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Today's Problems

In *The Outsiders*, the teenagers in the story faced realistic problems. Many of these problems face today's teenagers as well. Working in groups of three or four, brainstorm lists of problems that faced the characters in *The Outsiders*. Use a separate sheet of paper. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| alcohol abuse | teenage pregnancy |
| gang violence | search for self |
| parental neglect | peer pressure |

Still working with the same group, circle the problems that you identified in *The Outsiders* that are very real problems for you or teenagers you know.

Next, add current teenage problems that haven't been mentioned in **The Outsiders**-based list.

As a group, select ten problems from your combined list that you feel are the most critical problems facing teenagers today. Write them down in the order of importance in the box below. (#1 is the most critical problem; #2 is second most critical, etc.)

The Ten Most Critical Problems Facing Teenagers Today

Group members: _____

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

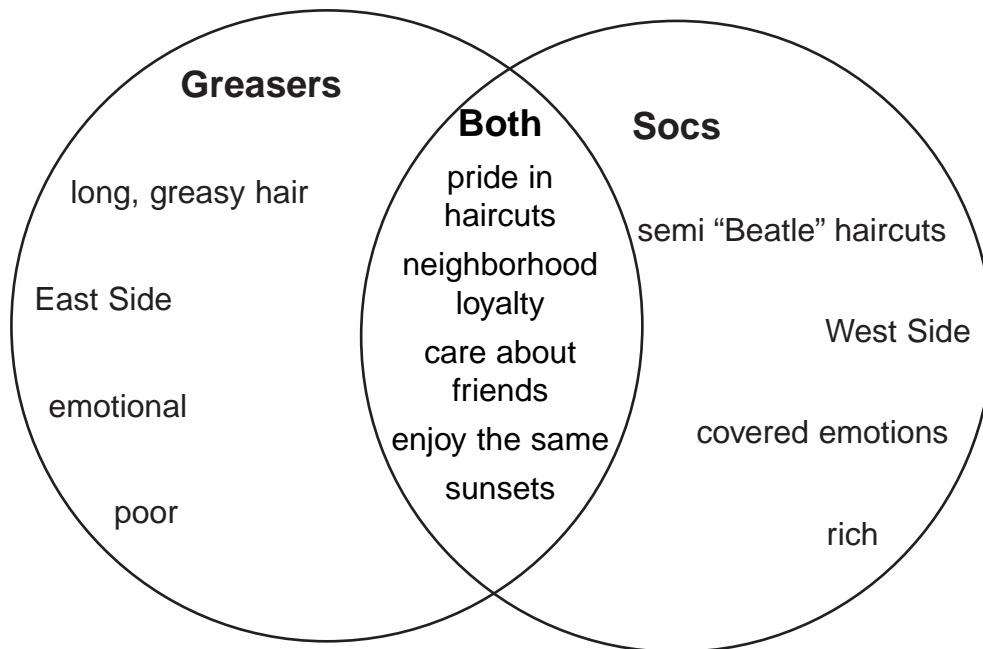
Share your list with the others in your class. How similar are your lists? Are there ways you can face or avoid these problems? Invite a counselor to your class to speak of ways to lessen the effect of these and similar problems in your life.

Greasers and Socs Together!

For this culminating activity, you will be working together to make a bulletin board display that shows the unity that can be achieved if we try to understand people who are different than we are.

Several options are available for the bulletin board focus. Here are some ideas. Encourage your students to devise more ways to show an understanding and acceptance of others.

- Make a Venn diagram that shows the similarities and differences between the Greasers and Socs in *The Outsiders*. Here is a sample.



- Devise a “Rules of Conduct” display that will outline exactly what both Greasers and Socs should do to live harmoniously. Here is a sample.

*We, the teenage inhabitants of Tulsa,
Oklahoma, do promise to obey
these rules of conduct:*

1. Talk first to settle our differences.
2. Meet each person as an individual, not as a member of a group.
3. ...