

Reduction Example

Your Name

Teacher's Name

English 9

10 June 2011

Title: *The Outsiders* 1967

Author: S. E. Hinton 1950—

Significance of title: Refers to the “greasers”-- gang of poor kids who are looked down upon or left out by others.

Characterization: **Socs:** West-side rich kids. **Greasers:** Poorer, middle class. **Ponyboy Curtis,** narrator, greaser. Hates Socs. Learns that some are good. **Johnny Cade:** little, but tough. Has integrity. Peacemaker. Rescuer. **Cherry:** Soc girl; sees a little bit beyond stereotypes. **Dallas “Dally” Winston:** Violent, hard Greaser; protective of Johnny.

Setting: Oklahoma. 1960's. Tense atmosphere between rival “gangs.” Division between East Side and West Side.

Point of View: First person point of view. Narrated by Ponyboy.

Summary: Gang of Soc boys attack Ponyboy. greasers protect him. Ponyboy meets Soc girl. She likes him and Johnny, but boyfriends are jealous and start a fight. Ponyboy knocked unconscious, wakes up with a dead Soc next to him. Johnny says he killed the Soc. to protect Ponyboy. Turning to Dally, he tells them to hide out in a church. The church catches fire and Ponyboy and Johnny rescue the children who are trapped in the fire. Dally rescues them, but Johnny hospitalized, with serious injuries. In major rumble between the greasers and Socs, greasers win. Johnny dies from injuries from the fire, which sends Dally into a grief-driven frenzy. Robs a grocery store. The police search for him. When Dally raises his gun, they kill him. **Subplot:** death of Ponyboy's parents. Mirrored tension between Ponyboy and older brother/authority figure. Ponyboy struggles with events of his life both in the gang/in the family. Turns to writing to tell the story.

Tone: Serious. Author is sympathetic to plight of the poor kids. Ends on positive note. Hopeful. Future looks better.

Style: Conversational. Use of dialogue. Slang. “*Ya kill ‘em with switchblades, too, don’t ya kid?*” Straight narrative—chronological order. Capitalizes *S* in Soc, but uses lower case *g* for greasers. Dream sequences about dead parents. Hinton develops greaser characters/not so much Socs. Allusions: *Gone With the Wind*; *Great Expectations*.

Theme: See beyond the surface. Acceptance of differences. Money doesn't make you a better person.

Symbols: Long hair=defying authority, separation between classes. Cars=Soc superiority in terms of money, transportation—the haves and the have nots.

Quotes: “Stay gold.” Dying words of Johnny. References Robert Frost poem. Johnny says, “*I guess we’re different.*” Ponyboy says, “*Shoot, . . . maybe **they** are*” (Connects to theme). “There’s still lots of good in the world.” (Ponyboy able to still see good after all).

Evaluation: Good story, easy to read, easy to understand. Shows what it's like to be a teenager dealing with tension between different groups. Shows that there are good people in all groups—you shouldn't judge someone before you know them. Would recommend to others.