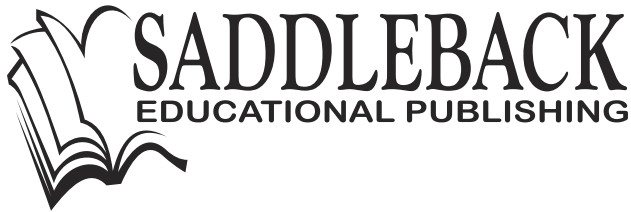


Focus **ON READING**

The Outsiders

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This is a sample not intended for classroom use.



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Introduction/Classroom Management

WELCOME TO *FOCUS ON READING*

Focus on Reading literature study guides are designed to help all students comprehend and analyze their reading. Many teachers have grappled with the question of how to make quality literature accessible to all students. Students who are already avid readers of quality literature are motivated to read and are familiar with prereading and reading strategies. However, struggling readers frequently lack basic reading skills and are not equipped with the prior knowledge and reading strategies to thoroughly engage in the classroom literature experience.

Focus on Reading is designed to make teachers' and students' lives easier! How? By providing materials that allow all students to take part in reading quality literature. Each *Focus on Reading* study guide contains activities that focus on vocabulary and comprehension skills that students need to get the most from their reading. In addition, each section within the guide contains a before-reading **Focus Your Reading** page containing tools to ensure success: **Vocabulary Words to Know**, **Things to Know**, and **Questions to Think About**. These study aids will help students who may not have the prior knowledge they need to truly comprehend the reading.

USING *FOCUS ON READING*

Focus on Reading is designed to make it easy for you to meet the individual needs of students who require additional reading skills support. Each *Focus on Reading* study guide contains teacher and student support materials, reproducible student activity sheets, an end-of-book test, and an answer key.

- **Focus on the Book**, a convenient reference page for the teacher, provides a brief overview of the entire book including a synopsis, information about the setting, author data, and historical background.
- **Focus Your Knowledge**, a reference page for students, is a whole-book, prereading activity designed to activate prior knowledge and immerse students in the topic.

The study guide divides the novel into 6 manageable sections to make it easy to plan classroom time. Five activities are devoted to each section of the novel.

Before Reading

- **Focus Your Reading** consists of 3 prereading sections:

Vocabulary Words to Know lists and defines 10 vocabulary words students will encounter in their reading. Students will not have to interrupt their reading to look up, ask for, or spend a lot of time figuring out the meaning of unfamiliar words. These words are later studied in-depth within the lesson.

Things to Know identifies terms or concepts that are integral to the reading but that may not be familiar to today's students. This section is intended to "level the playing field" for those students who may not have much prior knowledge about the time period, culture, or theme of the book. It also gets students involved with the book, increasing interest before they begin reading.

Questions to Think About helps students focus on the main ideas and important details they should be looking for as they read. This activity helps give students a *purpose* for reading. The goal of these guiding questions is to build knowledge, confidence, and comfort with the topics in the reading.

During Reading

- **Build Your Vocabulary** presents the 10 unit focus words in the exact context of the book. Students are then asked to write their own definitions and sentences for the words.
- **Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice** offers 10 multiple-choice, literal comprehension questions for each section.

Check Your Understanding: Short Answer contains 10 short-answer questions based on the reading.

After Reading

- **Deepen Your Understanding** is a writing activity that extends appreciation and analysis of the book. This activity focuses on critical-thinking skills and literary analysis.
- **End-of-Book Test** contains 20 multiple-choice items covering the book. These items ask questions that require students to synthesize the information in the book and make inferences in their answers.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Focus on Reading is very flexible. It can be used by the whole class, by small groups, or by individuals. Each study guide divides the novel into 6 manageable units of study.

This literature comprehension program is simple to use. Just photocopy the lessons and distribute them at the appropriate time as students read the novel.

You may want to reproduce and discuss the **Focus Your Knowledge** page before distributing the paperbacks. This page develops and activates prior knowledge to ensure that students have a grounding in the book before beginning reading. After reading this whole-book prereading page, students are ready to dive into the book.

The **Focus Your Reading** prereading activities are the keystone of this program. They prepare students for what they are going to read, providing focus for the complex task of reading. These pages should be distributed before students actually begin reading the corresponding section of the novel. There are no questions to be answered on these pages; these are for reference and support during reading. Students may choose to take notes on these pages as they read. This will also give students a study tool for review before the **End-of-Book Test**.

The **Focus Your Reading** pages also provide an excellent bridge to home. Parents, mentors, tutors, or

other involved adults can review vocabulary words with students, offer their own insights about the historical and cultural background outlined, and become familiar with the ideas students will be reading about. This can help families talk to students in a meaningful way about their reading, and it gives the adults something concrete to ask about to be sure that students are reading and understanding.

The **Build Your Vocabulary** and **Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice** and **Short Answer** activities should be distributed when students begin reading the corresponding section of the novel. These literature guide pages are intended to help students comprehend and retain what they read; they should be available for students to refer to at any time during the reading.

