

The Outsiders

by S. E. Hinton

Sample Pages

A Teaching Guide

By Margaret Whisnant

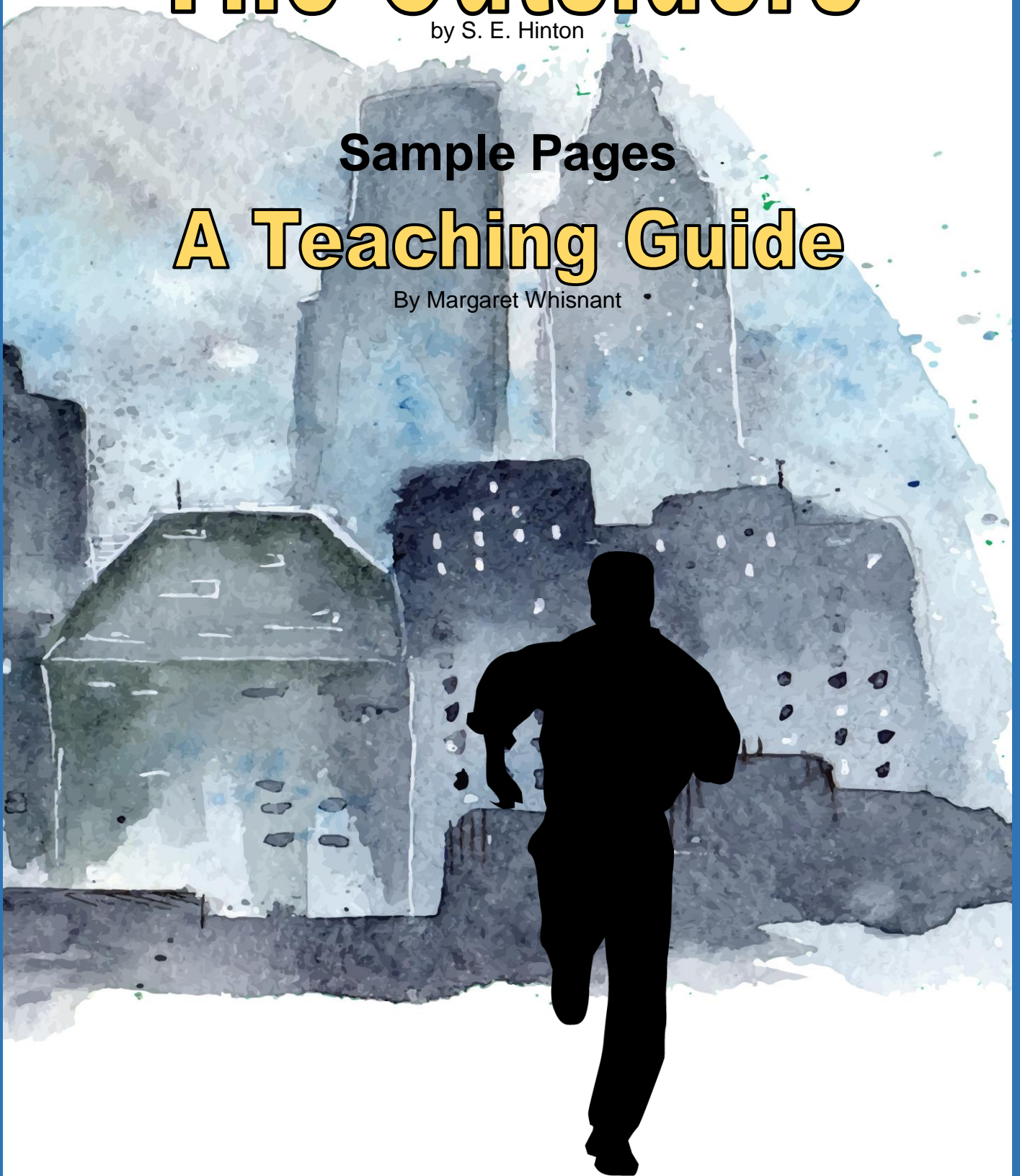


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Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1

