trauma, particularly through keeping a journal, reading young adult fiction, discussing personal topics aloud, reading aloud, pantomime, and writing first-person poetry.

Student Involvement Activities

1. Compose a theme in which you compare Ponyboy and Dally to other teen misfits, particularly the protagonist in *The True Confession of Charlotte Doyle*, Huck Finn in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* or *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Finny in *A Separate Peace*, Henry in *Red Badge of Courage*, Adam Farmer in *I Am the Cheese*, Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher in the Rye*, or Frankie Addams in *Member of the Wedding*.
2. Rewrite passages of conversation or teen vernacular from the novel, for example, the letter on p. 81. Replace slang with standard English. Make a list of grammatical changes and slang words that mark the greasers' style. Note the contrast in Cherry Valance's language as she talks with Ponyboy.
3. Citing specific examples of loyalty, compassion, jealousy, and conflict, compare the relationship of Ponyboy, Darry, and Sodapop to siblings in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, *Black Boy*, *Cheaper by the Dozen*, *Tex*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.
4. Compose a letter to Ponyboy in which you offer sympathy for his injuries and grief. Suggest ways he can recover and grow from his mistakes, for example, by explaining teen problems in a theme for Mr. Syme or finding a job to help out at home.
5. List props and costumes needed for a stage or movie version of *The Outsiders*.
6. Add a chapter to the book written from the point of view of Darry, Sodapop, Mr. Syme, Jerry, nurse, track coach, reporter, judge,

Cherry, Sandy, or Marcia. Conclude the story of the Curtis family by detailing what happens to each brother in the aftermath of the rumble.

7. Write an extended definition of "outsider." Express the alienation that leads to Ponyboy's errors in judgment. Apply the word to Darry, Dally, Johnny, Cherry, and Randy.
8. Compose a plan to help Darry, Sodapop, and Ponyboy. Suggest ways to earn money to improve their lifestyle and recover the use of Mickey Mouse. Set up a division of chores so Darry does not carry too much of the load.
9. Read other S. E. Hinton novels, particularly *Tex*. List aspects of her writing that occur in later works, for example, young people facing dilemmas, difficult choices, temptations, poor school performance, troubled relationships with parents, and violence as an answer to social difficulties.
10. Watch a video of *West Side Story*. Lead a discussion of similarities in themes, including violence, loyalty, social class differences, poverty, pride, and kinship. Cite lines from the lyrics of song that apply to *The Outsiders*, particularly "Gee Officer Krupke" and "When You're a Jet."

Alternate Assessment

1. List examples of fairness, honor, humiliation, curiosity, loyalty, loss, and immaturity among the greasers.
2. Compile a list of actions and attitudes that demonstrate Ponyboy's attempts to grow up.
3. Compose a scene in which Cherry comforts Ponyboy for the loss of two friends.
4. Make a character list and explain the flaws of each.
5. Account for the importance of gangs to the Socs and greasers.

Vocabulary

In the blanks below, replace the boldfaced slang expressions with standard English from the list that follows. You may use some answers more than once.

alcoholic	control	fighter	police	succeeded
anticipate	critical	hit	pretense	support
attacked	eager	just	proud	terrible
bothering	easy	losing	receiving	thrive
cigarette	enjoy	money	relax	vanishing
challenge	everywhere	mouth	spending	wait

- _____ 1. I groaned and it wasn't all **fake-out**.
- _____ 2. That **bum** haircut made my ears stick out.
- _____ 3. Ol' Tim sure can **pack a punch**.
- _____ 4. Wish I had me a **weed**.
- _____ 5. He's **blowin'** his loot from that last race.
- _____ 6. I'll bet you think the Socs have it **made**.
- _____ 7. When you're a gang, you **stick up for** the members.
- _____ 8. Neither one of my brothers had ever been beaten in a fight, but I wasn't exactly **itching** for someone to break the record.
- _____ 9. "**Hold up!**" a familiar voice yelled.
- _____ 10. I'll **take on** anyone.
- _____ 11. There was another column about just Darry and Soda and me: how Darry worked on two jobs at once and **made good** at both of them and about his outstanding record at school.
- _____ 12. Where you gonna get the **dough**, little man?
- _____ 13. I remembered Cherry's voice: Things are rough **all over**.
- _____ 14. I'm **pretty bad off**, ain't I, Pony?
- _____ 15. You learn to **cool it**.
- _____ 16. I ain't got no record with the **fuzz** and it was self-defense.
- _____ 17. Johnny was high-strung anyway, a nervous wreck from getting **belted** every time he turned around and from hearing his parents fight all the time.
- _____ 18. We're sophisticated—**cool** to the point of not feeling anything.
- _____ 19. Like the way you **dig** sunsets, Pony.
- _____ 20. It wasn't Johnny's fault Bob was a **boozehound** and Cherry went for boys who were bound for trouble.
- _____ 21. Gotta **cancer stick**, Johnny-cake?
- _____ 22. Two-Bit got **jumped** a few days ago.
- _____ 23. He a pretty good **bopper**?
- _____ 24. An' you can shut your **trap**, Johnny Cade, 'cause we all know you ain't wanted at home, either.
- _____ 25. And Darry, you ought to try to understand him more, and quit **bugging** him about every little mistake he makes.

