

## THE OUTSIDERS

A stage play written by Christopher Sergel based upon the novel by S.E. Hinton  
Directed by Scott P. Calhoon

March 6, 2020 - March 15, 2020

A coming-of-age story where Ponyboy, the Greasers & Socs learn valuable lessons about belonging, friendship, family and goodness

# Welcome to Prime Stage Theatre's 2019-2020 Season

## *See Me for Who I Am*

### Bringing Literature to Life!

Dear Educator,

We are pleased to bring you the *The Outsiders*, a modern classic written for the stage by Christopher Sergel from the book by S.E. Hinton, our second exciting production of the season.

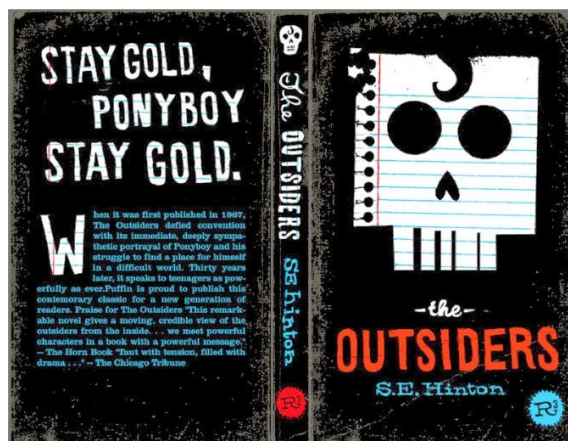
All literature produced by Prime Stage is always drawn from middle and secondary reading lists and themes are in the current Pennsylvania curriculum.

This Resource Guide is designed to provide historical background and context, classroom activities and curricular content to help you enliven your students' experience with the literature and the theatre. We encourage you to use the theatrical games and creative thinking activities, as well as the Theatre Etiquette suggested activities to spark personal connections with the themes and characters in the story of *The Outsiders*.

If you have any questions about the information or activities in the guide, please contact me and I will be happy to assist you, *and* I welcome your suggestions and comments!

Linda Haston, Education Director & Teaching Artist  
Prime Stage Theatre  
[lhaston@primestage.com](mailto:lhaston@primestage.com)

**The activities in this guide are intended to enliven, clarify and enrich the text as you read, and the experience as you watch the literature.**



Cover Art of The Outsiders



## OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMMING -

*Literacy In ACTION Program (LACT)*

*Student Matinee Field Trips*

*Global Learning*

*Young Women's Collaborative*

*Technical Theatre Interns*

*Professional Development*

*Teen Dating Awareness*

## OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMMING IS FUNDED IN PART BY THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS

American Eagle Outfitters

Bank of America / Nora Roberts Foundation

Jack Buncher Foundation

Philip Chosky Charitable Education Fund

Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust

The Fine Foundation

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The Grable Foundation

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## PRIME STAGE THEATRE EDUCATION STAFF

Wayne Brinda, Ed.D  
*Producing Artistic Director*

Linda Haston  
*Education Director*

Ken Lutz  
*Global Learning Coordinator*

Monica Stephenson  
*Education Coordinator*

Ryan Pontzloff  
*Education Intern*

Heather Sendera  
*Student Matinee Field Trips*

Tina Cerny  
*Technical Theatre Intern Director*



## TEACHER ADVISORY COUNCIL

Education Staff, John Dolphin, Sueanne Zoratto, Jennifer Wells, Linda Withrow, Kerry McGrath, Lawrence McCullough, Ph.D, Mary Dalesio





## **Featured National Standards:**

### **English/Language Arts**

#### **Standards Developed by International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English**

1. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic) of human experience.
2. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context and graphics).
3. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, and video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
4. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, and video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
5. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
6. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

## **Theatre**

### **NA 5-8.3 Designing by developing environments for improvised and scripted scenes**

Students analyze improvised and scripted scenes for technical requirements.

### **NA5-8.7 Analyzing, evaluating, and constructing meanings from improvised and scripted scenes and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions**

Students articulate and support the meanings constructed from their and others' dramatic Performances Students use articulated criteria to describe, analyze, and constructively evaluate the perceived effectiveness of artistic choices found in dramatic performances.

### **NA 9-12.2 Acting by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisations and informal or formal productions**

Students analyze the physical, emotional, and social dimensions of characters found in dramatic texts from various genres and media.





**NA 9-12.3 Designing and producing by conceptualizing and realizing artistic interpretations for informal or formal productions**

Students analyze a variety of dramatic texts from cultural and historical perspectives to determine production requirements.

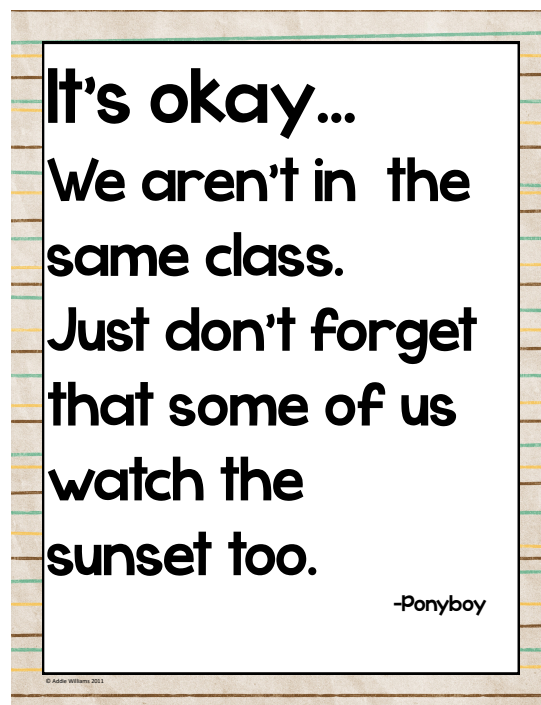
**NA9-12.5 Researching by evaluating and synthesizing cultural and historical information to support artistic choices**

Students identify and research cultural, historical, and symbolic clues in dramatic texts, and evaluate the validity and practicality of the information to assist in making artistic choices for informal and formal productions.

**NA9-12.7 Analyzing, critiquing, and constructing meanings from informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions**

Students articulate and justify personal aesthetic criteria for critiquing dramatic texts and events that compare perceived artistic intent with the final aesthetic achievement.

Students analyze and critique the whole and the parts of dramatic performances, taking into account the context, and constructively suggest alternative artistic choices.



**All Prime Stage productions and Resource Guides address the following:**

**Pennsylvania Common Core Standards for *The Scarlet Letter*:  
Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking**

**CC.1.3.9-10.A:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

**CC.1.3.9-10.C:** Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

**CC.1.3.9-10.D:** Determine the point of view of the text and analyze the impact the point of view has on the meaning of the text.

**CC.1.3.9-10.E:** Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it and manipulate time create an effect.

**CC.1.3.9-10.F:** Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.

**CC.1.3.9-10.G:** Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.

**CC.1.3.9-10.H:** Analyze how an author draws on and transforms themes, topics, character types, and/or other text elements from source material in a specific work.

**CC.1.3.9-10.K:** Read and comprehend literary fiction on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

**CC.1.5.9-10.A:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grades level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CC.1.5.9-10.G:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English when speaking based on grade 9-10 level and content.

**CC.1.6.11.A:** Listen critically and respond to others in small and large group situations. Respond with grade level appropriate questions, ideas, information or opinions.

**CC.1.6.11.C:** Demonstrate awareness of audience using appropriate volume and clarity in formal speaking presentations.

**CC.1.6.11.D:** Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of other students well introducing ideas and opinions to enrich the discussion.



## *Theatre Etiquette and House Rules*

Going to a play is a special experience, one that you will remember for a long time.

Everyone in the audience has been looking forward to seeing the performance. The production team put in many long hours and hard work to mount this performance. If you keep in mind common courtesy for the performers as well as your fellow audience members, everyone's theatre experience will be terrific.

A few reminders for attending the theatre.

- When you arrive, stay with your group at all times, and wait for the ushers to help you find your seat.
- Gum, food, drinks, or candy, are **never** allowed in the theatre.
- Please go to the restroom before seating for performance or at intermission.
- **TURN OFF ALL** cell phones, pagers, beepers, alarms, **anything** that can disturb the production, actors and the audience during the performance.
- Lights will dim just before a performance and then go dark. Show your knowledge by sitting quietly and calmly.
- **Listen without speaking.** The actors on stage can hear you which is why you can hear them so well. Laughter is permissible at appropriate times.
- Pictures or video recording is not allowed.
- **Stay in your seat until the cast has taken their curtain call at the end.** Show your appreciation by clapping. The actors love to hear applause. This shows how much you enjoyed the performance!





## S.E. Hinton



*S.E. Hinton, was and still is, one of the most popular and best known writers of young adult fiction. Her books have been taught in some schools, and banned from others. Her novels changed the way people look at young adult literature.*

Susan Eloise Hinton was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She has always enjoyed reading but wasn't satisfied with the literature that was being written for young adults, which influenced her to write novels like *The Outsiders*. That book, her first novel, was published in 1967 by Viking.

Once published, *The Outsiders* gave her a lot of publicity and fame, and also a lot of pressure. S.E. Hinton was becoming known as "The Voice of the Youth" among other titles. This kind of pressure and publicity resulted in a three year long writer's block.

Her boyfriend (and now, her husband), who had gotten sick of her being depressed all the time, eventually broke this block. He made her write two pages a day if she wanted to go anywhere. This eventually led to *That Was Then, This Is Now*.

In 1975, S.E. Hinton published *Rumble Fish*. *Rumble Fish* was the shortest novel she had published. It received a great deal of contrasting opinions, with one reviewer claiming it to be her best book and the next claiming it to be her last.

The latter was apparently wrong. *Tex* was published in 1979, four years after *Rumble Fish*. It received great reviews and people raved about how the writing style had matured since previous publications.

Four years after *Tex* was released, quite a few major events took place in S.E. Hinton's life. In March of 1983, the movie *The Outsiders* was released. The following August, Nicholas David was born. Two months later the movie *Rumble Fish* was released.

In 1985 the movie version of *That Was Then, This Is Now* was released. Three years later S.E. Hinton became the first person to receive the YASD/SLJ Author Achievement Award, which was given by the Young Adult Services Division of the American Library Association and School Library Journal.