- Fourteen-year-old Ponyboy Curtis is leaving the movie theater and walking home alone.
- Ponyboy has a sixteen-year-old brother, Soda. His oldest brother, Darry, is twenty years old. Ponyboy loves Soda better than anyone, but Darry is hard and firm and treats him like a kid.
- Ponyboy and his brothers are poor kids from the East Side. They are part of a group who call themselves “greasers.” They are almost like hoods.
- Ponyboy doesn’t get into trouble. His parents were killed in an auto wreck, and he doesn’t want to do anything that might cause him to be separated from his brothers.
- Ponyboy begins wishing he was not walking home alone because he could get jumped by the Socs, the West-Side rich kids. He has a high IQ and makes good grades, but he hasn’t used his head by being out alone.
- When he is almost two blocks from home, a red Corvair pulls up beside Ponyboy, and five Socs get out. One of them pulls a knife and flips the blade open, threatening to cut Ponyboy’s hair.
- Ponyboy thinks of sixteen-year-old Johnny Cade, who has once been jumped and beaten by four Socs.
- The Socs knock Ponyboy down. It occurs to him that they could kill him, and he starts screaming. One of the Socs stuffs a handkerchief in his mouth.
- The Socs run when Ponyboy’s brothers and other greasers arrive. Ponyboy is cut, bruised, and shaken, but his encounter with the Socs is mild compared to Johnny’s experience.
- Two of the four greasers who chased the Socs to their car are Steve Randal, Soda’s best buddy, and Two-Bit Mathews, who likes to make wisecracks.
- Dallas Winston—Dally—has lived three years on the wild side of New York and is tougher, colder, and meaner than the other greasers. The police have a file on him.
- Johnny Cade is the gang’s pet, everyone’s kid brother. His father beats him and his mother ignores him.
- Darry lectures Ponyboy for not thinking about the danger he had put himself in, but Soda sticks up for him, as he always does.
- Ponyboy and Johnny agree to join Dally the next night at the Nightly Double drive-in. Two-Bit says he might be there.
- Ponyboy thinks about the girls who hang out with the greasers. He likes Soda’s girl Sandy, but he wonders what other girls are like—the ones who are afraid of them or think of them as dirt.
- Ponyboy understands that Darry, who roofs houses, doesn’t deserve to work like an old man when he is only twenty. Once he had been captain of the school football team, and he also had an athletic scholarship. After their parents were killed, lack of money had kept him from going to college.
- Soda, Ponyboy’s movie-star handsome brother, works full time at a gas station and is a school dropout. He tells Ponyboy he thinks he might marry his girl friend Sandy.
- Despite Soda’s assurance that Darry loves him, Ponyboy doesn’t believe Darry could love anyone except maybe Soda. He tries to convince himself that he doesn’t care about Darry, but he knows he’s lying to himself.

Chapter 2

- Before they sneak over the back fence of the Nightly Double drive-in, Dally, Ponyboy, and Johnny hang around a drugstore where Dally steals cigarettes. They also visit the Dingo drive-in where there is a fight with switchblades.
- Dally begins talking dirty to attract the two girls sitting in front of them on the drive-in bleachers. The attractive redhead, whom Ponyboy recognizes as a cheerleader at his school, tells him to stop it and leave them alone.
- The girls and Dally have seen each other previously when they participated in rodeos.
- While Dally is away getting Cokes, the redhead introduces herself as Cherry Valance. She knows Sodapop and thinks he is a doll. She says Ponyboy looks like him.
- The other girl is Marcia.

