

Junior Cycle English

Read and Respond

The Outsiders

By S.E. Hinton

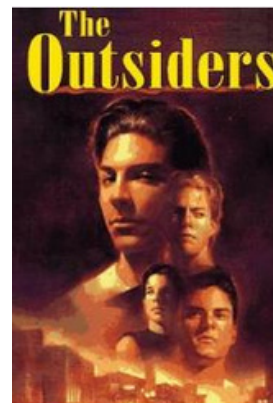


Image courtesy of
Viking Press

Background to the novel:

The novel is set in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1965. The plot centres around the rivalry between two gangs, the Socs (Society) and the Greasers. The members of the Socs are from well-to-do backgrounds, while the Greasers are from working-class backgrounds. Meetings between the rival gangs often results in violence, sometimes with devastating consequences.

Aspects of Learning Outcomes in Focus:

Oral Language 2	Engage actively and responsively within class groups in order to listen to or recount experiences and to express feelings and ideas 🟡
Reading 6	Read their texts for understanding and appreciation of character, setting, story and action: to explore how and why characters develop, and to recognise the importance of setting and plot structure. 🟡★
Reading 11	Identify and comment on features of English at word and sentence level using appropriate terminology, showing how such features contribute to overall effect. ★
Writing 4	Write competently in a range of text forms, for example letter, report, multi-modal text, review, blog, using appropriate vocabulary, tone and a variety of styles to achieve a chosen purpose for different audiences 🟡★

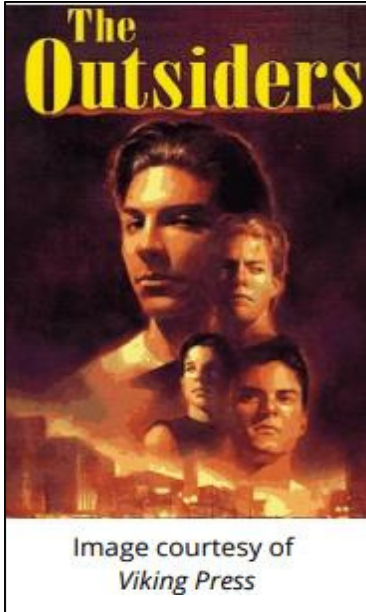
Possible Links to L2LP:

Communication and Literacy	1.16 Use a range of reading strategies, e.g. clues, context, sound, prediction and decoding.
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The following activities might be completed in oral and/or written format.

Pair/Group Work Activity:

Novel Cover



Film Still



Image courtesy of IMDb

1. In pairs/groups discuss the cover of the novel and the still from the film adaptation. What do you think the novel will be about? Share your initial thoughts.
2. In pairs/groups, read the opening line of the novel.

When I stepped out into the bright sunlight from the darkness of the movie house, I had only two things on my mind: Paul Newman and a ride home.

Do you think this is an engaging opening line to the extract. Explain your answer.

Read the following extract from Chapter 12 from *The Outsiders*



I wish I could say that everything went back to normal, but it didn't.

Especially me. I started running into things, like the door, and kept tripping over the coffee table and losing things. I always have been kind of absent-minded, but man, then, I was lucky if I got home from school with the right notebook and with both shoes on. I walked all the way home once in my stocking feet and didn't even notice it until Steve made some bright remark about it. I guess I'd left my shoes in the locker room at school, but I never did find them. And another thing, I quit eating. I used to eat like a horse, but all of a sudden I wasn't hungry. Everything tasted like baloney.

I was lousing up my schoolwork, too. I didn't do too badly in math because Darry checked over my homework in that and usually caught all my mistakes and made me do it again, but in English I really washed out. I used to make A's in English, mostly because my teacher made us do compositions all the time. I mean, I know I don't talk good English (Have you ever seen a hood that did?), but I can write it good when I try. At least, I could before. Now I was lucky to get a D on a composition. It bothered my English teacher, the way I was goofing up, I mean. He's a real good guy, who makes us think, and you can tell he's interested in you as a person, too. One day he told me to stay in after the rest of the class left. "Ponyboy, I'd like to talk to you about your grades." Man, I wished I could beat it out of there. I knew I was flunking out in that class, but golly, I couldn't help it. "There's not much to talk about, judging from your scores. Pony, I'll give it to you straight. You're failing this class right now, but taking into consideration the circumstances, if you come up with a good semester theme, I'll pass you with a C grade." "Taking into consideration the circumstances" ---brother, was that ever a way to tell me he knew I was goofing up because I'd been in a lot of trouble. At least that was a roundabout way of putting it.

The first week of school after the hearing had been awful. People I knew wouldn't talk to me, and people I didn't know would come right up and ask about the whole mess. Sometimes even teachers. And my history teacher--- she acted as if she was scared of me, even though I'd never caused any trouble in her class. You can bet that made me feel real tuff. "Yessir," I said, "I'll try. What's the theme supposed to be on?"

"Anything you think is important enough to write about. And it isn't a reference theme;



I want your own ideas and your own experiences." My first trip to the zoo. Oh, boy, oh, boy. "Yessir," I said, and got out of there as fast as I could. At lunch hour I met Two-Bit and Steve out in the back parking lot and we drove over to a little neighborhood grocery store to buy cigarettes and Cokes and candy bars. The store was the grease hang-out and that was about all we ever had for lunch. The Socs were causing a lot of trouble in the school cafeteria- -- throwing silverware and stuff--- and everybody tried to blame it on us greasers. We all got a big laugh out of that. Greasers rarely even eat in the cafeteria. I was sitting on the fender of Steve's car, smoking and drinking a Pepsi while he and Two-Bit were inside talking to some girls, when a car drove up and three Socs got out. I just sat there and looked at them and took another swallow of the Pepsi. I wasn't scared. It was the oddest feeling in the world. I didn't feel anything--- scared, mad, or anything. Just zero.

Possible Activities:

1. What impact do you think writing in the first person has on this extract
2. Ponyboy's experience of school is described in this extract. Would you like to go to Ponyboy's school? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
3. From the extract discuss your understanding of Ponyboy as a character.
Choose three characteristics that you think describe him and explain why you have chosen these specifically for him.
4. The extract above uses colloquial terms, some of which you will see in the table on the next page. Rewrite these sentences in more formal language while retaining their meaning.

*Colloquial language is informal, everyday language that is often more suitable for conversation rather than in written format.



Colloquial phrase from the extract	In your own words
I always have been kind of absent-minded, but man, then, I was lucky if I got home from school with the right notebook and with both shoes on.	
I was lousing up my schoolwork, too. I didn't do too badly in math because Darry checked over my homework in that and usually caught all my mistakes and made me do it again, but in English I really washed out.	
I mean, I know I don't talk good English (Have you ever seen a hood that did?), but I can write it good when I try. At least, I could before. Now I was lucky to get a D on a composition. It bothered my English teacher, the way I was goofing up, I mean.	
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Possible Extended Writing Activity:

Extracts like this one can provide inspiration for writing. Below are some sentences from this extract. Using one of these sentences as a writing prompt, write the first two paragraphs of a short story using one of the following starter sentences.

- I wish I could say that everything went back to normal, but it didn't.
- I guess I'd left my shoes in the locker room at school, but I never did find them.
- I used to eat like a horse, but all of a sudden, I wasn't hungry.
- The first week of school had been awful. People I knew wouldn't talk to me, and people I didn't know would come right up and ask about the whole mess.

In your opening piece, you might like to consider some of the following:

Imagery Setting

Opening Sentence Adjectives

Adverbs Character

Dialogue/ inner dialogue Colour