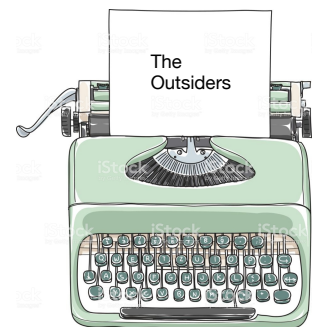
*Taming The Star Runner* was released in October of that year. It was the first book that S.E. Hinton had published that wasn't in first person. With a seven-year wait, S.E. Hinton released another book in 1995. This time she did something that no one expected.

*Big David, Little David* was written for children around the kindergarten age. This deviation from Teen fiction seems to be a reflection of the current important things in S.E. Hinton's life: Family. The children's fiction trend continues with her latest release- *The Puppy Sister*, which is a fantasy book written for Elementary school level children.

*S.E. Hinton currently lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma with her husband David. Her son Nick is away for college.*

### Did you Know?

Susan didn't plan to publish *The Outsiders*! Hinton originally wrote the novel for herself, but the other of one of her friends read a draft and that that the book deserved a wider audience. The friend's mother contacted an agent in New York and soon Viking Press signed Hinton for a \$1000 advance.



Bio from <http://www.sehinton.com>



*Learn more about S.E. Hinton in this exclusive interview from The Outsiders's Fan Club!*

**You were a sixteen year-old high school student in Oklahoma when you wrote *The Outsiders*. Where did you get the idea for the story?**

I was actually fifteen when I first began it. It was the year I was sixteen and a junior in high school that I did the majority of the work (that year I made a D in creative writing). One day a friend of mine was walking home from school and these "nice" kids jumped out of a car and beat him up because they didn't like his being a greaser. This made me mad and I just went home and started pounding out a story about this boy who was beaten up while he was walking home from the movies--the beginning of *The Outsiders*. I was just something to let off steam. I didn't have any grand design. I just sat down and started writing it. I look back and I think it was totally written in my subconscious or something.

**So was there a real-life Ponyboy? A real Johnny?**

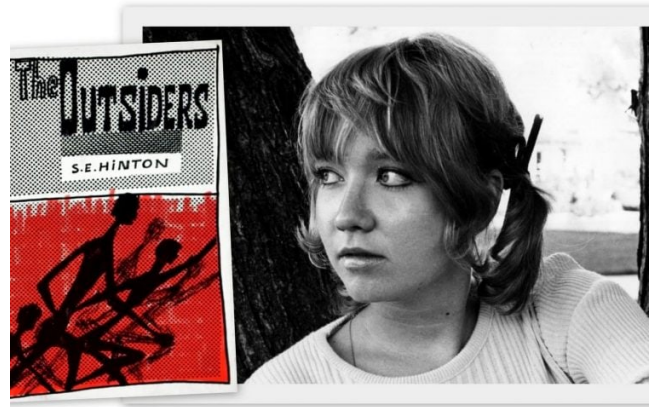
Ponyboy's gang was inspired by a true-life gang, the members of which were very dear to me. Later, all the gang members I hung out with were sure they were in the book--but they aren't. I guess it's because these characters are really kind of universal without losing their individuality.

**How did you turn that inspiration for a story into such memorable characters?**

When I write, an interesting transformation takes place. I go from thinking about my narrator to being him. A lot of Ponyboy's thoughts are my thoughts. He's probably the closest I've come to putting myself into a character. He has a lot of freedom, true-blue friends, people he loves and who love him; the things that are important to him are the things that are important to me. I think Ponyboy and Soda and Darry come out better than the rest of them because they have their love for one another.

**What made you want to become a writer?**

The major influence on my writing has been my reading. When I was young, I read everything, including cereal boxes and coffee labels. Reading



taught me sentence structure, paragraphing, how to build a chapter. Strangely enough, it never taught me spelling.

I have always loved to write, almost as much as I love to read. I began goofing around with a typewriter when I was about twelve. I've always written about things that interest me, so my first years of writing (grades three through ten), I wrote about cowboys and horses. I wanted to be a cowboy and have a horse.

Some writers are plot writers...I have to begin with people. I always knew my characters, exactly what they look like, their birthdays, what they like for breakfast. It doesn't matter if these things appear in the book. I still have to know. I get ideas for characters from real people, but overall they are fictional; my characters exist only in my head.

**Why do you use your initials instead of your full name?**

My publisher was afraid that the reviewers would assume a girl couldn't write a book like *The Outsiders*. Later, when my books became popular, I found I liked the privacy of having a "public" name and a private one, so it has worked out fine.

**Why do you think the book has remained so popular through the years?**

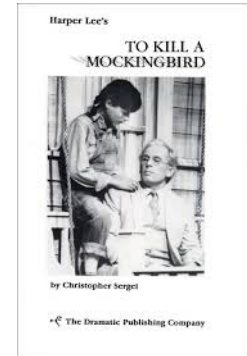
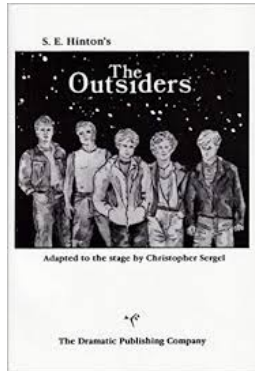
Every teenager feels that adults have no idea what's going on. That's exactly the way I felt when I wrote *The Outsiders*. Even today, the concept of the in-group and the out-group remains the same. The kids say, "Okay, this is like the Preppies and the Punks," or whatever they call themselves. The uniforms change, and the names of the groups change, but kids really grasp how similar their situations are to Ponyboy's.

For more: <http://theoutsidersfanclub.weebly.com/exclusive-interview-with-se-hinton.html>



# The Amazing Life of Playwright, Christopher Sergel

May 7, 1918 - May 7, 1993  
President of Dramatic Publishing 1970 - 1993



**Christopher Sergel** is an American writer and playwright whose many interests and talent led him on many adventures throughout the world.

## Life and career

Christopher Sergel was born on May 7, 1918 in Iowa City, Iowa. In 1944, he graduated from the University of Chicago.

As a lieutenant commander during World War II, he taught celestial navigation. He also spent two years in the South Pacific as captain of the schooner *Chance*, and he lived in the African bush for a year while he was a writer for *Sports Afield* magazine.

From 1970 to 1993, Christopher Sergel was the president of Dramatic Publishing, a publishing company for stage plays founded in 1885 and held by the Sergel family. On May 7, 1993, Christopher Sergel died at the age of 75 in Wilton, Connecticut.

## Work

Based on *The Outsiders* novel, Christopher Sergel wrote a stage play which was published in 1990. He also wrote stage adaptations of *The Outsiders*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Cheaper By the Dozen*, *The Mouse That Roared*, *Up the Down Staircase*, *Fame*, *Black Elk Speaks* and many more.

His play *Winesburg, Ohio* based on the novel of the same name by Sherwood Anderson was shown on the Broadway and adapted to film by Ralph Senensky in 1973.

“Y’all were heroes from the beginning. You just didn’t ‘turn’ all of a sudden”  
— S.E. Hinton, *The Outsiders*







## Meet Director, Scott P. Calhoon

As a professional actor and director, Scott has been on stage and behind the scene for many Prime Stage productions. We recently sat down with Scott to get his incite on his experiences with PST and directing this classic story!

**You are both a professional actor and director. Can you tell us what a director does and what you enjoy most about directing?** A director tells the writers story on a three-dimensional canvas. As a director, it is my job to coordinate the telling of the story in the most complete way I can using the elements at my disposal including the words, the actors, the visuals and the audial. Working with the actors I must create the visual pictures that help the audience understand the meaning of the words and story while guiding the audience's eyes to see everything that is important for them to see at every moment of the production all while helping the actors understand and develop their characters and understand the meaning of the story themselves. In addition, I need to make sure that every person, whether they are actors, designers or technical crew, is working toward a common and cohesive goal to make sure the production is concise in its delivery. In other words, since there are many ways to interpret a story, I need to make sure everyone is working toward the same interpretation. And, of course, you want to accomplish all of this in a way that makes the audience have a wonderful and moving experience and perhaps get them thinking.



Scott P. Calhoon in PST's production of *The Scarlet Letter*, November 2019.

**Do you have a favorite Prime Stage Experience?** Although I have had many wonderful experiences at Prime Stage, my favorite would be working on ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT. It was a chance to tell a wonderful story, working on a new script, and to think outside the box, bringing to the stage a way of telling a story that I had never seen or done before. You might say it was one of the most challenging shows I have done and I truly love a challenge! And working with such a great design team to pull it off was amazing.

**What are you most looking forward to in directing Christopher Sergel's adaptation of The Outsiders?** I think I am really most excited about working with such an amazingly talented young cast. I have worked with some of them before and many of the others I had always wanted to work with. As a whole, they are such a great group of people and will truly be able to give meaning to the production and make it very moving for the audience. In addition, with the assistance of Richard Garland, I hope that this piece will open up some meaningful dialogue with the audience.

**What are some perspective challenges?** There are a few challenges worth mentioning. This piece is really iconic. I can not tell you how many people have said to me, "I love that story. Don't mess it up!" So, it is my goal to be true to the story and yet make it an exciting theatrical experience that won't soon be forgotten. In addition, creating the many locations of the story is also a challenge. Hopefully our idea of creating each scene in a simplistic straightforward way will be rewarding for all involved. And, creating a period piece that is believable and not too melodramatic that can speak to us today, is also a challenge.

**What do you hope for young people to experience in your production?** THE OUTSIDERS is a story that young people truly connect with and I hope that by telling this classic story in an exciting way, will leave them with a sense of wonder and joy, not only about the story and what it means, but also about the novel and about theatre itself which, in turn, I hope will be rewarding enough to encourage them to read more, use their imaginations more, see more theatre and maybe even get involved with the arts themselves.