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Identification (30 points)

Identify the character described using the names from the list below. You may use some names more than once.

Bob	Darry	Jack	Mr. Sheldon	Sandy
Buck	doctor	Jerry	Mr. Syme	Sodapop
Cherry	Evie	Johnny	Paul	Steve
Curly	farmer	Mr. Curtis	Ponyboy	Tim
Dally	Hank	Mrs. O'Briant	Randy	Two-Bit

- _____ 1. goes to Florida to live with grandparents.
- _____ 2. encourages Ponyboy to write about personal experience.
- _____ 3. accompanies Ponyboy in the ambulance.
- _____ 4. brags about a long criminal record.
- _____ 5. analyzes a poem by Robert Frost.
- _____ 6. is knocked unconscious after his jacket catches fire.
- _____ 7. refuses to see his mother.
- _____ 8. is in a reformatory at the time of the rumble.
- _____ 9. robs a grocery store.
- _____ 10. strains his muscles by carrying roofing materials.
- _____ 11. visits Ponyboy while he is recovering from Johnny's death.
- _____ 12. describes how much she loved Bob.
- _____ 13. offers Cherry and Marcia a ride home from the drive-in.
- _____ 14. runs away from home to avoid hearing an argument.
- _____ 15. bruised Johnny's face with his rings.

Part II: Completion (20 points)

Fill in each blank with a word from the list that follows.

aspirin	chocolate cake	fountain	Ponyboy	Sting Ray
bologna	Coke	Mickey Mouse	Socs	switchblade
Cherry	Dally	peroxide	Sodapop	Two-Bit

- 1. At the drive-in, _____ throws a _____ in Dally's face.
- 2. To evade police, _____ allows Johnny to _____ his hair.
- 3. _____ strikes _____ on the back to put out the flames.
- 4. _____ grieved over the sale of _____.
- 5. The _____ threaten to cut Ponyboy's hair and nearly kill him in the _____.

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- _____ 1. Ponyboy never learns why he should “stay gold.”
- _____ 2. Dally, Ponyboy, and Johnny sneak over the fence at the drive-in.
- _____ 3. During the rumble, Sodapop comes to Paul’s rescue.
- _____ 4. Greasers take no interest in the type of cars driven by Socs.
- _____ 5. Johnny’s parents change their attitudes toward their son after he is placed in the critical ward.
- _____ 6. Darry fears that his brothers will be put in a home if the police raid the rumble.
- _____ 7. Sodapop is the only member of the Curtis family to experience nightmares.
- _____ 8. Dally drives to Jay Mountain and treats Johnny and Ponyboy to barbecue and banana splits.
- _____ 9. Ponyboy is usually placed in classes with smart students.
- _____ 10. Johnny is horrified by the stabbing at the park fountain.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

- 1. Discuss why Cherry becomes a spy.
- 2. Describe Darry’s home responsibilities.
- 3. Describe how Johnny and Ponyboy evade capture.
- 4. Analyze the meaning of violence in the lives of gang members.
- 5. Contrast Ponyboy and Dally in their reactions to death.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Short Answer (20 points)

Supply an answer to each of the following questions.

- _____ 1. Who confesses to an attraction to Dally?
- _____ 2. Who states that he would have “let those kids burn to death”?
- _____ 3. Where had Ponyboy been the night the Socs put a blade to his head?
- _____ 4. How do Ponyboy and Johnny travel to Jay Mountain?
- _____ 5. Who clowns with the reporters and tries to take the policeman’s gun at the hospital?
- _____ 6. Who lies about Ponyboy having a motorcycle accident?
- _____ 7. Who daydreams about living in the country and buying Sodapop a horse?
- _____ 8. Who turned down a scholarship?
- _____ 9. Who confides to Ponyboy that he plans to get married?
- _____ 10. Who accompanies Ponyboy to the hospital in the ambulance?