Word Lists with Definitions

Arranged in Story Order

(Some words may appear on more than one page)

Set One: Chapter 1—Chapter 5

- asset** A useful and desirable thing or quality, person, or thing; a single item of ownership having exchange value. (p. 3)
- madras** A light cotton fabric of various weaves, especially one in multicolored plaids, stripes, or checks used for shirts, dresses, jackets, etc. (p. 5)
- sensitive** Aware of and responding to the feelings of others; easily upset, pained, annoyed, etc.; requiring tact or caution; delicate; touchy. (p. 7)
- sagely** In the manner of a profoundly wise person. (p. 12)
- sarcasm** A sneering or cutting remark often intended to wound; a sharp or bitter, often ironic, taunt. (p. 17)
- roguishly** Mischievously, in a playful way; rascally; in a deceitful, undisciplined manner. (p. 22)
- wincing** Drew back or tensed the body as from pain or from a blow; flinched; drew back in a startled movement. (p. 23)
- incredulous** Inclined to disbelief; skeptical; not believing. (p. 24)
- scowled** Wrinkled or contracted the brow as an expression of anger or disapproval; displayed a gloomy or threatening look. (p. 24)
- stalked** Walked with a stiff, haughty, or angry gait; followed or observed a person persistently, especially out of obsession or derangement; tracked prey or quarry by means of stealth; pursued menacingly or threateningly (p. 25)
- nonchalantly** In a coolly unconcerned, indifferent, or casual manner; casually. (p. 25)
- shanghaiing** Inducing or compelling someone to do something, especially by fraud or force; kidnapping a person for compulsory service aboard a ship, especially after drugging the victim. (p. 28)
- vaguely** Not clearly or explicitly stated or expressed; indefinite or indistinct in nature or character, as ideas or feelings; not clearly apparent to the sight or any other sense. (p. 33)
- gallantly** Bravely, noble-mindedly, or spirited; chivalrously; done in a manner as to be exceptionally polite and attentive to women. (p. 37)
- sophisticated** Altered by education or experience so as to be worldly-wise; not naive; complex, or intricate, as a system, process, piece of machinery, etc.; knowledgeable. (p. 38)
- rave** To talk or write with extravagant enthusiasm; to speak irrationally, or incoherently. (p. 38)
- aloofness** The state of being distant, especially with feelings or interest; indifference; disinterest; snobbishness. (p. 38)
- ornery** Unpleasant or ugly in temperament or disposition; stubborn; cantankerous; mean spirited or irritable. (p. 39)
- elite** Persons of the highest class; the best; representing the most choice or select. (p. 41)
- apprehensive** Uneasy or fearful about something that might happen; anxious; worried. (p. 59)
- contemptuously** Done in such a way as to express scorn or lack of respect; arrogantly. (p. 59)
- ruefully** In a manner that shows sorrow, pity, or regret; in a way that inspires pity or compassion; mournfully; sorrowfully. (p. 60)
- reformatory** A penal institution (reform school) for the discipline, reformation, and training of young or first offenders. (p. 65)
- premonition** A feeling of anticipation or of anxiety over a future event; a forewarning; omen. (p. 67)
- peroxide** A bleaching agent, especially for the hair; a compound used as a disinfectant. (p. 71)
- imploringly** Begging in a urgent and pitiful manner, as for mercy; earnestly. (p. 72)
- sullenly** Done in a manner as to show irritation or ill-humor by a gloomy silence or reserve; cheerlessly; mournfully; grumpily. (p. 73)
- stubble** Any short, rough growth, as of a beard; the stumps of grain or other stalks left in the ground when the crop is cut. (p. 80)

Dictionary Digs

(Set One: Chapter 1—Chapter 5)

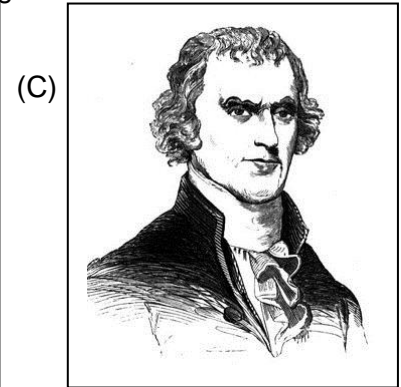
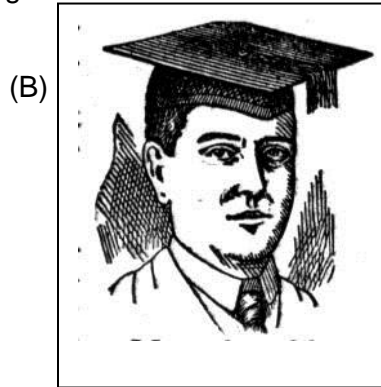
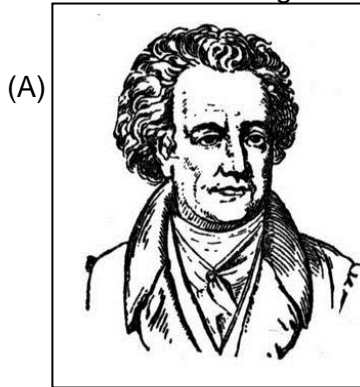
Use your favorite dictionary to find answers to the following questions about some challenging words from the first five chapters of **The Outsiders**. Write the **letters** of the correct answers in the blanks to the left.

