***The Outsiders* Notes ELA 9**

-S. E Hinton published this novel when she was only 17.

-She often writes from a boy’s point of view.

-She uses her initials, instead of her name (Sara Eloise) to reach more readers and to make her story more believable.

-This novel was published in 1967. The language and details set the story in the 1950’s.

-The setting is Tulsa, Oklahoma.

-The story is about the conflict between two gangs of teenagers: the Greasers (lower class/poor) and the Socs (the rich-short for socials).

**Themes**

**1. Bridging the gap between the rich and the poor**

This novel shows that even though there are differences in social classes, members of different social classes can still be friends. The Greasers and the Socs share things in common. Cherry and Ponyboy discuss their love of literature, popular music and sunsets. They see the same sunset on the East and West side of town. The battle between the rich and the poor will be long-lasting, but similar passions can fill the gap between the social classes. Over the course of the novel, Ponyboy begins to see a pattern of shared experiences. He begins to think of Bob as a real person and wonder about him. He has several civil conversations with Randy. He realizes that Cherry was right and that things are “rough all over”. The Greasers and Socs both have it hard in different ways. Ponyboy realizes that the Greasers, the Socs and all young people have to face fear, love and sorrow.

**2. Honour among the Lawless**

The Greasers see honour as their duty. They stand up for each other against enemies and authorities. Dally is represented as a wild criminal. However, Dally let himself be arrested for a crime that Two-Bit committed. While discussing *Gone with the Wind*, Johnny says he views Dally as a Southern gentleman (a man with a fixed personal code of behaviour). The Greasers always fight fair and do not use weapons. Dally, Johnny and Pony honourably sacrifice for others, showing that honour and good qualities can exist in characters who act out outside of the law. For example, Johnny and Pony saving the kids from the burning building, Johnny saying it was worth dying to save those kids, and Dally helping Johnny and Pony escape, and then saving them from the fire.

**3. Prejudice and people are not what they seem**

People assume that the Greasers are bad simply because they look “hood”, but the novel shows how they have good qualities. Johnny, Pony and Dally are heroes. People think the Socs have it made because they are rich, but they have problems as well. They are numb and can’t feel emotion. Bob kept trying to get his parents to tell him no. Pony thinks that Darry is too harsh and strict and doesn’t care about him. He realizes throughout the novel, that Darry does love him, and is trying to make a good life for him. Pony describes how he gets judged by others. For example, the reaction he got when he pulled a switchblade out in biology class. Dally appears tough and acts like he doesn’t care about anything. However, when Johnny dies, we find out that he loves Johnny.

**Symbols**

**1. Cars**

Cars represent the Socs power and wealth and the Greasers’ vulnerability. Because they cannot afford “tuff” cars, they must walk around and may be easily jumped. The Socs have more protection and mobility. Darry, Sodapop and Steve fix cars. This symbolizes how the Greasers have a more hands on and well rounded experience than the Socs with the reality of life. Also, the fact that the Greasers must service and care for the Socs cars, shows how the Socs hold power over the Greasers. The cars are a symbol of the class distinction. The Socs drive Corvairs, Mustangs and Corvettes.

**2.** **Bob’s Rings**

Throughout literature, rings and jewellery have been symbols of wealth. The rings in this novel represent the physical power that accompanies wealth. By using his rings as weapons, Bob takes advantage of his economic superiority over Johnny and the other Greasers by using his wealth to injure them.

**3. Greaser Hair**

By wearing their hair in a specific style, the Greasers set themselves apart from other groups. They are also defying what was considered normal in the 1960’s. Men were expected to keep their hair short then. For the Greasers, their hair represents their identity. Pony feels lost and out of place when he gets a haircut. When the Socs jump Ponyboy at the beginning of the novel, they threaten to cut off his hair. By doing so, they would rob him of his identity.

**Unit Test Format**

-10 multiple choice (1 mark each)

-10 character matching (1 mark each)

-6 True or false (1 mark each)

-4 Long answers:

-One explaining one theme from the novel and supporting it with evidence from the novel (6 marks)

-One on making one connection (choice of text to text, text to self or text to world) (6 marks)

-Two questions from the booklet we did in class (I will narrow these questions down and tell you which ones to study. (6 marks each)

Test is marked out of 50

Note: Remember that long answer questions must be stated, supported and explained. Write in complete sentences. Use evidence from the novel to back up your answers.