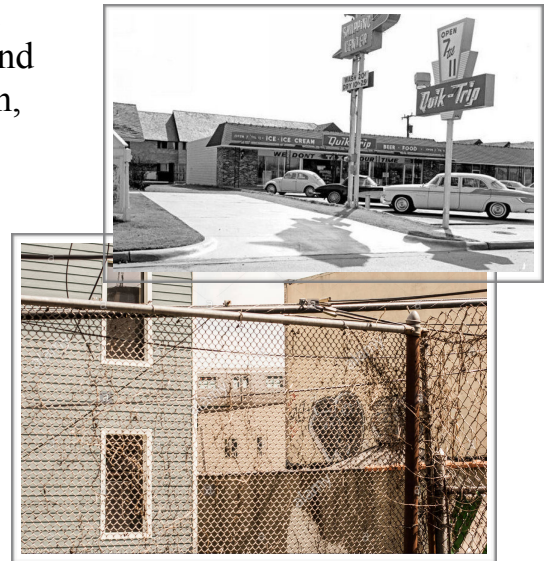
# SCENIC DESIGN

**The scenic designer is responsible for the visual appearance and function of the scenic elements used in the production. To translate the scenic design from the concept to the stage, the designer produces colored sketches or renderings of the sets and properties, scale models of the various sets, and scale mechanical drawings that fully describe the settings. (Based on the description in J. Michael Gillette's *Theatrical Design and Production*, 6th ed.).**

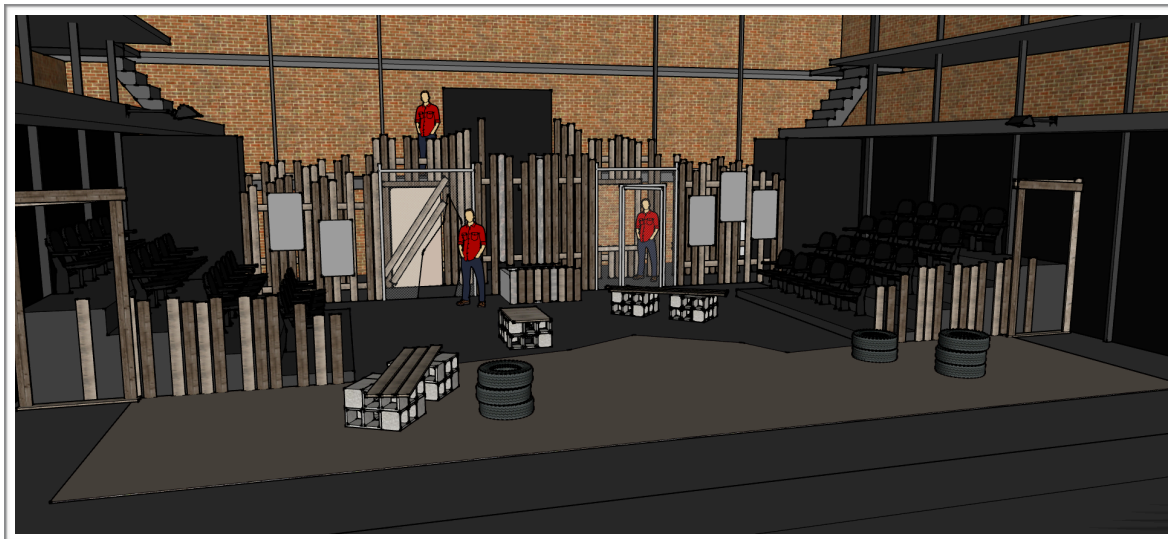
The Outsiders can be relatable to many. The novel was written by a young teenage woman (S.E. Hinton) commenting on our society's struggle with family dysfunction, socioeconomic oppression, and the yearning to feel like you belong. Many parts of these struggles can make a person or a group of people feel isolated or walled off from the rest of society. That isolation and division can result in being cast away or being seen lesser than, like junk to be removed or discarded. The scenic design is an attempt to support these themes. The set design fences us into their world but also portrays how many in society see them as trash to be discarded. In an attempt to follow S.E. Hinton's intentions, the design is intended to find empathy in life stories that may not be like our own. Fences are merely barriers and should be questioned and broken down to find our compassion and understanding for struggling and misunderstood lives.

***Britton Mauk, Scenic Designer***

***Prime Stage production of "The Outsiders," March 2020***



The pictures above depict a scenic design research photos.



A concept design of the set for PST's production of *The Outsiders*.



# COSTUME DESIGN

**The costume designer is responsible for the visual appearance of the actors, including what is seen (clothes, shoes, wigs, makeup, etc.) as well as what isn't (corsets, character elements, etc.). Designs consist of colored sketches depicting the clothing and accessories that will be worn by the actor. (Based on the description in J. Michael Gillette's *Theatrical Design and Production*, 6th ed.)**

"My high school years of 1975-1979 were not too far off from the time S.E. Hinton wrote "The Outsiders". And while Toledo, Ohio is rather removed from Oklahoma, we still had "Socs"- privileged upperclass kids who had cars, wore the designer jeans of Calvin Klein and Gloria Vanderbilt and Izod shirts. They were the cheerleaders and the football players. Status in their club was mitigated by economics and address. The other end of the spectrum were the "Burnouts"- kids who smoked cigarettes between classes outside (yes, that was UNREGULATED) and in the school bathrooms (that WAS regulated), who dabbled in Quaaludes and marijuana, wore leather jackets and Wrangler or Levi jeans and had no discernable plans for college.

I didn't fit in with either of those groups. I was a straight arrow, straight A, type A personality college track kid who was the editor of the yearbook and an officer in numerous clubs – positions the "Socs" didn't have the work ethic nor club advisor approval for. The "Socs" fought amongst themselves for the hierarchy of class officer and Homecoming court. People like me were derisively called "Bookworms" or "Nerds" by the "Socs", but it didn't bother me because I did like books and had confidence in myself. My father taught me the adage "sticks and stones" and I took it to heart.

My intersection with "Burnouts" happened my senior year. I had taken all my credits and could have graduated a year early. Instead, a few like me in the college track, were recruited for the Distributive Education program along with the usual "Burnouts," who took it as part of business- related training and early afternoon release for work study jobs. As a result of this eclectic blend of personalities, a teacher who saw value and potential in everyone, that group elected me DECA class president and helped me get elected as the first female state vice president for Northwest Ohio. Our chapter won numerous awards in business competition and even went to the National competition. A level of acceptance was achieved by a diverse group of students, who, as a team, achieved great things for one moment in time.

I never read "The Outsiders" in high school. It wasn't literature for college track students. That curriculum included Shakespeare, Orwell and Thoreau. But I am glad I found it as an adult and as an educator of high school students (a job I hold in addition to being a costume designer/president of a costume rental house). It's lessons of perception, the power of choice and the potential of positive influence helps me to encourage others to "stay golden".



## The Socs wore Madras Shirts.

These were popular in the 1960s - made of lightweight, cotton with a patterned texture.

The Greasers would often wear a t-shirt, jeans and a jean jacket or a leather jacket.

\*Picture of Greasers taken from the motion picture "The Outsiders."



***-Kim Brown, Costume Designer***

***Prime Stage production of "The Outsiders," March 2020***





# LIGHTING DESIGN

**The lighting designer is responsible for the design, installation, and operation of the lighting and special electrical effects used in a theater production.**

“The Outsiders is all about point of view and how it can be limited or broad. The lights mirror this reality. We see what happens in the light and assume what happens in the dark. It’s the narrow field of vision given by car headlights when violence happens or the broad openness of daylight when we meet our enemies and discover that they are more like us than we thought. It’s the pale, shadowless hospital room where we can’t hide our mortality. It’s the blazing light of fire where our true character is revealed. The lights in this play are an important tool to communicate both what is revealed to the world and what remains hidden.”

*-J.R. Shaw, Lighting Designer*

*Prime Stage production of “The Outsiders,” March 2020*



The pictures above depict a lighting instrument, research photos of a church burning, a 1960's Drive-in and Mike's technical theater table.



# SOUND DESIGN

**The sound designer is basically responsible for everything related to sound for a theater production. They provide the designs for all pre-recorded music, sound effects, and the reinforcement of live voices, musical instruments and sound elements.**

“For *The Outsiders*, my goal is to not only bring the story to life, but to bring life to the story. With so many intense and often fast moments, I feel that underscoring and timed directional and period effects help set and drive the tempo. Because of this, my plan is to incorporate numerous directional speakers that allow the world outside the set to directly influence the world within the set, bringing the outside in. In terms of effects, realism is key. Sound effects will fit the period, reinforce the script, and provide an audible world that works in tandem with the physical world to influence the audience and actors alike.”



Original illustration by Chris Martin

**-Max Pelná, Sound Designer**

***Prime Stage production of “The Outsiders,” March 2020***



A typical sound design table used to program sound cues during technical rehearsal.



## What is a Fight Director ?

One of the most fun, yet challenging parts of performing *The Outsiders* is “tackling” the number of fight sequences necessary for the show. Since actual fighting is very dangerous, actors must develop a technique of showing the illusion of fighting while, many times, not even touching at all! Stage combat actually is very similar to dance because every move is specifically choreographed with incredible precision and it requires a lot of physical awareness. Theater companies will work with a Fight Director to stage fight sequences. Michael R. Petyak is the fight director for PST’s production of *The Outsiders*.



Fight scene for *The Outsiders* film by Francis Ford Coppola.

“A fight director is a position that is obtained through specific training in stage combat, special effect/technical theater elements, general safety protocol, and formal stage director training.

When a fight director works on a production, he works closely with both the director and production team before he walks into a rehearsal room with the actors. Specifically, a props master is the best friend of a fight director and vice versa, due to the nature of working with specific weaponry that is unique to each theatrical piece. After discussing style, expectation, length, measure, objective and safety with a director, the fight director then is prepared to work with the actual performers.

In this particular production of *The Outsiders*, the fight director had to track down two butterfly knives, two switchblades, and some non-firing period firearms. It is the fight director's duty to make sure that all stage weaponry is dulled before having the actors working with the weaponry - this is standard safety protocol. When it comes to working with theatrical stage firearms, there is another safety protocol process, but it can be assured that the audience nor the actors onstage are indeed in no danger while working under these procedures during any production (with either firing or non-firing stage firearms). Let it be noted that the fight director will also make sure that stage weapons are only used onstage, and has a protocol for when actors leave the stage to hand off their weapons to an assistant stage manager.

A fight director will “pre-score” fights before walking into a rehearsal room - like a dance choreographer, it means that the fight director has taken specific notes on where the actors will be placed, and what particular movement, blocking or choreography will be done with

the fights themselves. The reason that it is a “fight director” title, is because without actual acting direction and execution of acting beats within stage fights, the fights themselves would be basic bare-bones choreography that would take the audience out of that particularly elevated emotional moment where a fight happens within a script.

To become a fight director, there are a few different options. Primarily, most Bachelors of Fine Arts programs for Acting in the nation have some sort of Stage Combat course to begin training in all eight recognized base weapons. Outside of these collegiate courses, there are also stage combat courses that will be held by local fight directors and/or organizations that you study with to gain more stage combat experience, and eventually being certified as a fight director. These organizations include: The American Society of Fight Directors, The Sword and the Pen, The Society of American Fight Directors (these are two different societies), and for film and television, the United Stuntmen's Association. “

**-Michael R. Petyak, Fight Director**  
**Prime Stage production of “*The Outsiders*,” March 2020**





# *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton

## In 30 seconds or less...

The Outsiders (1967) is a well-known young adult novel by American writer S.E. Hinton. It tells the story of 14-year-old Ponyboy Curtis and his two older brothers, Soda and Darry. The boys are orphans and struggle to stick together in their lower-class neighborhood, known as the East Side. They and their friends are part of a gang of working class tough street boys called the Greasers.