- _____ 1. A comment made **nonchalantly** was said (A) hurriedly or quickly, (B) in a casual, unconcerned manner, (C) in secret.
- _____ 2. Which of the following is **not** characteristic of the fabric known as **madras**? It (A) is made of cotton, (B) has patterns of multicolored plaids, stripes, or checks, (C) is used more as upholstery and drapery yardage than for clothing.
- _____ 3. Which word can be substituted for **ornery** in the following sentence without changing its meaning?

*My little sister starts getting **ornery** about a hour before bedtime.*

(A) cantankerous, (B) restless, (C) lethargic

- _____ 4. A synonym for **incredulous** is (A) naive, (B) skeptical, (C) gullible.
- _____ 5. Not only can **peroxide** be used to bleach one's hair, it is also a compound used as a (A) disinfectant, (B) insect repellant, (C) deodorizer.
- _____ 6. Which of the following drawings **best** illustrates the meaning of **scowled**?



- _____ 7. An **antonym** of **vaguely** is (A) indefinitely, (B) obviously, (C) remarkably.
- _____ 8. Which of the following sentences correctly demonstrates the **verb** form of the adverb **ruefully**? (A) She had a *rueful* look on her face, (B) I *rue* the loss of a golden opportunity. (C) He is totally *rueless* to the truth.
- _____ 9. The word **sagely** refers to behavior that is (A) void of thought or goals, (B) exaggerated in terms and ideas, (C) based on wisdom and good judgment.
- _____ 10. Who are the inhabitants of a **reformatory**? (A) young people who have broken the law, (B) young musicians and artists, (C) young adults with substance-abuse problems.
- _____ 11. Which of the following would **not** be considered an **asset**? (A) credit card debt, (B) a good credit rating, (C) an education.
- _____ 12. In addition to naming a short, rough beard, **stubble** is also (A) any hurdle that prevents progress, (B) the fossil remains of extinct species of animals and plants, (C) the stumps of grain or other stalks left in the ground when the crop is cut.
- _____ 13. A person described as **sensitive** can be either *perceptive* or (A) annoying, (B) high-strung, (C) imaginative.

Short Answer Questions

Chapter 1

1. How old were Ponyboy and his two brothers?
2. How were the Socs different from the greasers?
3. How had Ponyboy put himself in a dangerous situation?
4. What had happened to Ponyboy's parents?
5. What did the Soc say to Ponyboy when he pulled the knife?
6. What had the Socs done to Johnny Cade when he was sixteen?
7. How did Two-Bit Mathews get his name?
8. Explain how Dallas Winston was different from the other greasers.
9. What was it like for Johnny Cade at home?
10. What was it that Ponyboy didn't believe about Darry?

Chapter 2

1. Why did Dally not pay his way into the drive-in although he had the quarter fee?
2. How did Cherry and Marcia know Dally and Sodapop?
3. What did Cherry do with the Coke that Dally bought for her?
4. Who told Dally to leave Cherry alone?
5. Why were Cherry and Marcia at the drive-in alone?
6. Why was Tim Shepard looking for Dally?
7. Where did the greasers find Johnny after he had been beaten by the Socs?
8. What had caused Johnny to be cut up so badly?
9. How had Johnny's behavior changed after the beating?
10. What did Cherry say about Socs?

