***The Outsiders* Sample theme question**

A theme is the central idea or main message in a piece of literature. A powerful theme in S.E. Hinton’s *“The Outsiders”* is that anything that is innocent and pure will eventually fade and become corrupted. This theme is reflected in the Robert Frost poem that Ponyboy recites to Johnny, “Nothing Gold Can Stay”. Ponyboy and Johnny seem to be the most innocent members of the Greaser gang. However, even Ponyboy and Johnny lose their innocence when Johnny murders Bob to protect Ponyboy. After Johnny’s death, Ponyboy begins to act tough. He threatens a Soc with a broken pop bottle, starts talking back to Darry and failing school. In the end, Ponyboy decides to take Johnny’s advice and “stay gold”. Even though he has been affected by pain, loss and corruption, he chooses to see the good in the world. As people grow older, loss of innocence is inevitable, but we can choose to see the good in the world and do positive things with our lives.

**Long Answer Format:**

1. State your answer

1. Define theme

2. State a theme for the novel

3. Example one from the text to support the theme and explain

4. Example two from the text to support the theme and explain

5. Concluding statement related to the theme.

**State**

**Support**

**Explain**