



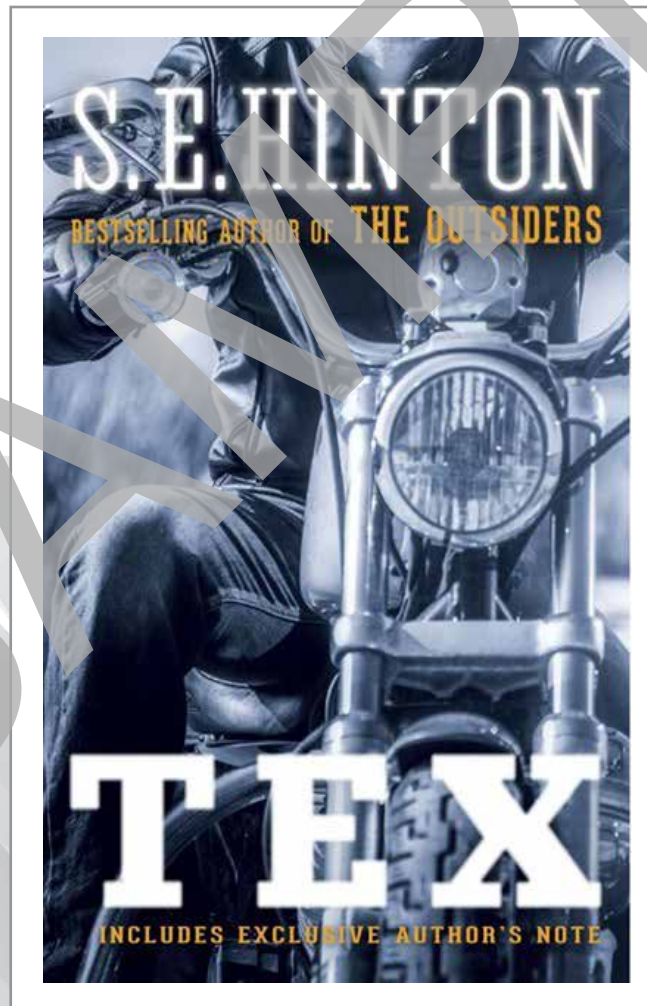
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 9-12**

**COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS**

# Tex

S. E. Hinton



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# Tex

S. E. Hinton

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Brainstorming, decision-making, visualization

### Comprehension

Predicting, comparison/contrast

### Vocabulary

Context clues, synonyms, word mapping

### Writing

Journaling, creative, poetry

### Listening/Speaking

Debate, dramatization, pantomime

### Literary Elements

Characterization, story elements, symbolism, point of view, conflict

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## Introduction to *Tex*

*Tex* is about a 14-year-old Oklahoma boy's relationships with his older brother, best friend, father, and first girlfriend. Through each of these relationships, Tex learns to rely on his intellect as well as his instinct. He also learns that actions have consequences, and that those consequences can be controlled to some extent by one's choice of actions.

During the course of the novel, Tex McCormick deals with the loss of his horse, being beaten up by his brother, kidnapped by a hitchhiker, nearly expelled from school, finding out the man he calls "Pop" is not his biological father, and being shot during a drug deal.

Some critics have said that a chain of events like these is just "too theatrical" and "not representative of real teenagers' lives," and that the language is uninspired and repetitious. Yet Susan Eloise Hinton remains one of the most popular authors among readers of junior-high age. Teen readers seem able to identify with the feelings of Hinton's characters, even if they have not had similar experiences.

In *Tex*, there are themes that are universal for most readers: alienation from parents, being judged on the basis of money and clothes, loss of a beloved pet, exposure to drugs and alcohol, the need to prove oneself by doing daring things, and the sweet confusion of first love. Hinton appeals to her readers so much that teachers report many cases where her books have made the difference between teens reading nothing at all—or reading S.E. Hinton.

*Tex* has won its share of prizes, and in 1982 was adapted for a Walt Disney film starring Matt Dillon. Hinton worked closely with the director, and her own horse played the role of Negrito.

### Awards:

American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults, 1979

One of School Library Journal's Best Books of the Year, 1979

One of Booklists's Reviewer's Choices, 1979

American Book Award Finalist, Children's Paperback Fiction, American Association of Publishers, 1980

One of New York Public Library's Books for the Teen-age Reader, 1980

Sue Hefly Award Honor Book, Louisiana Association of School Libraries, 1982

California Young Reader Medal Nominee, California Reading Association, 1982

## Summary

Fourteen-year-old Tex McCormick has a way with horses. Lately, since his best friend, Johnny Collins, got a motorcycle, he's a little sorry he hasn't spent much time riding his spirited horse, Negrito. He plans to allot more time for Negrito, but he's too late. His 17-year-old brother, Mason, left in charge of Tex and the household while their father is off riding the rodeo circuit, has run out of money. Negrito has been sold, along with Mason's horse, Red. Tex is livid, and Mason handles Tex's explosive reaction by beating him up.