Deepen Your Understanding is an optional extension activity that goes beyond literal questions about the book, asking students for their own ideas and opinions—and the reasons behind them. These postreading activities generally focus on literary analysis.

As reflected in its title, the **End-of-Book Test** is a postreading comprehension test to be completed after the entire novel has been read.

For your convenience, a clear **Answer Key** simplifies the scoring process.

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Focus on the Book

Synopsis

Ponyboy Curtis doesn't have it easy. With both parents dead and his strict brother Daryl in charge, he and his other brother Soda do their best to survive on the rough side of town. In a place divided by class, Ponyboy is just another "greaser" who fights the privileged "Socs" of the West side. But the greasers are more than a gang of teenagers; they are as close as brothers and struggle to stay together in a society where appearances and money are valued more than life. For the greasers, innocence is hard to hold onto and growing up fast is expected.

Ponyboy and his friend Johnny are jumped by some Socs. To save Pony from being killed, Johnny kills one of the Socs. The boys go into hiding in an abandoned church. While they are away, some children find the church and become trapped inside when a fire breaks out. Johnny and Ponyboy save the children. Ponyboy is slightly injured; Johnny, mortally so.

A story in which theft and violence is a way of life and education is hard to come by, *The Outsiders* teaches the importance of friendship and tolerance, and how life can change when there is hope.

About the Author

It was 1965 when sixteen-year-old S.E. Hinton began writing her first novel, *The Outsiders*. She was a young adult going through adolescence in an uncertain but hopeful time. Susan Eloise Hinton was advised to use her initials instead of her first name because her publishers thought no one would believe a young woman could write a book like *The Outsiders*. At the time, Hinton followed her publishers' advice and later found that she appreciated the privacy of not having her first name known to everyone.

Historical Background

The Outsiders was written in 1965 during a revolutionary time in the United States when civil rights were being challenged and the country was at war in Vietnam. Many people—black, white, rich, middle-class, and poor—were fighting for equal rights in America. One leader of the Civil Rights movement, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., an African-American pastor, spent his short life speaking out against segregation and spreading his message of nonviolence and tolerance

among all people. Dr. King inspired people to rise up and march in protest against discrimination in schools, on buses, and in communities. He believed that one day people of every color would live freely and justly as expressed in the Declaration of Independence. During the 1963 March on Washington, Dr. King stood on the steps of the Lincoln memorial and delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, one of the most powerful and significant speeches in American history.

America was also at war in Vietnam and teenage boys were dying overseas. Books were being banned from schools, and lifestyles were being threatened by the traditional ideals of society. Many artists came together to creatively demonstrate their anger at the war and their opinions on the draft, censorship, politics, and environmental issues. These artists attracted people from all over the country through song, art, and poetry. Folk singers such as Joan Baez and Bob Dylan and poets such as Allen Ginsberg greatly influenced young people by promoting change and social consciousness. Those who felt isolated and dissatisfied with the politics of the time found a place to express their opinions.

The Outsiders takes place in Tulsa, Oklahoma, an urban town surrounded by rural communities, and where Hinton was raised. Tulsa is the most populated city in Oklahoma next to Oklahoma City, and it felt the effects of the revolution shaking up the country in the 1960s. Tulsa at that time was beginning to address issues such as housing discrimination, job bias, and urban renewal. Movies including *Rebel Without a Cause* with James Dean and *The Wild One* starring Marlon Brando reflected the rebellious attitude of many teens.

Tulsa County marked the dividing line between the Eastern Ozarks and the Western plains, with hills, bluffs, and prairies. Farmland and cattle and horse ranches lie just outside the urban limits of Tulsa. Oklahoma has over 69,000 square miles of land area, is home to more American Indians than any other state, and has a history of outlaws, gangs, and earthquakes. It is bordered by six states: Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas, and it has more man-made lakes than any other state in America.

Focus Your Knowledge

- *The Outsiders*, written in the 1960s, deals with several universal social issues, including class conflict, gangs, and domestic violence, that are relevant today. What do you know about such issues?
- *The Outsiders* takes place in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Locate Oklahoma on a map. What do you know about this region of the country? What do you know about Oklahoma?
- Gangs are a fact of life in *The Outsiders*. The story deals with conflicts between two groups, the rich Socs and the generally poor greasers. What do you know about gangs? Are gangs formed based on social class today, or on some other connection? How do gangs differentiate themselves from each other? What activities do gangs today engage in? Do you think gangs today and gangs in the 1960s share common purposes and problems?
- Several teens in the book have difficult home lives. Ponyboy, the main character, is an orphan who fears that he will be removed from the care of his twenty-year-old brother. What do you know about foster care and other social services in your state? Do you think it is a good idea to keep a group of brothers together, even if the oldest is only twenty, or would it be better for the younger siblings to be cared for elsewhere? Johnny, another important character, lives in an abusive environment. What help might be available to someone in such a situation?

