

NAME:

CORE:

The Outsiders Discussion Guide

Directions: Of the following questions, choose FIVE to answer on a loose-leaf sheet of paper as you reflect on our read aloud, *The Outsiders*. Of the FIVE that you choose, one HAS TO BE #20.

1. One of the primary themes in *The Outsiders* is the struggle between the Greasers and the Socs. Describe each group. What is the main source of tension between the two groups? Are the two groups really so different?
2. Have you ever felt like an outsider? Why did you feel that way, and how did it make you feel?
3. Do you think that different groups of people are treated differently? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. Imagine that you were a character in the book. Would you be associated with the Greasers or the Socs? Why?
5. Discuss the various attitudes towards fighting found in *The Outsiders*. Which attitudes do you agree with? Which attitudes do you disagree with? Do you feel that violence can ever be justified?
6. Who is the narrator of *The Outsiders*? What point of view is it told in? What effect do you think this has on the story?
7. How do Ponyboy's relationships with Darry and Sodapop differ? Explain. Do you think Darry loves Ponyboy? Why does he treat Ponyboy the way he does?
8. Johnny is portrayed as being particularly quiet and sensitive. Why do you think he is this way? How do the other Greasers treat him?
9. Why is the "gang" so important to Johnny? How is his family situation different from that of Ponyboy and his brothers?
10. Dallas is portrayed as a particularly tough character. What makes Ponyboy admire him? Is Dally redeemed by his love and concern for Johnny?
11. Ponyboy says, "I lie to myself all the time." What do you think he means by this? And why do you think he does it? Do you ever lie to yourself? Why?
12. What does Cherry tell Ponyboy is the difference between the Socs and the Greasers? How does this differ from Ponyboy's perspective on the situation?
13. Ponyboy says, "Johnny and I understood each other without saying anything." What does he mean by this statement? Have you ever had a relationship with someone who you understood, or who understood you, without having to say anything?

NAME:

CORE:

14. How do Johnny's prior experiences with the Socs affect his behavior in the park? Does the fact that he was defending his friend's life justify his actions? Why or why not?
15. What is your definition of a hero? Do you think that Johnny, Ponyboy, and Dallas are heroes? Explain.
16. Ponyboy says that he would rather have someone's hate than their pity. Why do you think he says this?
17. Ponyboy says, "Johnny didn't have anything to do with Bob's getting killed." What do you think he means by this? Does he believe that this is true?
18. Johnny leaves the copy of *Gone with the Wind* to Ponyboy. Why is this significant? How does it illustrate their friendship?
19. Do you think it is obvious that the novel was written when the author was only sixteen years old? Support your answer with details from the book.
20. Examine Robert Frost's poem, "Nothing Gold can Stay." What do you think the poem is saying? How does this apply to the characters in the novel? What does Johnny mean when he tells Pony to "stay gold"?
*Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower,
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.*