Chapter 1
Pages 1-18

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. Which of the following was **not** true of Ponyboy Curtis? He (A) had long hair and was a greaser, (B) liked to watch movies alone, (C) was a lot like his older brother.
- _____ 2. Ponyboy loved his brother Soda more than anyone because, unlike Darry, Soda (A) understood everything and didn't treat him like a little kid, (B) allowed him to do as he pleased, (C) was a loner, who never followed the group.
- _____ 3. Ponyboy was (A) fourteen, (B) eighteen, (C) twelve.



- _____ 4. The Socs were a (A) group of local businessmen who worked with poor kids, (B) gang of rich kids from the West-side, (C) a gang led by Darry, Ponyboy's twenty-year-old brother.
- _____ 5. Although he was a greaser, Ponyboy (A) didn't like the illegal things the gang did, (B) didn't get into trouble with the police because he didn't want to be separated from his brothers, (C) kept his gang activities a secret from Darry.
- _____ 6. Ponyboy's parents had been (A) convicted of murder and imprisoned, (B) killed in a car accident, (C) missing for over five years.
- _____ 7. Which of the following was **not** true of greasers? (A) Most of them never did anything illegal. (B) They wore their hair long, dressed in blue jeans, leather jackets, T-shirts, and left their shirt tails out. (C) They were poorer and wilder than the Socs.
- _____ 8. Ponyboy (A) went to school only three days a week, (B) wasn't a very good student, (C) made good grades and had a high IQ.
- _____ 9. Inside the red Corvair that trailed Ponyboy as he walked home alone were (A) two greasers that no one liked, (B) five Socs, (C) his three best friends.
- _____ 10. When he realized the Socs could kill him, Ponyboy (A) started running down an alley, (B) pulled a switchblade from his back pocket, (C) started screaming.
- _____ 11. Ponyboy was rescued by (A) Soda, (B) a policeman, (C) Darry.

Chapter 2
Pages 19-36

Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

_____ 1. While the three boys were in the drugstore, Dally stole two packages of Kools.



_____ 2. The Dingo was a quiet, clean drive-in where the greasers were not welcome.

_____ 3. Dally, Johnny, and Ponyboy had to sneak into the drive-in because they didn't have enough cash to pay their way in.