### Plot Summary

The story begins with Ponyboy walking home from the movies and gets jumped by a group of Socs (or Socials), the rich kids from the West Side who drink, drive fancy cars, and beat up Greasers just for fun. The Greasers fear and hate the Socs because the Socs once beat up Ponyboy's friend and fellow Greaser Johnny Cade.

The night after Ponyboy's run-in with the Socs, Johnny and Ponyboy go to the movies with their friend Dally Winston and chat up two Soc girls named Cherry and Marcia. After the movie, Johnny and Ponyboy are walking the girls home when a group of Socs show up, including the girls' boyfriends, Bob and Randy. The boys have been drinking, which is why Cherry and Marcia had left them and gone to the movies by themselves. Bob turns out to be the same boy who beat up Johnny. To avoid a fight between the boys, Cherry and Marcia agree to go home with Bob and Randy.

When Ponyboy arrives home late, Darry shouts and slaps him, startling both of them. Ponyboy runs off and finds Johnny, and the two boys walk to the nearby park so Ponyboy can calm down. The Soc boys show up again, drunk, and when Bob threatens Johnny while the other boys try to drown Ponyboy in a fountain, Johnny fatally stabs Bob in self-defense. He and Ponyboy tell Dally what happened, and Dally tells them about an old church in the country where they can hide out.

Ponyboy and Johnny hide out in the church for a few days until Dally shows up to tell them that Cherry, Bob's girlfriend, is going to testify in court on their behalf, which makes Johnny decide to turn himself in because he can make a case for self-defense. Dally takes the boys to get a bite to eat, and when they get back, the church is on fire. Ponyboy realizes that a cigarette that one of them hadn't put out probably caused it. Realizing that there's a school picnic going on there, the boys rush inside and manage to save the children trapped in the church, but Johnny is badly injured when a fallen beam breaks his back.

Johnny dies in the hospital as a result of his burns and a broken back, and a devastated Dally allows himself to be killed by the police in a shootout after he robs a store. Ponyboy has a difficult time accepting Johnny's death and all that has happened to him, and his grades begin to drop. When he's assigned to write an essay for English so that he can pass the class, he thinks of the experiences he's had and decides to write his story, because his brothers, his friends, and Johnny's heroism can remind kids that there is always some good to be found in the world.



The Outsiders Fan Art by © 2020 [lewisrockets](#)



## Cool Facts about *The Outsiders*!

*The Outsiders*, S.E. Hinton's coming-of-age novel, is a staple for young readers. Even if you've already delved into Ponyboy's tumultuous adolescence, you can probably still learn something about the young adult classic.

It was PUBLISHED in 1967 by Viking Press. The story in the book takes place in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1965, but this is never explicitly stated in the book.

A FILM ADAPTATION was produced in 1983 and directed by Francis Ford Coppola, and a little-known short-lived television series appeared in 1990, picking up where the movie left off.

A STAGE ADAPTATION was written by Christopher Sergel and published in 1990.

### 1. RIVAL GANGS AT HINTON'S OWN HIGH SCHOOL INSPIRED THE SOCS AND THE GREASERS.

The tense divide between the upper class "Socs" (pronounced "soashes," as in "social") and the lower class "Greasers" at Hinton's high school was so bitter that the gangs had to enter through separate doors. Although Hinton was neither a greaser nor a Soc, the book is written from the point of view of the greaser Ponyboy in an effort to humanize the gang. However, Hinton also refrains from vilifying the Socs, a choice that reflected her belief that things are "rough all over."

### 3. THERE WAS A REASON HINTON WROTE FOR BOYS.

What drove Hinton to write from a male point of view in the first place? As she explains on her website, the initial choice reflected her own sensibility, but it was also strategic. "I started using male characters just because it was easiest. I was a tomboy, most of my close friends were boys, and I figured nobody would believe a girl would know anything about my subject matter. I have kept on using male characters because boys have fewer books written for them, girls will read boys' books, boys usually won't read girls', and (3) it is still the easiest for me."

### 4. *THE OUTSIDERS* HELPED CHANGE THE WAY SCHOOLS TAUGHT LITERATURE.

The emergence of an authentic, relatable novel helped teachers reach students who had grown bored with the use of traditional textbooks in English classes. "I remember going to American Library Association conferences and they were clamoring for something different. We realized there was a real market for books such as *The Outsiders*," Hinton's longtime friend Ron Beuhl told *USA Today* in 2007.

### 5. HINTON'S FANS CONVINCED FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA TO FILM THE NOVEL.

Francis Ford Coppola's 1983 big screen adaptation helped spark the "Brat Pack" genre of the 1980s and jumpstarted the careers of "up-and-comers" like C. Thomas Howell, Rob Lowe, Tom Cruise, Emilio Estevez, Matt Dillon, Patrick Swayze, and Diane Lane. But without Hinton's passionate fans, the director might not have found the project at all. Coppola started considering filming *The Outsiders* after California high school students sent him a petition nominating him as the perfect director to adapt their favorite

### 6. IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST FREQUENTLY CHALLENGED BOOKS OF THE 20TH CENTURY.

Controversial at the time of its publication for its frank portrayal of gang violence, delinquency, underage drinking and smoking, and strong language, the book continues to be challenged. It was ranked #38 on the American Library Association's "Top 100 Most Frequently Challenged Books of the 90s," and has even been banned in some schools. Thankfully, the book also has become a part of many schools' curricula, ensuring that students will be staying gold with Ponyboy for years to come.

From: <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/62766/11-fascinating-facts-about-s-e-hintons-outsiders-its-50th-anniversary>



# *The Outsiders*, Adapted by Christopher Sergel

## What people say:

"S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* is a perfect tale of teenagers as told by a teenager. Playwright Christopher Sergel has done an admirable job of staying true to the story." — **Mauī News**

"It's a nearly universally read novel. Everyone will have an image, a vision or a longing. ... It's a very rare situation when literally every middle-schooler or upper grade-schooler will know the story.

You're working on a hot stage."  
— **Jeff Church**, producing artistic director of The Coterie Theatre in Kansas City, Missouri, one of America's top theaters for young audiences

**The Outsiders** is a full-length drama adapted for the stage by Christopher Sergel from the novel of the same name by S.E. Hinton, who wrote this modern classic when she was 16 years old: a coming of age tale about teens, written by a teen and for teens, that continues to be the best-selling young adult novel of all time. She comments:

"*The Outsiders*, like most things I write, is written from a boy's point of view. That's why I'm listed as S.E. Hinton rather than Susan. (I figured most boys would look at the book and think 'What can a chick know about stuff like that!') None of the events are taken from life, but the rest — how kids think and live and feel — is for real. The characters — Dallas, who wasn't tough enough; Sodapop, the happy-go-lucky dropout; Bob, the rich kid whose arrogance cost him his life; Ponyboy, the sensitive, green-eyed Greaser who didn't want to be a hood — they're all real to me. Many of my friends are Greasers, but I'm not. I have friends who are rich, too, but nobody will ever call me a Soc — I've seen what money and too much idle time and parental approval can do to people. Cool people mean nothing to me — they're living behind masks and I'm always wondering, Is there a real person underneath?"

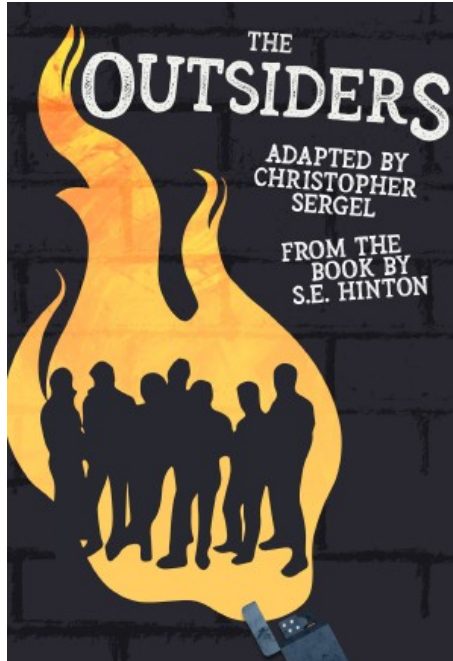
This entirely practical stage adaptation of **The Outsiders** deals with real people, seen through the eyes of young Ponyboy, a Greaser on the wrong side of life, caught up in territorial battles between the have-it-made rich kids — the Socs — and his tough, underprivileged "greaser" family and friends. In the midst of urban warfare, somehow Ponyboy can't forget a short poem that speaks of their fragile young lives:

*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.*

"Robert Frost wrote it," Ponyboy tells Johnny. "I always remembered it because I never quite got what he meant by it."

Cherry, a beautiful Soc, comes to share a special sensitivity with Ponyboy as she discovers that he remembers poems and needs to watch sunsets. At the same time, Cherry's attracted to the older, tougher Dallas, and in a sense she's caught in the violent space between the Greasers and the Socs. While the Socs appear to have everything, the only thing a Greaser has is his friends.

As these young people try to find themselves and each other, as the sadness of sophistication begins to reach them and their battles and relationships reach a resolution, Ponyboy's dying friend, Johnny, sends him a last message... I've been thinking about the poem that guy wrote. He meant you're gold when you're a kid, like green. When you're a kid everything's new, dawn. It's just when you get used to everything that it's day. Like the way you dig sunsets, Pony. That's gold. Keep it that way. It's a good way to be.



From inside cover of the play & <https://www.dramaticpublishing.com/the-outsiders>



## Who's Who in *The Outsiders*?

When looking at the characters in *The Outsiders*, let's first take a closer look at the Curtis family, the main characters of this story.

**Ponyboy Curtis** is the story's narrator and protagonist. He's smart and bookish, which sets him apart from the other Greasers and helps him to see things more deeply, questioning why everyone wastes so much time fighting rather than focusing on what they have in common.

**Darrel (Darry) Curtis** is 20 years old and the eldest Curtis brother. He has been struggling to keep the family together since their parents' death in a car crash eight months before the novel begins. He's allowed to be Ponyboy and Soda's legal guardian as long as they can stay out of trouble. Darry turns down a football scholarship to college and works to support his brothers.