Part II: Description (30 points)

Place an X by every true statement about Ponyboy.

- _____ 1. earns a bad reputation on New York City’s West Side
- _____ 2. goes with Cherry to buy popcorn
- _____ 3. gets eggs from the refrigerator to cook for breakfast
- _____ 4. always carries a switchblade
- _____ 5. worries about being put in a home
- _____ 6. plays poker with Johnny
- _____ 7. breaks a window to get into the the abandoned church
- _____ 8. loses feeling below the waist
- _____ 9. challenges the police with an empty gun
- _____ 10. dates Sandy
- _____ 11. is small for fourteen
- _____ 12. wants to quit school to work full time at the DX
- _____ 13. calls an English teacher late at night
- _____ 14. is unaware he has a concussion
- _____ 15. nearly drowns a greaser in the park fountain

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part III: Matching (20 points)

Match the following endings of sentences with their beginnings.

- _____ 1. Some of their parents came by to thank me and
- _____ 2. I've been thinking about it, and that poem, that guy that wrote it,
- _____ 3. The police came by to question us and
- _____ 4. Darry hasn't got the slightest notion where you're at and
- _____ 5. Johnny was high-strung anyway, a nervous wreck
- _____ 6. We have troubles
- _____ 7. Then he gave Johnny a lecture on girls and
- _____ 8. We're sophisticated—
- _____ 9. I don't really think a beer blast on the river bottom is super-cool, but
- _____ 10. I don't know why I could talk to her,

- A. he meant you're gold when you're a kid, like green.
- B. how a sneaking little broad like Sylvia would get him into a lot of trouble.
- C. it is nearly killing him.
- D. cool to the point of not feeling anything.
- E. I know it was worth it.
- F. you've never even heard of.
- G. maybe for the same reason she could talk to me.
- H. from getting belted every time he turned around and from hearing his parents fight all the time.
- I. we told them as much as we could.
- J. I'll rave about one to a girl-friend just to be saying something.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain why Darry seems embarrassed at the beginning of the rumble.
2. Prove that the Curtis brothers are still a family.
3. Explain why greasers stick together.
4. Account for Dally's grin of triumph.
5. Discuss why Randy comes to visit Ponyboy.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. pretense | 14. critical |
| 2. terrible | 15. relax |
| 3. hit | 16. police |
| 4. cigarette | 17. hit |
| 5. spending | 18. proud |
| 6. easy | 19. enjoy |
| 7. support | 20. alcoholic |
| 8. eager | 21. cigarette |
| 9. wait | 22. attacked |
| 10. challenge | 23. fighter |
| 11. succeeded | 24. mouth |
| 12. money | 25. bothering |
| 13. everywhere | |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Identification (30 points)

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Sandy | 9. Dally |
| 2. Mr. Syme | 10. Darry |
| 3. Jerry | 11. Randy |
| 4. Dally | 12. Cherry |
| 5. Johnny | 13. Two-Bit |
| 6. Ponyboy | 14. Sodapop |
| 7. Johnny | 15. Bob |
| 8. Curly | |

Part II: Completion (20 points)

- Cherry, Coke
- Ponyboy, peroxide
- Dally, Ponyboy
- Sodapop, Mickey Mouse
- Socs, fountain

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T |
| 2. T | 7. F |
| 3. F | 8. T |
| 4. F | 9. T |
| 5. F | 10. T |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Short Answer (30 points)

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| 1. Cherry | 5. Dally |
| 2. Randy | 7. Ponyboy |
| 3. movie | 8. Darry |
| 4. train | 9. Sodapop |
| 5. Sodapop | 10. Jerry Wood |

Part II: Description (30 points)

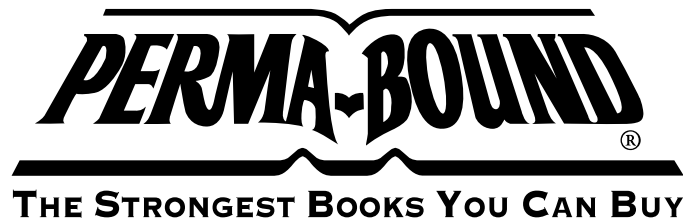
- | | | |
|------|------|-------|
| 1. | 6. X | 11. X |
| 2. X | 7. X | 12. |
| 3. X | 8. | 13. X |
| 4. | 9. | 14. X |
| 5. X | 10. | 15. |

Part III: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. E | 6. F |
| 2. A | 7. B |
| 3. I | 8. D |
| 4. C | 9. J |
| 5. H | 10. G |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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