



THE OUTSIDERS: POST-READING RESPONSE PROMPTS



After you finish reading *The Outsiders*, choose five of the following prompts to respond to.

A.	<p>What does it mean to be a hero? Choose a character from the story who you think is a hero and explain what makes that person a hero. Support your response with reasons and examples from the text.</p> <p>A hero is someone who acts with immense courage. For example, Johnny is a hero for putting his life at risk to save the children in the fire. Johnny is typically shy and skittish, but he responds to the crisis with bravery and confidence. While rescuing the children, Ponyboy says that Johnny “grinned” at him and that “he wasn’t scared either.” It was the only time Ponyboy could remember Johnny “without that defeated, suspicious look in his eyes.”</p>
B.	<p>How are the teenage characters in the story similar to teenagers today? What character do you relate to most and why? Support your ideas with details from the text.</p> <p>Like teenagers today, the characters have concerns that are both big and small, from trying to figure out what they stand for to worrying about their hair and clothes. Student responses to the second part will vary but should include relevant details and examples from the text.</p>
C.	<p>Relationships change over time. How does Ponyboy’s relationship with Darry change over the course of the novel? Support your response with ideas and details from the text.</p> <p>At the beginning of the novel, Ponyboy feels that Darry is too strict and critical. He questions Darry’s love for him and wishes that Darry would ease up. By the end of the novel, Ponyboy realizes that Darry is hard on him because of his fierce love for Ponyboy and his desire to protect his brother. Ponyboy also comes to understand that Darry believes in Ponyboy and wants him to make a better life for himself.</p>
D.	<p>Several characters in the novel experience loss. Choose one character who has lost someone important to them. How is the character affected by loss? How does grief affect the character’s relationships with others? Support your response with ideas and details from the text.</p> <p>The Curtis brothers lose their parents in a car crash before the novel begins. Darry was greatly affected by the loss. While Soda and Ponyboy are emotional at their parents’ funeral, Darry shuts down. At times in his grief, Darry comes across as cold, and this puts a strain on his relationship with Ponyboy. But his loss also drives Darry to take on the responsibility of caring for his brothers.</p>
E.	<p>Ponyboy decides to write his theme about the experience of being a greaser. He does this with the hope that it will help others better understand teens like him and the hardships they face. Based on events in the book, do you think sharing experiences is an effective way to build understanding? Support your response with evidence from the text.</p> <p>Sharing experiences can be an effective way to build understanding. Ponyboy’s relationship with Cherry is an example of this. Ponyboy and Cherry talk about their experiences being from different “sides of the tracks.” Eventually, they realize that both groups feel misunderstood. They fight to prove themselves, and yet, they both feel lost and overwhelmed by the world around them and the process of growing up. This realization helps Ponyboy and Cherry understand each other and their other friends.</p>



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<p>F.</p>	<p>How would you describe Ponyboy's gang? How do members of the gang have both a positive and negative effect on each other? Support your response with ideas and details from the text.</p> <p>Ponyboy and his friends are deeply loyal to each other. They look out for each other and are willing to make great sacrifices for each other, including risking their own physical safety and well-being. The friends constantly joke with each other and are comfortable and casual around one another. The friends offer a sense of belonging for each other. However, they also feed into each other's poor choices and contribute to a cycle of violence. Their willingness to stand by their friends during a rumble is evidence of their loyalty to each other, but it's also an example of their dangerous choices.</p>
<p>G.</p>	<p>Give an example of a character in <i>The Outsiders</i> who experiences significant personal growth. Based on events in the book, what do you think drives people to make a major change in their lives? Support your response with ideas and details from the text.</p> <p>Randy is a Soc who was friends with Bob, the boy who was killed. Randy approaches Ponyboy and Two-Bit before the rumble, saying that he is remorseful and will not participate in the rumble. He doesn't think more violence will solve the problem between the greasers and the Socs. Randy's actions show that experiencing a tragedy, like the loss of a friend, can transform a person and drive them to change.</p>
<p>H.</p>	<p>Think about the behavior and attitudes of the young men in <i>The Outsiders</i>. What does the novel suggest about masculinity? Support your response with ideas and details from the text.</p> <p>In the novel, the characters feel pressure from society to prove themselves through violence, tough talk, and a hard exterior. Fighting is the norm. However, the main characters also display great affection and sympathy. They seem torn between the expectation to prove themselves through violence and a desire to connect with each other in a more caring way.</p>
<p>I.</p>	<p>Choose a quote from the novel that made an impact on you. Describe the context of the quote and its significance. Then explain why the quote affected you.</p> <p>Student responses will vary. Responses should include the quote, its meaning, and an explanation of the quote's effect on the reader.</p>
<p>J.</p>	<p>S.E. Hinton chose to tell <i>The Outsiders</i> in the first person, from Ponyboy's point of view. Explain whether you think this was a good choice, and why or why not.</p> <p>Telling the novel from Ponyboy's point of view allows readers to learn his private thoughts and feelings. It creates an honest and emotional tone and helps readers understand Ponyboy's inner conflicts and doubts. Hearing Ponyboy's voice helps readers connect with him and care about what happens to him and his friends.</p>