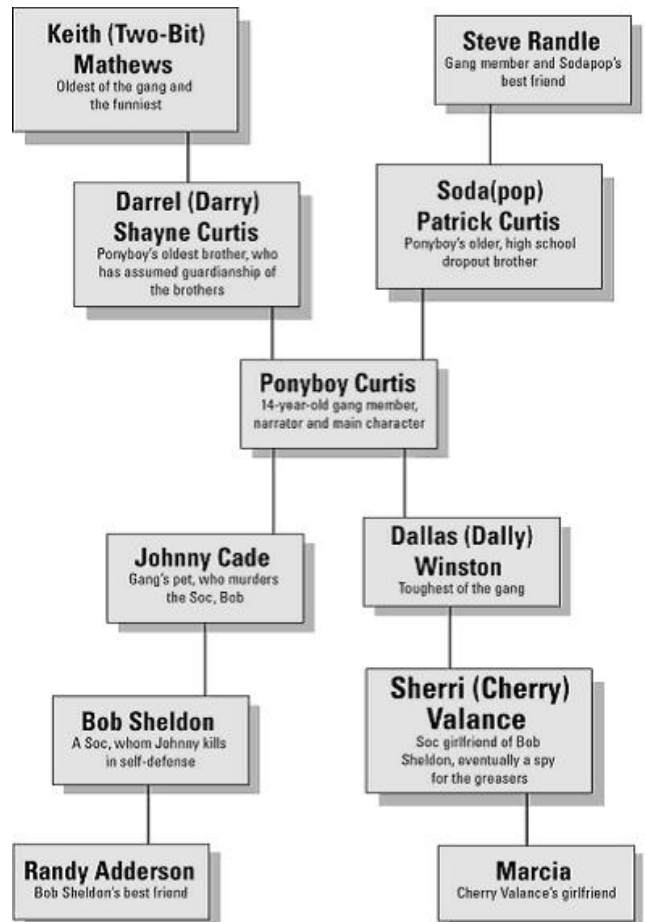
**Sodapop (Soda) Curtis** is 16 years old and the peacemaker of the family. He is happy-go-lucky, always listening and supporting his brothers and friends, and making everyone smile and laugh. Soda's a high school dropout and helps Darry pay the bills by working with his best friend Steve in a gas station. The Curtis brothers' friends, Steve, Two-Bit, Johnny, and Dally, the other members of their gang, are like their family, especially after their parents' deaths.

Now let's take a closer look at the other major characters in the book.

**Johnny Cade** is the gang's pet; his father beats him and his mother ignores him, so the Greaser boys are his surrogate family. His beating at the hands of the Socs makes him paranoid, but when push comes to shove, he stands up for himself and his friends, killing Bob Sheldon, the Soc boy who beat him up, and sacrificing himself to save children from a fire. Johnny dies a hero's death in the hope of restoring some good to a very chaotic world.

**Sherri (Cherry) Valance** is Bob's girlfriend and the mediator, since she is the one who mediates the disagreement between the Greasers and the Socs after Bob's death. She's sweet and dreamy like Ponyboy and understands him in a way that makes him realize just how silly it is for the Greasers and the Socs to be constantly fighting. She talks to Ponyboy about Bob after his death and tells him that she loved him because underneath that tough-boy exterior was just a sweet kid who wanted attention. If he hadn't been so hung up on his own popularity and bad-boy image, maybe he might still have been alive.

**Dallas (Dally) Winston** is the most dangerous member of the gang. He's been in and out of prison since he was 10 and is constantly getting into fights. Life on the streets has toughened Dally, but his remaining drop of humanity shows in his love and protectiveness for Johnny. He wants Johnny to have a better life, and when Johnny dies, Dally gives up all hope. He robs a drugstore and allows the police to kill him in a shootout, putting an end to his rough existence.



Character Map from: <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/o/the-outsiders>

Character Descriptions from: study.com





# BEFORE

## Pre-show Activities

Try these activities to spark curiosity before reading the book or attending the performance.

**Who's in and Whose not (Opinion):** Ponyboy is a Greaser. His new friend Cherry is a Soc! The Socs live in the rich West Side of town while the Greasers come from the poorer East Side. The public tends to forgive the transgressions of the Socs while Greasers are considered “hoodlums.” Though they come from vastly different backgrounds, both Socs and Greasers are negatively impacted by the stereotyping and conflict that surrounds their two groups. Can you find any similarities between your school and the high school in *The Outsiders*?

1. Make a list of different groups that exist at your school.
2. Pick two of the above groups. What do they wear? Do they have a distinct hairstyle? What do they do for fun? How can one tell that a person belongs to this group? Do they all have similar racial or religious backgrounds, social status or intelligence levels?
3. Do these groups get along? Which do and which don't? Why?
4. Is it important to belong to a certain group in your school? Why or why not?
5. Are there gangs at your school? Why do you think gangs form?
6. Where and under what circumstances do you think are gangs most likely to form?

**Purpose:** This activity will help students understand how the characters and world of *The Outsiders* compare to their own schools and community.

**Fitting In:** Ask your students to write journal entries about what it feels like to fit into a group and what it feels like not to fit in. If they claim not to have experienced one of these phenomena, tell them they can use their imaginations and describe what they think it would feel like. If students want to share their writing, make a time and space for them to do so safely; however, many students may choose to keep this particular work private.

**Purpose:** This is another activity that gives students a tangible way to relate to the characters in *The Outsiders* and create a personal connection with the novel or play.

**Music in The Outsiders:** The Socs like The Beatles. Ponyboy, Sodapop and Darry like Elvis, while, Buck Merrill, another greaser, likes Hank Williams. Listen to these artist to create a connection the character and time period!

**Prepare to play the following songs: “I Feel Fine” by The Beatles, “Jailhouse Rock” by Elvis Presley & “Honky Tonk Blues” by Hank Williams.** Write the title of each song on the board and play each song. The students must use single words to describe what they hear for each song. Rather than calling the words out they must come up and write them on the board. This is a popular game because most students love that they can get up any time they want to write a word on the board. By the end of each song there should be plenty of descriptive words. Ask students what types of people might be listening to these songs in the 1960s.

**Purpose:** This will give students an opportunity to connected to the time period and the characters in *The Outsiders* on a fun and personal level.



# DURING

## READING ACTIVITY!

Try the following activity to enliven and enrich the text as they read the novel or play.

**Write a Script:** Christopher Sergel's stage adaptation includes much of S.E. Hinton's original text. Have student read the following excerpt from the scene at the Drive-In Theater and discuss Sergel's choice to include the original language. What does it sound like to read each passage out loud? Consider what word or phrases could be changes and why? Ask your students to re-write this scene in their own way. How would the style change if it included modern language or slang? What do you feel are the most important points to include? Have students perform their re-written scenes for the class.

Script : Scene 2, page 8	Novel: Chapter 2, pages 19& 20
CHERRY- <i>(Has had it)</i> Take your feet off my seat and shut your trap!	"Take your feet off my chair and shut your trap."
DALLAS- Who's gonna make me?	Boy, she was good-looking. I'd seen her before; she was a cheerleader at our school. I'd always thought she was stuck-up.
MARCIA- That's the greaser that jockeys for the Slash J sometimes.	Dally merely looked at her and kept his feet where they were. "Who's gonna make me?"
DALLAS- I know you too. I've seen you around the rodeos. Couldn't forget your moves or those curves.	The other one fumed around and watched us. "That's the greaser that jockeys for the Slash J sometime," she said, as if we couldn't hear her.
CHERRY- It's a shame you can't <i>ride</i> bull half as good as you can talk it.	I had heard the same tone a million times: "Greaser... greaser... greaser." Oh yeah, I had heard that tone before too many times. What are they doing at a drive-in without a car? I thought, and Dallas said, "I know you two. I've seen you around rodeos."
DALLAS- Ooooooh! You two like the stallions or the ponies?	"It's a shame you can't ride bull half as good as you can talk it," the redhead said coolly and turned back around.
CHERRY- You better leave us alone- or I'll call the cops.	That didn't bother Dally in the least. "You two barrel race, huh?"
DALLAS- Oh my, my. You got me scared to death! You ought to see my record sometime, babe. Guess what I've been in for?	"You'd better leave us alone," the redhead said in a biting voice, "or I'll call the cops."
CHERRY- <i>Please</i> leave us alone! Why don't you be nice and leave us alone?	"Oh, my, my"--- Dally looked bored--- "you've got me scared to death. You ought to see my record sometime, baby." He grinned slyly. "Guess what I've been in for?"
DALLAS- I'm never nice. <i>(CHERRY is getting exasperated)</i> Want a Coke?	"Please leave us alone," she said. "Why don't you be nice and leave us alone?"
CHERRY- I wouldn't drink it if I was starving in the desert. Get lost, hood!	Dally grinned roguishly. "I'm never nice. Want a Coke?"
<i>(DALLAS leaves to go to the refreshment stand. To PONYBOY)</i> Are you going to start on us?	She was mad by then. "I wouldn't drink it if I was starving in the desert. Get lost, hood!"
	Dally merely shrugged and strolled off.
	The girl looked at me. I was half-scared of her. I'm half-scared of all nice girls, especially Socs. "Are you going to start in on us?"
<b>Purpose:</b> By making their own choices about language and style, students will be able to decipher the nuances of Hinton's style. Using Sergel's example of adaptation, students will have a model on which to build their own writing. As students listen to the performances of their peers, they will think critically about the creative choices of others.	



# DURING

## READING ACTIVITY CONT.!

Try the following activity to enliven and enrich the text as they read the novel or play.

**Role Playing Game:** Create a role-playing game. Make two decks of cards. One deck displays characters — Ponyboy, Darry, and so on — and the other deck reflects situations — both from the book and made-up. Two class members at a time draw from the character pile and together choose a situation. As they create the scene, the rest of the class must identify the characters and discuss the particulars of the scene.

**Purpose:** *This is another activity that gives students a tangible way to relate to the characters and events in *The Outsiders*. Though it can be humorous, this gives students a chance to be up on their feet, activity learning and interacting with one another.*

FOR MORE IN DEPTH ACTIVITIES, TRY THESE AMAZING LINKS BELOW!

### Discussing Character Traits in The Outsiders

Who Would You choose Character Chart.

Who would you take on a double date? Back you up in a fight? Or, teach you to drive?

Try this activity in the link below to learn more about the characters!

