

THE OUTSIDERS

Summer Reading Journal Project

Grade 8

Required Reading: *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton

Duration: June-August 2016

Motivation of the Required Reading:

S.E. Hinton's novel addresses the changes youth experience during adolescence. Today's youth are able to relate to the themes and characters in *The Outsiders* because of the similar characterization, self-exploration, identity, and coping with group conflict. The plot and identifiable characters will allow students to relate the story to their own lives.

The Summer Reading Journal Project:

The Summer Reading Journal Project is based on themes revolving around identity, the individual vs. the group, heroism, innocence, experience, family, media influence, and crisis. The purpose of the journal project is to encourage students to gain an appreciation for literature, self-exploration and growth. The main theme surrounding identity is key for 8th grade students because they are leaving childhood transitioning to high school.

The Summer Reading Journal Project allows students to reflect on the novel as a whole and their identity. Students will create a journal based on the novel which will include ten designated journal entries.

Materials needed:

- Required Reading book
- Composition Book (Journal)
- Various decorative materials for Journal Cover

Objectives:

- Students will identify and discover their self-identity
- Students will create a Journal Cover that portrays their personal identity.
- Students will evaluate the dynamics of cliques and gangs and assess if they are necessary during youth.

- Students will compare and contrast the 1960s and 2014, in regards to fashion, media, music, and movies.
- Students will write Journal entries that will demonstrate critical thinking and personal reflection on the novel and different themes.
- Students will compare and contrast the Greasers and Socs, and relate the gangs to the groups/cliques at their secondary school
- Students will write an autobiography sharing personal information about family, interests, and beliefs.
- Students will communicate their reflections, ideas, and questions about *The Outsiders* and related themes within story
- Students will analyze the influence of media in the novel and in society
- Students will compose a variety of writing assignments relating to themes, characters, identity, and self-identity.

The Journal: Over the course of the summer, students will write journal entries based on the provided prompts that relate to the novel. Students are required to decorate the cover of their journals (10 points) based on their personalities. Journal entries will either be personal or a reflection of the novels themes and characterization. Each journal entry will be:

- A reflective experience
- 10-20 minutes of writing
- Evaluated on grammar and thoughtful completion
- Worth 10 points each (Total of 10=100 points)
- Written from a prompt provided by the teacher

The journal entries will be written from prompts provided. Students must include the writing prompts in their journals. Students are expected to write 10-20 minutes, depending on the writing prompt. The prompt is an attempt to expose students to several writing activities through out the unit. The entries will vary from questions in regards to one character, a theme, an issue, or an event. The journals are mostly creative and personal; answering prompts that deal with the novel, movie and the self.

Journal Entry #1: Outside Identity!

Theme: Identity – Individuality vs. The Group

Writing Prompt: journal entry, students will write about their personal identity and their group of friend’s identity? What is your personal identity? What is your group of friend’s identity?

Journal Entry #2: The impression of the 1960s

Theme: Setting and Issues of the 1960s

Writing Prompt: After reading the first chapter of *The Outsiders*, what is your impression of the setting, including time period and place? Discuss the ideas and perceptions of setting? How does it relate to 2014? Are the years similar or different? What are 2 differences between the 1960s and 2014?

Journal Entry #3: To be or not to be?

Theme: Characterization

Writing Prompt: Describe the characters: Ponyboy, Soda, Darry, Steve, Two-Bit, Johnny, and Cherry. Be sure to include:

- Characters name
- Physical characteristics
- Personality traits
- Relationship to other characters
- Any other relevant information

Also discuss the differences and similarities of each character

- Are the identities the same? Different?
- Does gender play a role in identity or position?
- What makes the characters different? Money? House? Clothes?

Are any of characters similar to you? If so, who? How?

Journal Entry #4: Who Am I?

Theme: Self-identity

Writing Prompt: Who are you? What makes you unique? What factors influence who you are? (family, friends) Why?

Write about a particular event that has impacted your life and has that has shaped who you are. Include a photo, drawing, or object that represents this event and explain why you chose the item.

Journal Entry #5: Clash of the Cliques

Theme: Greasers vs. Socs

Writing Prompt: Describe Ponyboy's neighborhood, The East, what is it like? What is the West like? What are the differences between the East and West? What are the Similarities? What is the difference between a Greaser and a Soc?

Journal Entry # 6: Staying Gold!

Theme: Innocence vs. Experience

Writing Prompt: Why do you think Johnny killed Bob?

- Do you think you would have reacted differently?
 - What could have been some alternatives?
 - If you were Ponyboy and Johnny, whom would you turn to for help? Why do you think they went to Dally?
 - Why do you think Ponyboy and Johnny's situation prompted Ponyboy's recitation of "Nothing Gold Can Stay?"
 - Who is innocent? Who has experience? (all characters) Is Dally innocent or experienced? What about the rest of the Greasers?
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Journal Entry #7: This is who I am.

Theme: Biography

Writing Prompt: Finish the following statements:

- The best thing about me is ..., and the worst thing about me is ...?
Explain why you chose those best things and worst things?
 - How does your identity relate to Ponyboy's?
 - What are there similarities? Differences?
 - How important is it to celebrate your identity?
 - What is a biography? How does a biography represent a person's identity?
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Journal Entry # 8: Are they heroes?

Theme: Heroism and the Media

Writing Prompt:

- Why does Johnny decide to turn himself in?
 - Why did Ponyboy, Johnny run into the burning church to save the kids?
 - Ponyboy, Johnny, and Dally heroes? Why or why not?
 - How does media's bias affect society's treatment of issues, individuals, and groups/gangs? (relate back to the writing prompt)
 - Find an article that portrays an heroic act? Or displays an example of being a Hero.
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Journal Entry #9: The Family Factor

Theme: Influence of Family

Writing Prompt: What did Ponyboy learn at the end of Chp. 6 about his family? How does the Curtis family operate in their house? How are the gang (Steve, Two-Bit, Dally, Johnny, etc.) considered family? What threat does Juvenile court have on the Curtis family? How does Ponyboy's dream affect his family? How does Randy's talk with Ponyboy demonstrate similarities in Greasers and Socs? How can family influence a person?

Journal Entry #10: Take My Advice!

Theme: Crisis and Help

Writing Prompt: Why does Dally handle the situation the way he does? How do Ponyboy and the other Greasers deal with similar pressures? How do you handle a crisis? Where could Dally gone for help?

- What is the best thing to do in a crisis? Who would be a good person to talk to if you are involved in something you don't think you can handle?
- Why did Johnny leave *Gone With The Wind* for Ponyboy?
- What significance does *Gone With The Wind* have for Johnny? How is the novel suppose to "help" Ponyboy?