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## Chapter One, pp. 1-24

### Vocabulary

hooves 1	bucked 2	loped 2	canter 2
bridle 3	paddock 3	bribing 4	throwback 5
trademark 5	icebox 6	astounded 7	expression 7
distinctly 8	irritated 9	sarcastic 9	fanatic 9
ignorant 10	leasing 10	nickering 11	spurred 12
clenched 12	shattered 12	flinched 14	Appaloosa 15
whippoorwill 15	throb 18	assault 19	battery 19
abuser 19	influences 20	mock 21	brooding 22

### Vocabulary Activity

After reading the chapter, have students categorize the words on the list as a whole-group exercise. Some suggested categories are:

**Words Having to Do With Horses:** hooves, bucked, loped, canter, bridle, paddock, nickering, spurred, Appaloosa

**Descriptive Nouns:** throwback, trademark, icebox, fanatic, abuser

**Human Actions:** clenched, flinched, mock, assault, battery, shattered, leasing

**Words Having to Do With Feeling or Speaking:** astounded, distinctly, irritated, sarcastic, ignorant, brooding, throb, expression

**A Bird:** whippoorwill

As words are placed in categories, ask for brief definitions to make sure students are aware of why specific words fit into particular categories.

### Discussion Questions

1. What sort of horse is Negrito? (*a spirited, imaginative cow horse*) What color is he? (*negrito = "black" in Spanish*) According to the narrator, how is Negrito different from Red? (*Red doesn't "act like a person," as Negrito does.*) Do you know any animals that "act like people"?
2. Who is Mason? (*Tex's brother*) Who is Johnny Collins? (*Tex's friend*) How old are the three boys? [*Tex and Johnny are under 16 (p. 3) and Mason is 17 (p. 7).*]
3. Who does Tex hope will be coming home soon? (*his father*) Where is he? (*He is riding the rodeo circuit.*) What do you think of a father who leaves two teen-age boys alone for months?
4. What does Johnny look like? (*red-haired, dark blue eyes, freckles, short*) How do you picture Tex?
5. Why does Mason seem so resentful toward Tex? (*Mason has been left with the responsibility of looking after the house, trying to stretch the money, and watching out for Tex.*) How does Mason plan to escape his situation? (*go to college on a basketball scholarship*)
6. What happens when Mason tells Tex he sold the horses? (*Tex, extremely upset, begins yelling and throwing things. Mason beats him up. Tex then can't stop crying.*) How might Mason have handled telling Tex about the horses so that a fight didn't result? Whose fault is it that the fight started, in your opinion?

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7. Why does Tex leave the house and start walking? (*He is looking for the horses.*) Who brings him home? (*Mason*)
  8. Why doesn't Cole Collins want his kids around Tex and Mason? (*He considers them bad influences; he may know about their father's prison record, and he "judges a lot by money."*)
  9. Who is Jamie? (*Johnny's sister*) What advice does she give Tex? (*She suggests he call the police and report Mason for assault and battery.*) Do you think Tex should take her advice?
  10. What does Mason mean when he asks Bob, "You think I could take knowing you had our horses on top of everything else you've got?" (*Mason is envious of the well-off Collins family; the children already have so much more than Tex and Mason that their having Negrito and Red would just add insult to injury.*)
  11. **Prediction:** Will Pop come back soon? Will Tex get Negrito back?

### Writing Ideas

1. Losing Negrito is the worst thing that's ever happened to Tex. Write about a time you lost someone or something important. What was your first reaction?
2. Tex says that Mason hates being poor, and Mason is envious that the Collins children have so much more than he and Tex. Have you ever felt envious of someone whose family has more money than yours? What do they have that you do not? What do you have that they don't? Did you do or say anything about your envious feelings? What?

### Math Activity

Mason and Tex were left with only a few hundred dollars to get through several months. Assuming you did not need to make house payments, and that utilities run \$50 per month, how would you budget \$200 over two months for two people? How much would you need for the basic necessities of living?

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## Chalkboard Activity: Characters Introduced in Chapter One

A number of characters are introduced or mentioned in this chapter. To help students keep them straight, draw a Character Map like the one below on the chalkboard. (Elicit information from the students.) Have them copy the map into their Literary Journals for future reference. As more characters are introduced, have students add them to their maps. (Some later additions are: Lem Peters, Connie, Charlie, Blackie, Mrs. Johnson, Miss Carlson, the hitchhiker, the coach, Ralph Hernesy, Mr. Kencaide.)