_____ 4. Ponyboy didn't approve of Dally's behavior with the two girls in the theater.

_____ 5. The two girls were the type who hung out with greasers.

_____ 6. Cherry Valance had red hair and was also a cheerleader at Ponyboy's high school.

_____ 7. Cherry told Ponyboy he looked like Sodapop, whom she described as "a doll."

_____ 8. Cherry and Marcia had ridden in rodeos with Sodapop.

_____ 9. It did not bother Ponyboy to tell Cherry that Soda had dropped out of school.

_____ 10. Cherry accepted the Coke from Dally as a peace offering and an apology.

_____ 11. After Johnny told him to leave Cherry alone, Dally stalked out of the theater and didn't come back.

_____ 12. Dally did not hit Johnny for talking back to him because he was afraid of Johnny's father.

_____ 13. Cherry and Marcia invited Ponyboy and Johnny to sit with them and be their protectors.

_____ 14. According to Cherry, Ponyboy and Johnny looked too sweet to scare anyone.

WHOLE BOOK TEST

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. Ponyboy Curtis (A) was constantly in trouble with the law, (B) was the only greaser who wore his hair cut short, (C) had a high IQ and was a good student.
- _____ 2. The greasers were a loosely organized gang that (A) were almost like hoods, stealing things and getting into gang fights, (B) was so violent about half its members were in prison, (C) refused to accept members under the age of sixteen.
- _____ 3. The Socs were a gang of (A) older kids who had dropped out of school, (B) a gang of West-side rich kids, (C) older neighborhood kids who thought the greasers were babies.
- _____ 4. Ponyboy's parents (A) were in prison, (B) had been killed in a car accident, (C) were in Alaska working for an oil company.
- _____ 5. Which of the following was **not** true of Soda? He (A) was movie-star handsome and easy going, (B) was not a good student and had dropped out of school, (C) tried to be the head of the family and yelled at Ponyboy all the time.
- _____ 6. Which of the following was **not** true of Darry? He (A) was quiet and rarely noticed what Ponyboy was doing, (B) was six-feet-two and muscular, (C) did not get to go to college, but took a job instead to hold his family together.
- _____ 7. Ponyboy was (A) ten, (B) twelve, (C) fourteen.
- _____ 8. Johnny had been scared of his own shadow since (A) his brother disappeared, (B) he was jumped and beaten by four Socs, (C) the police started trailing him.
- _____ 9. Ponyboy was jumped by the Socs in the red Corvair because he (A) was walking alone, (B) had injured one of them in a rumble, (C) was shouting and cursing.
- _____ 10. The greaser who was tougher, colder, and meaner than the rest was (A) Two-Bit Matthews, (B) Dally Winston, (C) Steve Randle.
- _____ 11. Which of the following was **not** true of Johnny Cade? (A) He was the gang's pet, everyone's kid brother. (B) His dad beat him and his mother either ignored him or yelled at him. (C) He was the oldest member of the gang.
- _____ 12. Where did Ponyboy meet Cherry Valance? At (A) the Nightly Double drive-in movie, (B) Spencer's drug store, (C) school in biology class.
- _____ 13. In talking about the Socs and the greasers, Cherry assured Ponyboy that (A) Socs never robbed stores and mugged people, (B) all greasers were as bad as Dally, (C) things were rough for the Socs as well as for the greasers.
- _____ 14. In Ponyboy's opinion, Darry (A) didn't like him and would stick him in a home if it wasn't for Soda, (B) could still go to college on his athletic scholarship if he wanted, (C) treated him as badly as Johnny's parents treated him.
- _____ 15. Ponyboy, Johnny, and Two-Bit planned to take Marcia and Cherry home from the drive-in because the girls (A) wanted to be seen with greasers to make their boyfriends jealous, (B) had walked out on their boyfriends, who had brought booze with them, (C) wanted to ride in Two-Bit's red car.
- _____ 16. Cherry and Marcia (A) thought Ponyboy and Johnny were cowards for refusing to fight the Socs in the blue Mustang, (B) got in the blue Mustang with their boyfriends and left, (C) gave their phone numbers to Ponyboy.
- _____ 17. When Ponyboy came home at two in the morning, Darry (A) met him at the door in tears, (B) refused to let him come into the house, (C) slapped him in anger for arguing with him.

Think, Write, Create

Chapter Activities

Chapter 1

Ponyboy made good grades and had a high IQ, but he admitted that he didn't use his head.

- Explain how walking home alone from the movies was not using his head.
- In your opinion, was screaming a smart thing or a cowardly thing for Ponyboy to do when he was being attacked by the Socs? Explain your thinking.
- How did Ponyboy and his brothers show they were smart enough to do what was necessary for them to stay together. What would probably have happened to them if they had behaved like other greasers?
- Was being a greaser another example of how Ponyboy didn't always use his head? Did he have a choice? Explain your answers.

Ponyboy explained that his older brother Soda didn't need to drink because he got *drunk on just plain living*. It would seem that Soda understood the power of what some people call a *natural high*.

- In your own words, explain the experience. What are some conditions that create such a state of extreme happiness without drugs or alcohol? What does it look like?
- Is there an activity or an event that lifts your spirits to such heights?
- Organize your thoughts and ideas about this phenomenon. Then write a composition about the power of **The Natural High**. (See **Graphic Organizer #1**)

To Ponyboy, there was a shade of difference that separated a greaser from a hood. He didn't like Dally because he did everything the hoods in New York did.

- From the information you have about the greasers at this point, do you think Ponyboy was correct in thinking that the greasers were friends who stuck together and not a real gang like regular hoods? Why or why not?
- Do you see any real difference in Dally and the other greasers? Explain your point of view.

In defiance of the odds against them, Ponyboy, Soda, and Darry had managed to stay together as a family.

- What personal sacrifices had Darry made in order to take care of his two younger brothers?
- Speculate as to why Darry kept a tighter rein on Ponyboy than on Soda?
- Does Soda seem to be able to make better decisions and choices than Ponyboy? Give specific examples from the story to support your answer.