Posted by Keith [schochhttp://howtoteachanovel.blogspot.com/2011/04/discussing-character-traits-in.html](http://howtoteachanovel.blogspot.com/2011/04/discussing-character-traits-in.html)

### Text to Text: 'The Outsiders' and 'Bored, Broke and Armed'

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/09/learning/lesson-plans/text-to-text-the-outsiders-and-bored-broke-and-armed.html>

In this Text to Text lesson plan, we pair a scene from the novel with recent reporting from the South Side of Chicago, where the Times journalist John Eligon spent months with gangs who are “Bored, Broke and Armed.” In both pieces, an “insider” gives us a view of the world through the eyes of “outsiders.” In both pieces, an “insider” gives us a view of the world through the eyes of “outsiders.”



**KEY QUESTION: WHAT CAN WE LEARN BY SEEING THE WORLD THROUGH THE EYES OF OUTSIDERS?**



# AFTER

## POST READING ACTIVITY!

Try these activities to provide reflection and make personal meaning after they have read the text or attended the performance.

**Reflection Snapshots:** After your students attend the performance, ask your students to recall highlights by using their bodies to create frozen “snapshots” of what they saw. Prompts may include: Show me a moment when Ponyboy is afraid, when Darry is worried. Show me a moment that surprised you. Show me a moment in which you saw Ponyboy connect with another character. As students create the moment, ask them to explain their ideas. Pay attention to physical details such as posture or facial expression. Discuss in detail how the actors used physicality to bring the characters to life.

**Purpose:** This activity is a great assessment of the students’ attention to the performance and comprehension of details. It provides struggling writers another means in which to convey their ideas.

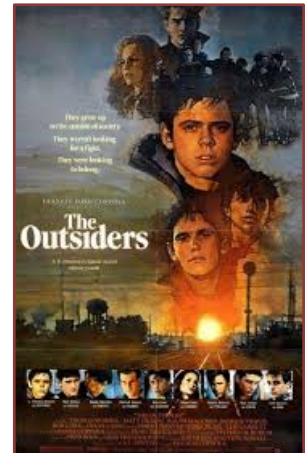


**Make a Cartoon:** Who was your favorite character? What was your scene? Quote? Make a short cartoon of a scene or conversation. One page and a maximum of five images to tell the story. Work individually or pair up. Afterwards the classroom can be decorated with the posters, cartoons and quotes.

**Purpose:** This is another activity to assess student attention to the performance and comprehension of details. It provides struggling writers another means in which to convey their ideas.

**Create a Prequel, Sequel, and Alternate Endings:** This strategy is fun for the students and wildly entertaining to grade. This is an advantage for everyone involved. The students create prequels, sequels, or alternate endings to the story being read. Depending on the level of the student, you can also hold them accountable for continuing within the same writing style as the author. Using this as a post reading activity can help reinforce comprehension as well as demonstrate a student’s knowledge of characters, sequence of events, and dictate their own ideas.

**Purpose:** This activity will help the student to analyze the literature and pay attention to details all while expressing their own creative style.



1983 Movie Poster





# QAR; Question, Answer, Response ACTIVITY!

QAR is a tool to teach students how to approach the task of reading texts and answering questions. By reviewing the 4 different types of questions one can create, students will realize the need to consider information in the text and information from their own background knowledge.



QAR creates a way of thinking about the types of questions that are most appropriate for different points in guiding students through a text. Questions asked before reading are usually *On My Own*-QARs. They are designed to access relevant prior knowledge. In creating questions asked during reading it is important to balance text based and inference questions. *Search and Locate*-QARs should dominate and should build to *The Author and Me*-QARs. Finally, after reading questions are primarily *Author and Me* and *On My Own*-QARs. Please remember that too many *Right There*-QARs may indicate and overemphasis on literal, detail questions.

**QARs helps students recognize whether or not information is present in the text and, if not, that it is necessary to read “between or beyond the lines” to answer the question.**

Have students make up questions in the 4 QAR Categories. Student may work in pairs or individually to formulate there own questions for “The Outsiders”

## In The Book “Right There”

The answer is in one place in the text.

EX: “Who were Cherry and Marcia's boyfriends?”

“How many...” “What is...”  
“Who is...”



## In The Book “Search and Answer”

The answer is in several places in the text.

EX: Why could Johnny and Ponyboy be considered heroes?

“The main idea of the passage is...”  
“What may have caused..”

## In My Head “On My Own”

The answer is not in the text.

EX: “What do you think ‘The Outsiders’ means?”



“Tell me about a time when..”  
“Have you ever..”  
“Think About someone who”

## In My Head “The Author and Me”

The answer is not in the text. Think about how what you know and what is in the text fit together.

EX: “Would you rather be a Greaser or a Soc? Why”

“Something that really surprised me was..”  
“I agree/disagree with...”

Information on QAR from: [QARQuestionAnswerRelationshipTeachingChildrenWheretoseekAnswerstoQuestions.pdf](#)



# Putting it in Context: The Outsiders

## Who? What? When? Where? Why?

The Outsiders takes place in the 1960s, sometime after 1964—we can infer this from references to pop culture icons like The Beatles, Elvis Presley, Paul Newman and to the Ford Mustang, which was produced in 1964. While Hinton never specifies a physical setting for the book, we might guess that it takes place in her hometown of Tulsa, Oklahoma, or a generic "cowboy town" modeled on Tulsa. As far as local culture goes, the young people in the novel are involved in the rodeo, gang activities (fighting, shoplifting, etc.), and they enjoy hanging out at the drive-in theater and at ice cream parlors. The follow pages will give students historical context for *The Outsiders* and offer a glimpse into Ponyboy's world.

## When? 1960's TIMELINE

A defining chapter in America's past, the '60s shaped a generation and sculpted a political landscape that can still be seen today. The story of the '60s is illuminated with images of freedom protests, atom bombs, flower power, the fight for civil rights and a nation divided by war.



March 23, 1960

### **Elvis Leaves Army**

Sergeant Elvis Presley receives honorable discharge after two years in the Army.  
May 16, 1960

February 1, 1960

### **First Sit-In Protests**

A group of students launch protests against segregation at a "Whites only" lunch counter of the Woolworth store in Greensboro, NC.

November 8, 1960

### **Kennedy Elected**

John F. Kennedy wins presidency in tightest election since 1884.

December, 1960

### **Viet Cong Emerge**

An armed coalition of communists and insurgents emerge in South Vietnam.

December, 1960

### **"The Pill" is Born**

Here is the first drug developed for social rather than medicinal purposes. At first, the Pill is only available to married women, but American culture rapidly adopts the new contraceptive choice

April 16-25, 1961

### **Bay of Pigs: Failed Invasion of Cuba**

CIA-backed Cuban exiles launch a failed attempt to remove Fidel Castro from power

November 22, 1963

### **Kennedy Assassinated**

President John F. Kennedy is shot and killed in Dallas, Texas. Lyndon Johnson is quick sworn in as President.

August 28, 1963

### **"I Have A Dream..."**

During the Civil Rights March on Washington, Martin Luther King Jr. delivers one of his most impassioned and memorable speeches to an audience of 250,000.

## What? POP CULTURE REFERENCES IN THE OUTSIDERS

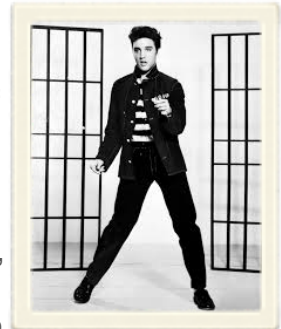
### Paul Newman

"I had only two things on my mind: Paul Newman, and a ride home." Ponyboy Curtis identifies with Paul Newman, a movie star with roles like Eddie Felson in *The Hustler* (1961) and Hud (1963), a movie about a disconnected, rebellious young man.



### Elvis Presley

Elvis was a big role model for the Greasers. Most of the Greasers worshipped him because how tuff he was. For the Greasers to be tuff means to look cool, act cool, and just all around be a cool person. He had tuff hair, tuff look, and a tuff act. Lots of Greasers greased their hair just like Elvis to look tuff and some like Two Bit acted like him.



### The Beatles

The Beatles were a favorite of the Socs. All the Socs tried to be like The Beatles and even style the hair like them. The Greasers notice this too how almost all of the Socs haircuts are like The Beatles.



# Putting it in Context: The Outsiders - When? & What?

## When? 1960's TIMELINE

### Continued

February 9&16, 1964

#### **Beatles Appear on Sullivan Show**

The Beatles make two appearances on Ed Sullivan Show. Over 70 million people watch each show.

August 7, 1964

#### **Gulf of Tonkin**

On Aug 7, Congress passes the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, allowing Pres. Johnson to wage war against North Vietnam without a formal Declaration of War.

February 21, 1965

#### **Malcolm X Assassinated**

The Nation of Islam leader is killed during while delivering a speech in Manhattan's Audubon Ballroom.

December 31, 1967

#### **385,300 U.S. Troops in 'Nam**

More troops are on their way: 33,000 are stationed in Thailand; 60,000 sail offshore

August 25-29, 1968

#### **Violence Scars Convention in Chicago**

Turmoil and Robert Kennedy's death push the party toward chaos, while anti-war demonstrators are beaten by police.

July 20, 1969

#### **One Small Step for Man**

Along with Walter Cronkite, over half a billion people watch as the Apollo 11 lander settles on the lunar surface at 4:19 PM, EDT.

July 2, 1964

#### **Civil Rights Act**

Legislation outlaws discrimination on basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

October 14, 1964

#### **MLK Awarded Nobel Prize**

Martin Luther King Jr. is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

August 6, 1965

#### **Voting Rights Act**

The legislation ends discrimination at the polls.

April 4, 1968

#### **MLK Assassinated**

Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, an event that sent stoke wave reverberating around the world.

November 5, 1968

#### **Richard Nixon Wins Presidency**

October 15, 1969

#### **Two Million Take Part in Peace**

**Moratorium**  
A one-day nationwide action, the Peace Moratorium is the largest demonstration in U.S. history

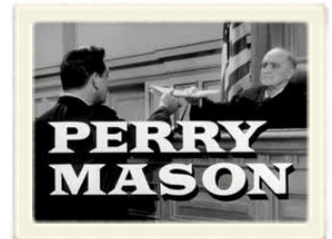
## What? POP CULTURE

## REFERENCES IN THE OUTSIDERS

### Perry Mason

Perry Mason is a television drama from the 1960s that featured a lawyer by the same name. Ponyboy mentions the series in the courtroom in Chapter 12.