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*Focus Your Reading**Vocabulary Words to Know*

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

rumble—to engage in a gang fight

mugged—attacked with intent to rob

lynx—a wildcat with thick, soft fur, a short tail, and tufted ears

bawling—crying or sobbing loudly

reckless—without care for consequences or danger

vacant—empty; unoccupied

nonchalantly—in an unconcerned manner

incredulous—doubtful; disbelieving; skeptical

stocky—solidly built; sturdy or chubby

roguishly—deceitfully; mischievously

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

Paul Newman is an actor who starred in many films in the 1950s and 1960s. He is famous for his classic good looks, sparkling blue eyes, and method acting. Paul Newman also founded Newman's Own, a food company that donates profits to charities.

An **editorial** is an article in a publication expressing the opinion of its editors or publishers.

Will Rogers was best known as a folksy philosopher. He was a movie star, a comedian, a famous broadcaster, and a political writer. He was raised in Oklahoma and had Cherokee heritage on both sides of his family. He was even in the Guinness Book of World Records for blowing three lassos at once: one around a running horse's neck, one around its rider, and the third around the four legs of the horse!

Corvair and **Mustang** were the names of small sports cars with high performance engines. They were popular drag racing cars in the 1960s.

Rodeos are tournaments in which cowboys' herding skills are tested. Calf roping and bull riding are a couple of the competitions that take place in a rodeo.

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. Why do you think Ponyboy loves going to the movies? What role do the movies play in your life? What do movies do for Ponyboy?
2. What does Ponyboy mean when he says that he does well in school but “doesn’t use his head”?
3. What are some of the reasons Ponyboy gives for Darry’s strict rules? Why doesn’t Ponyboy think Darry loves him?
4. What is Johnny’s life at home like? What do the greasers give Johnny that he doesn’t experience at home?
5. How does Ponyboy feel when the Socs tease him?

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Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use the word in a new sentence of your own.

1. “They gang up on one or two, or they **rumble** each other with their social clubs.”
rumble: _____
2. “There just isn’t a whole lot you can say while waiting to get **mugged**, so I kept my mouth shut.”
mugged: _____
3. “He had an elfish face, with high cheekbones and a pointed chin, small, sharp animal teeth, and ears like a **lynx**.”
lynx: _____
4. “I was smarting and aching and my chest was sore and I was so nervous my hands were shaking and I wanted to start **bawling**.”
bawling: _____
5. “He’s not as tall as Darry, and he’s a little slimmer, but he has a finely drawn, sensitive face that somehow manages to be **reckless** and thoughtful at the same time.”
reckless: _____
6. “Not unless you’re hurt like Johnny had been that day we found him in the **vacant** lot.”
vacant: _____
7. “‘Okay,’ I said **nonchalantly**, ‘might as well.’”
nonchalantly: _____
8. “She gave him an **incredulous** look.”
incredulous: _____
9. “He was about six feet tall, **stocky** in build, and very proud of his long rusty-colored sideburns.”
stocky: _____
10. “Dally grinned **roguishly**. ‘I’m never nice.’”
roguishly: _____

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Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

- Who does Ponyboy think about when he is walking alone and the Socs are following him?
 - Darry
 - Dallas
 - Johnny
- What age are most of the gang members?
 - eight to ten years old
 - fourteen to eighteen years old
 - twenty-two to twenty-five years old
- Who does Ponyboy think looks like a movie star?
 - Sodapop
 - Johnny
 - Steve Randle
- What is Two-Bit Matthews famous for?
 - fixing cars
 - eating four dozen eggs
 - shopping
- Why doesn't Ponyboy live with his mom and dad?
 - He doesn't get along with them.
 - They died in an auto wreck.
 - He chose to live with other relatives.
- Which member of the greasers was in jail at ten years old?
 - Dallas
 - Two-Bit Matthews
 - Darry
- Who is Soda's girlfriend?
 - Evie
 - Sandy
 - Sylvia
- Who was captain of the football team in school?
 - Ponyboy
 - Dallas
 - Darry
- How much does it cost to go to the movies at the drive-in?
 - two dollars
 - one dollar
 - twenty-five cents
- Who works at the gas station?
 - Ponyboy and Darry
 - Two-Bit and Dallas
 - Steve and Soda

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Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. What are some of the things that gang members carry?
2. Why doesn't Darry like movies?
3. What does Ponyboy do when the Socs pull a knife on him?
4. Using the five senses (sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch), how would you describe a Soc's appearance?
5. Using the five senses, how would you describe a greaser's appearance?
6. When Johnny tells Dally to leave Cherry alone, why doesn't Dally react violently?
7. Why do Cherry and Marcia leave their boyfriends at the drive-in?
8. Why aren't Cherry and Marcia afraid of Ponyboy and Johnny?
9. What does Ponyboy say is the difference between a pack and a gang?
10. What happened to Johnny when he went to play football with the greasers?

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Deepen Your Understanding

Social class refers to a group of people who share the same economic level. The Socs and the greasers represent two social classes. What kinds of things separate the East side from the West side? What do you think Cherry means when she tells Ponyboy that “things are rough all over”? Why is this statement important?

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