Make a list of **five** characteristics or behaviors that you think would apply to your concept of a young male involved in gang activities.

- Which of the items on your list fit what you know about Ponyboy Curtis?
 - What details on your list do not seem to apply to Ponyboy?
 - Using your analysis, what conclusion can you draw about Ponyboy? Is he truly a gang member or is he nothing like your idea of what it takes to be in a real gang? Explain your position.
-

Think, Write, Create

Whole Book Activities

Explain how each of the following lines from the story is a *foreshadowing* of a sad event.

And Johnny. . .now carried a six-inch switchblade. He'd use it, too, if he ever got jumped again. (page 34)

"Bob, I told you. . . Too many things could happen while you're drunk." (p. 44)

"I can't take much more." Johnny spoke. . . "I'll kill myself or something." (Page 47)

. . . if that old church ever caught fire, there'd be no stopping it. (Page 79)

"I started carryin' a heater. . . Don't worry," Dally went on, "it ain't loaded. . . " (Page 83)

-
- What are **three** qualities that you believe would make Two-Bit Mathews a good friend? What are **three** aspects of his behavior that would make him a poor choice for a friend?
 - Would you want to have a friend like Two Bit? Why or why not?
 - Is your best friend anything like Two-Bit? Explain how they are alike or how they are entirely different.
-

Ponyboy fantasized about living in the country with his parents and brothers.

- How was Ponyboy's real experience with country life different from his fantasy?
 - In your opinion, was the **place** where Darry, Soda, and Ponyboy lived the cause of their problems or merely the stage for their troubles to play out? Explain your answer.
 - If the three brothers had been able to move to the country when they lost their parents, do you think their lives would have been happier and more productive? Explain your position.
-

It occurred to Ponyboy that Dallas Winston's fight for self-preservation had hardened him beyond caring. It would be a miracle if he loved anything.

- What things did Dally say and do that showed Ponyboy's observation to be correct?
 - How did Dally demonstrate that he **was** capable of caring? Give at least two examples.
-

In the past, Ponyboy had gone to church all the time, even after his mom and dad were gone. The Sunday that Soda, Two-Bit, and Steve went along with him and Johnny was his last visit.

- What does the fact that Ponyboy and Johnny had gone to church and tried to get something out of the sermon say about them? How do you explain the contradiction between their interest in church and the violent lifestyle they led?
 - Why didn't Ponyboy go back to church after the Sunday that Soda, Steve, and Two-Bit went with him and Johnny?
-

Explain how the church on Jay Mountain was both a **symbolic** and a **real** means of redemption for Johnny and Ponyboy.

Johnny and Ponyboy were juvenile delinquents who earned their status as heroes by rescuing kids from a burning church. Suppose there was an organization in our area asking people to nominate *ordinary citizens* as **Unsung Heroes**? Do you know someone you think would be worthy of such a title?

Remember that a **hero** is someone regarded as *a model or an ideal person* as well as someone who has proven to be courageous or brave. Being dependable, supportive, and responsible are as heroic as saving a life. Nominate the hero in your life. (See **Graphic Organizer # 7**)

The Natural High

Ponyboy explained that his older brother Soda didn't need to drink because he got *drunk on just plain living*. It would seem that Soda understood the power of what some people call a *natural high*. In your own words, explain the experience. What are some conditions that create such a state of extreme happiness without drugs or alcohol? What does it look like? Is there an activity or an event that lifts your spirits to such heights?

Use the organizer below to gather your thought and ideas about this phenomenon. Then write a composition about the power of **The Natural High**.

The graphic organizer consists of two identical circular structures. Each structure has a central circle with text inside and ten lines radiating outwards for notes. The top structure's central circle contains the title 'The Natural High' and two prompts: 'Things that create it...' and 'What it looks like...'. The bottom structure's central circle contains the title 'My Natural High' and two prompts: 'How I create it...' and 'How to tell when I'm super happy...'. The lines radiating from each circle are intended for students to write their responses to the prompts.

The Natural High
Things that create it...
What it looks like...

My Natural High
How I create it...
How to tell when I'm super happy...