"The hearing wasn't anything like I thought it would be. Besides Darry and Soda and me, nobody was there except Randy and his parents and Cherry Valance... I don't know what I expected the whole thing to be like--I guess I've been watching too many Perry Mason shows."  
-Ponyboy



### Blue Ford Mustang

The Ford Mustang was manufactured by Ford from March 1964 until 1973. The introduction of the Mustang created a new class of automobile known as the pony car. It represents the Socs wealth as well as the danger they pose to greasers. When Ponyboy spots the Mustang, he knows trouble is coming.



### Rodeo Barrel Racing

Barrel Racing is a rodeo event in which a horse and rider attempt to complete a cloverleaf pattern around preset barrels in the fastest time. Dally mentioned that he has seen Cherry and Marcia barrel race at the rodeo. "It's a shame you can't ride bull half as good as you can talk it," the redhead said coolly. That didn't bother Dally in the least. "You two barrel race, huh? - chapter 3





## Putting it in Context: The Outsiders - Where?

The **setting** describes the surroundings of the story, including the time and place.

The East Side versus the West Side of the city is the stage for *The Outsiders*. It's possible that author S.E. Hinton chose these surroundings for her novel about teenagers because of her familiarity with this setting. She grew up in Tulsa, OK, during the 1960s. The novel fits her surroundings during her teenage years.

Although S.E. Hinton never explicitly tells the reader when and where the story takes place. We know that information not only because she has shared it in interviews since the book was published but also because of the way she describes it.

An author can convey the setting of a story in two ways:

- The setting of a story could be stated as a specific time and place. For example, "Dally was waiting for Johnny and me under the street light at the corner of Pickett and Sutton." This example tells readers the exact location of the characters.
- It might be a description, such as, "I wanted to be out of towns and away from excitement. I only wanted to lie on my back under a tree and read a book or draw a picture, and not worry about being jumped or carrying a blade or ending up married to some scatterbrained broad with no sense." In these sentences, Hinton somewhat describes the country, but also describes Ponyboy's view of the city.

Hinton's decision to leave out the city name may have helped the story be more relatable to teenagers all over America who are unsure of where they fit in a city divided by social classes.

### East and West

Throughout the story, the author uses the setting as an analogy. The East Side of town represents poverty and dysfunction. The West Side of town symbolizes wealth and power. The surroundings set the stage for the teens' internal conflict about social classes. Much of the pain that the characters endure throughout the story stems from the stereotypes that are placed on them because of where they live. The interactions between Cherry Valance and Ponyboy show the reader that the things that really matter, like respect and common interests, are more important than where you live.

### The Country

Hinton uses rural country settings to symbolize an oasis from the discord of the city. The trip to Windrixville was taken to escape the police, but the time that was spent in the abandoned church was cleansing. Johnny and Ponyboy cut their hair, gain some perspective, and are on their way to accepting responsibility. When the church fire breaks out, the instincts of the boys do not match the stereotype they had been given in the city. When they save the children from the burning building, they are not the 'juvenile delinquents' from the East Side of the city. In that moment, at that country church, they are heroes.

From: [study.com/academy/lesson/the-outsiders-setting.html](http://study.com/academy/lesson/the-outsiders-setting.html)



"We get jumped by the Socs. I'm not sure how you spell it, but it's the abbreviation for the Socials, the jet set, the West-side rich kids. It's like the term 'greaser,' which is used to class all us boys on the East side."  
-Ponyboy

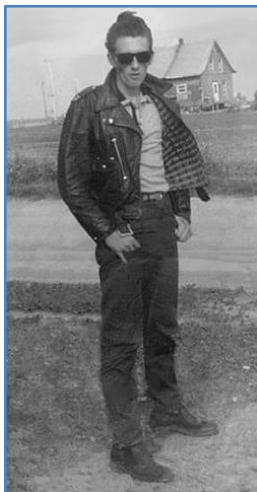




# Putting it in Context: The Outsiders - Who?

## Who were The Greasers?

Greasers were a youth subculture that originated in the 1950's among teenagers in northeastern and southern United States. The main figures of the look were Marlon Brando, James Dean and Elvis Presley.



Example of a typical Greaser from the 1950's. This image was found on Wikipedia.

In the northeast and southern states, the Greasers were one of the first types of street gangs. These greaser gangs existed before gangs were dependent on violence and drugs. The greasers of the 1950's took their name from the "Greaser Act," which was a law created in California against Mexicans to protect Californians from Mexicans who were unarmed, but not peaceful or quiet people. The name "Greaser" was given to the Mexicans that greased carts in the mid-1800's. This job was one of the worst jobs that anyone could have, which made the name "Greaser" one of utmost disrespect.

Generally, greasers were stereotyped as reckless, dangerous, and rebellious juveniles, they were often neglected and misunderstood youths. They originally arose from white working-class families that didn't have access to educational resources or life opportunities, which led to most of them getting involved with criminal activity.

When the teens in the 1950's and 1960's adopted the name "Greaser," they did so with the idea of being rebellious. The greasers were young white men that needed to rebel and they did so with their look and attitude. They hung out in their "hoods," which also gave them the name, "hoods." The name "greaser" later came from their greased-back hairstyle, which involved combing back the hair using hair wax, hair gel, creams, tonics, or pomade.

During the 1950's, women also became a part of greaser culture and were called "Greaser girls." Like men, they joined motorcycle gangs and wore jackets displaying their group's or gang's name.

The Greasers were the rebels who typically went for the "bad boy" look.

### Fashion:

- \*Fitted T-shirts with the sleeves rolled up
- \*Ringer T-shirts
- \*Leather/denim jackets
- \*Black or blue jeans with rolled up cuffs
- \*Motorcycle or army boots
- \*Chuck Taylor All-Stars
- \*Bandannas, chain wallets, black leather gloves, fedoras

From: <https://thegreasersubculture.weebly.com/background-information.html>

## What about the Socs?



The Greasers are at the bottom, then there is a middle class, and at the top of the chain are the Socs. Socs like to 'jump Greasers and wreck houses and throw beer blasts for kicks, and get editorials in the paper for being a public disgrace one day and an asset to society the next.' They have parents that care for them, and have so much time and money that they do not know what to do with themselves besides cause trouble and hope that an adult in their life will finally set some limits for them.

Once you break through the surface, you can see that the Socs were taught at an early age to put up a wall and hide who they really are. They are constantly looking for something to satisfy them, but are unable to find anything because they already have everything they want.

By the end of the story, Ponyboy finds that there are good guys and bad guys on both sides of the city. No one really has it easy.



## Putting it in Context: The Outsiders - Why?

**Teen-agers know a lot today. Not just things out of a textbook, but about living. They know their parents aren't superhuman, they know that justice doesn't always win out, and that sometimes the bad guys win. They know that persons in high places aren't safe from corruption, that some men have their price, and that some people sell out. Writers needn't be afraid that they will shock their teen-age audience. But give them something to hang onto. Show that some people don't sell out, and that everyone can't be bought. Do it realistically. Earn respect by giving it.**

The last paragraph of this 1967 Times essay by S.E. Hinton.

The Outsiders was written by a teenager about teenagers. It is told in a first-person narration style, with the narrator being a 14-year-old boy. Many of the issues that adolescents in the novel face are still very prevalent today. Teenage suicide, pregnancy, smoking(vaping), drinking, and the importance of staying in school are still areas of concern for teens.

Gangs continue to be a part of our society. Gang initiation is not a topic in The Outsiders, but perhaps

today it would be. Gang initiation in the past was something that happened to the prospective member. Today that prospective member is expected to do something to somebody else or something else. The characters in the novel talk little about acquiring new members, because Ponyboy's gang is like family.

The teens in The Outsiders have little or nothing to do with adults. The few times they cross paths, however, the adults are there to help them. When Johnny and Pony are in the country, and Pony stops a local farmer to ask for directions, he answers the questions kindly and without suspicion, and then laughs, "Boys will be boys."

After Johnny's death, Pony leaves the hospital dazed and confused. A man picks him up, and takes him home to his waiting brothers. Today teenagers often frighten adults — especially teenagers who appear to be gang members. Adults assume that a teen who looks like a hood probably has a gun and will use it. Therefore, an adult is usually not going to stop and help a suspicious-looking teen. Teenagers in the 1960s knew that whether they wanted help or not, an adult was usually someone they could turn to in a time of need. Sadly, that is not always the case today. Teenagers often feel as if they are on their own — truly outsiders.

Passage inspired by: <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/o/the-outsiders/critical-essays/has-society-changed>

Check out this article in Rolling Stone Magazine:

### Why 'The Outsiders' Still Matters 50 Years Later

S.E. Hinton's young adult novel about greasers in Oklahoma still resonates with readers

By Margaret Eby

<https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/why-the-outsiders-still-matters-50-years-later-194014/>

Rolling Stone



## Putting it in Context: Literary References in The Outsiders

Literary references occur throughout *The Outsiders*, helping us understand how the characters in the novel view themselves and those around them.

Ponyboy is an avid reader. He read's "Gone with the Wind" to Johnny and recites Robert Frost. Ponyboy even forms a friendship with Cherry Valance, a Soc, as this discuss their shared love of literature, popular music, and sunsets, transcending—if only temporarily—the divisions that feed the feud between their respective groups.

Below are three important references that students will find as that read *The Outsiders*.

*"I had to read Great Expectations for English, and that kid Pip, he reminded me of us—the way he felt marked lousy because he wasn't a gentleman or anything, and the way that girl kept looking down on him."*  
-Ponyboy

### Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

*Great Expectations* traces the life of an impoverished young boy with great expectations for self-improvement, who experiences conflict between his desires to be a good person and to advance in social class.

*"I sat down on a dusty chair and stared. "A paperback copy of Gone with the Wind! How'd you know I always wanted one?" Johnny reddened. "I remembered you sayin' something about it once. And me and you went to see that movie, 'member? I thought you could maybe read it out loud and help kill time or something." - Chapter 5, Ponyboy and Johnny hiding out at the church.*

### Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind*

The novel *Gone with the Wind* (written in 1936) revolves around the Civil War. The Greasers and Socs are also involved in their own kind of civil war in their city. The members of the Greasers are also courageous and gallant like the characters in the novel *Gone with the Wind*. It also symbolizes the closeness between Ponyboy and his friend Johnny.

*'Stay gold, Ponyboy. Stay gold. . .' -Johnny's last word*

### Robert Frost, "Nothing Gold Can Stay"

Written in 1923 and first published in *The Yale Review*. It is first recited aloud by the character Ponyboy to his friend Johnny. In a subsequent scene Johnny quotes a stanza from the poem back to Ponyboy by means of a letter which was read after he passes away. Ponyboy and Johnny put special emphasis on Robert Frost's poem "Nothing Gold Can Stay," which helps them understand that growing up and facing reality is a necessary part of life.

*'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.'*  
-Robert Frost

### Try this activity:

#### *Imagery in the Poem!*

Have your students read the poem 'Nothing Gold Can Stay', by Robert Frost. What words create vivid pictures in your mind? Is there a word that brings back a memory that is really strong?' Create key words that students come up with on the board.  
How does Robert Frost use imagery to bring *Nothing Gold Can Stay* to life? What examples of imagery are found in the poem?

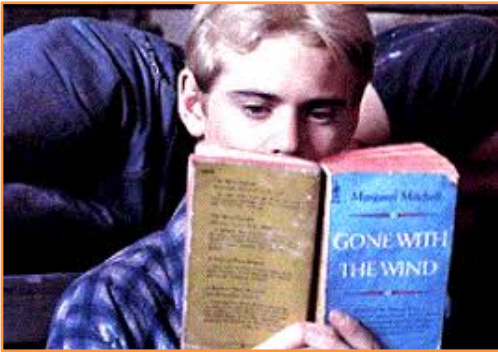




## Putting it in Context: Figurative Language in *The Outsiders*

When an author carefully chooses words to evoke an emotional or sensual response, they are using **figurative language**. Figurative language relies on literary devices or special literary techniques. Here are some examples from *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton.

**Alliteration** is the repetition of similar sounds. When the Socs jump Ponyboy as he is walking home from the movies, Hinton writes, 'They walked around slowly, silently, smiling.' The three words that begin with the letter 's' are an example of alliteration. Ponyboy, the narrator, uses alliteration to draw attention to the way they unexpectedly sneaked up on him and surrounded him before he knew they were there.



Ponyboy reads "Gone with the Wind" to Johnny in the 1983 Film version of *The Outsiders*.

**Allusion** is when an author alludes to, or vaguely mentions, something, and then leaves it up to the reader to interpret it. Johnny's last words, 'Stay gold, Ponyboy. Stay gold. . . ' are an example of allusion. Johnny and Ponyboy talked about Robert Frost's poem 'Nothing Gold Can Stay' while hiding out in the church in Windrixville. Johnny saw that the innocence of childhood provides hope. He sees a great deal of hope for the future in Ponyboy, but understands that the negativity that surrounds them has the ability to make him jaded. Johnny knows that it is too late for him, but he wants Ponyboy to fight against being consumed by violence and hate and find a way out.

**Foreshadowing** is dropping hints to the reader that something is about to happen. Ponyboy leaves a few hints that the church is going to burn when he narrates, 'If that old church ever caught fire there'd be no stopping it.' And, it does, indeed, burn to the ground. Did you feel the anticipation and suspense in this hint?

**Hyperbole** is an exaggeration used to make a point. When Ponyboy caught on fire and Dally hit him to put out the flames, Ponyboy lost consciousness. The next day, Dally used hyperbole to describe his concern. 'Kid, you scared the devil outa me the other day. I thought I'd killed you.' Dally didn't really think he was possessed by the devil or that he had killed Ponyboy, but his use of words show the level of concern that Dally had for Ponyboy in that moment.

**Metaphor** is comparing two unlike things without using the words 'as' or 'like' in the comparison. We'll discuss comparisons using the words 'as' or 'like' later in the lesson. More than once, Ponyboy compares Darry to Superman because of his strength and character, even though Darry is not a superhero from an alien planet that can fly. 'He (talking about Dally) didn't have Soda's understanding or dash, or Two-Bit's humor, or even Darry's Superman qualities.' Ponyboy views Darry as almost untouchable perfection. More than once, Darry is compared to Superman.

**Personification** is giving human characteristics to non-human things. The disobedient wall takes the heat when Dally blows up after Johnny's death. 'Damnit, Johnny. . . ' he begged, slamming one fist against the wall, hammering it to make it obey his will.' The wall can't do anything to help Johnny or Dally at this point, but it takes the heat for emotions that overwhelm Dally.

From: study.com, Karry Gray & Jenna Clayton







## Suggested Reading List: The Outsiders

If this play has piqued your interest, why not check out a book or movie and explore more?  
Visit your local library to borrow one of these titles....



### **More from S.E. Hinton**

***That Was Then, This is Now*** by S.E. Hinton

Since childhood, Bryon and Mark have been as close as brothers. Now things are changing. Bryon's growing up, spending a lot of time with girls, and thinking seriously about who he wants to be. Mark still just lives for the thrill of the moment. The two are growing apart - until Bryon makes a shocking discovery about Mark. Then Bryon faces a terrible decision - one that will change both of their lives forever. (Goodreads)

### **Something Modern**

***The Hate U Give*** by Angie Thomas

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school. The balance is shattered, when she witnesses a shooting and is thrust into the limelight. (Goodreads)

***I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*** by Erika L. Sanchez

Perfect Mexican daughters do not go away to college. And they do not move out of their parents' house after high school graduation. Perfect Mexican daughters never abandon their family. But Julia is not your perfect Mexican daughter. (Goodreads)

### **Try a Classic**

***Catcher in the Rye*** by JD Salinger

The novel covers just two days in the life of 16-year-old Holden Caulfield after he is kicked out of prep school. Disillusioned and agitated, Holden searches for truth and rails against the "phoniness" of the adult world.

***The House on Mango Street*** by Sandra Cisneros

Tells the story of Esperanza Cordero, whose neighborhood is one of harsh realities and hard beauty. Esperanza doesn't want to belong – not to her rundown neighborhood, and not to the low expectations the world has for her. Esperanza's story is that of a young girl coming into her power, and inventing for herself what she will become. (fantasticfiction.com)

### **YA Reads**

***Notes From the Midnight Driver*** by Jordan Sonnenblick

Follow 16-year-old Alex as he deals with his parents' separation, living as a teen in a confusing world, and making amends for his past mistakes. He develops an unlikely friendship that helps him to see the world in a new way.

***Eleanor & Park*** by Rainbow Rowell

Set over the course of one school year, this is the story of two star-crossed sixteen-year-olds. Smart enough to know that first love almost never lasts, but brave and desperate enough to try. (Publisher, Eleanor & Park)



### Check out these Films...

#### ***Rumble Fish***

Based on the novel by Outsiders author S.E. Hinton. Rusty James, an absent-minded street thug, struggles to live up to his legendary older brother's reputation, and longs for the days when gang warfare was going on. (IMDB)

#### ***Kite Runner***

An epic tale of fathers and sons, of friendship and betrayal, an unlikely friendship develops between Amir, the son of a wealthy Afghan businessman, and Hassan, a servant to Amir and his father. As an adult haunted by the childhood betrayal, Amir seeks redemption by returning to his war-torn native land to make peace with himself and reconcile his cowardice. (rottentomatoes.com)

#### ***Boyz n the Hood***

Follows the lives of three young males living in the Crenshaw ghetto of Los Angeles, dissecting questions of race, relationships, violence and future prospects. (IMDB)

#### ***The Perks of Being a Wallflower***

Based on the best-selling novel by Stephen Chbosky, this modern classic captures the dizzying highs and crushing lows of growing up. A moving tale of love, loss, fear and hope - and the unforgettable friends that help us through life. (fandango.com)

-###-

# Slang in The Outsiders

S.E. Hinton wrote in the **vernacular**, or in the informal language of the people in a particular time and area. Through Ponyboy, the first-person narrator, the speech patterns and the vocabulary of these Greasers and Socs comes to life. You'll notice that many of the words have to do with weapons, fighting, or cigarettes and alcohol. This highlights the world Ponyboy and his friends inhabit.

Here's a list of many of the slang words in the novel:

**Beer blast:** or a party with lots of underage drinking

**Bop-action:** a rumble

**Bopper:** meaning a rumbler or gang member

**Cancer stick:** or cigarette

**Cooler:** referring to a jail or prison

**Corvair:** meaning a sports car popular in the 1960s, made by Chevrolet

**Cuss:** or to swear

**Dig:** or to understand or like something

**Fuzz:** which refers to the police

**Hacked off:** or to be angry

**Heater:** or a gun

**Hood:** or someone who is a criminal by nature

**Hot:** or something that is stolen

**Jump:** which means to beat up, often as a surprise assault

**Kicks:** simply meaning fun

**Kools:** which are a popular, cheap brand of cigarettes

**Lift:** meaning to steal

**Lone it:** which refers to being alone, usually as a habit

**Madras:** or checkered fabric, expensive shirts

**One-horse:** or being small and not important

**Pickled:** or drunk

**Rank:** or uncool, not fun

**Rolled:** or robbed

**Rumble:** a gang fight

**Run out on:** or cheat on

**Savvy:** or to understand

**Scrap:** a fight

**Snooker:** which is a game like pool

**Souped up:** or made better for performance or looks

**Tight-knit:** or close

**Tuff:** meaning to be cool, nice, or in fashion

**Turf:** a territory of a specific group or gang

**Weed:** which actually refers to a tobacco cigarette; and lastly we have

**Woofing:** which means to be kidding

“No matter where or when in history you look, you will find groups of people who are “insiders” and groups who are “outsiders” — the haves and the have-nots, the center of society and the margins.”

-New York Times  
Brett Vogelsinger and Katherine Schulten



Please go to our website: [www.primestage.com](http://www.primestage.com) to find this form and send it back directly online! Or you can mail it to us at: Prime Stage Theatre P.O. Box 99446 Pittsburgh, PA 15233.

## THE RESOURCE GUIDE STUDENT EVALUATION FORM

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE \_\_\_\_\_ NAME OF TEACHER \_\_\_\_\_

What part/parts of this story did you enjoy when you were seeing the play?

What part/parts of this play confused you while reading or watching the play?

What part/parts of the stage version helped you understand the book?

What did you learn from reading or seeing this play?

Which character would you like to play?





Please go to our website: [www.primestage.com](http://www.primestage.com) to find this form and send it back directly online! Or you can mail it to us at: Prime Stage Theatre P.O. Box 99446 Pittsburgh, PA 15233.

## THE RESOURCE GUIDE TEACHER EVALUATION FORM

Prime Stage constantly assesses the work provided by our education department. Your feedback is vital to our ongoing need for funding for this program. Please fill out the following forms and mail or email them to the address given below. Thank you.

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Which part(s) of the play and experience you find most helpful for you and your students?

Was the guide useful to you?

Which part(s) did you find most helpful?

How can we improve the theatrical for the future?

