

RESOURCE 7

Sample Grade 8 Unit Plan: *The Outsiders*

Fiction

Mentor Text/Class Novel: *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton (Penguin Books, 2012)
Standards Addressed: RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3, RL.8.4, RL.8.6

Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
<p><i>Readers slow down and pay attention to the beginning of a novel where there is essential information about setting and character relationships.</i></p> <p>Text excerpt: pp. 1–3 “That’s just the way things are . . .”</p> <p>The teacher models, “What I’ve learned so far about . . .”</p> <p>“ . . . setting is that the town has two distinct social classes, actually three! The greasers, the Socs, and the middle class.</p>	<p><i>Readers think about the setting in ways that go further than basic facts of time and place. They can take a nuanced look at the values, rules, and social norms for race, class, gender, age, sexuality, and more for that time and place.</i></p> <p>Text excerpt: p. 12, “tough and tuff are two different words . . .”</p> <p>The teacher might say, “This tells me what characteristics are rewarded and valued in this society . . .”</p>	<p><i>Readers start imagining each distinct character beyond just his or her physical characteristics.</i></p> <p>Text excerpt: pp. 1–3 citing what we know about Ponyboy, even though we don’t know his name yet</p> <p>The teacher might say, “I’m not thinking of Ponyboy as a generic guy, but I’m using every detail I can glean to get a crisp picture of who he is and more. I’m thinking about what</p>	<p><i>Readers can take note of multiple conflicts in a novel. We’re used to looking for one obvious plot-driving conflict, but there are often underlying conflicts that we can track, too.</i></p> <p>Text excerpt: pp. 31–33</p> <p>There is a major conflict: two social groups don’t get along. This excerpt shows the major violence and conflict between the Socs and greasers, as Johnny, pet of the group, has been</p>	<p><i>Readers can identify antagonists and think about their role in moving the plot forward. It helps if we take time to understand what the antagonists want, and what is their backstory. This also gets us to a more sophisticated, perhaps empathetic understanding of the antagonist beyond “the bad guy.”</i></p> <p>Text excerpt: pp. 35–36 and/or p. 34 “Cherry no longer looked sick, only sad . . . I’ll bet you think the Socs</p>

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and stealing.) It's a different time or era: I can tell because of words like souped-up cars, <i>beer blasts</i> , <i>leather jackets</i> , and <i>shirttails</i> . ". . . characters is that the main character is a greaser, poor, an orphan, and very aware. He is involved with a bad group, but says, 'I don't mean to do things like that.' He's a bit of an outsider in his own group. The boys have 'long hair.' The main character has two brothers: Darry, the older brother, and Soda, the middle brother. He is able to see that ' . . . that's just the way things are.' He doesn't '[say] that either Socs or greasers are better.'	p. 14 "I thought of Sylvie . . . but maybe their boys didn't get arrested . . ." The teacher might say, "This tells me about what's expected for girls in these groups." "Today, in your notebooks, I want you to pay attention to clues about setting beyond time and place. What is expected of people according to race, gender, age, and social class? What are the unspoken norms and values?" Personality traits: Confident, mature for his age, accepting of his lot in life.	he looks like, and also how he talks, what he wants, what problems he faces, who he is close to and who he is not, what his strengths and weaknesses are, and more." "Here are some of my notes about Ponyboy just after the first chapter." Ponyboy Physical traits: Light brown, almost red longish hair, greased, and greenish-gray eyes. Doesn't look tough. Similarities to/differences from others: He's not a stealer like the rest of the group. He looks like Paul Newman, but "he looks tough, and I don't." He's	savagely beaten and is now lying in a puddle of his own blood. But also minor conflicts and inner conflicts occur: they're more subtle but still important to notice. pp. 25–26 Ponyboy not wanting to be seen as young, or not tough p. 4 "It drives my brother Danny nuts when I do stuff like that, because I'm supposed to be smart; I make good grades and have a good IQ and everything, but I don't use my head." p. 49 Darry is like a father figure, not just a brother. Darry,	have it made. The rich kids, the West-side Socs. I'll tell you something, Ponyboy, and it may come as a surprise. We have troubles you've never even heard of . . ." pp. 44–45 It's important to understand that you have to stretch your way of thinking about wealthy and poor to connect to characters' motivations. Bob seems unilaterally jerky—drunk, rude, cruel, misogynistic. Good readers will still try to see him as nuanced, two-dimensional, and human. Why would Bob act this way?
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<p>He seems to accept his 'lot in life' as being born a greaser and that is his identity." ". . . conflict is that there is a theme of character versus society (greasers versus Socs). Socs are held to a different standard—redeemable because of their wealth—in a way the greasers would never be. Also, smaller conflicts occur between characters, such as between Darry and the main character on page 2: '[Darry is] treating me as if I was six instead of fourteen.'" "Look how quickly we can identify these major elements within a few short paragraphs. It's important to always slow down and take note of these</p>	<p>the youngest of three children, an orphan, and introspective, a bit of a loner (e.g., p. 2, "I'm different that way"). He's aware of his precarious situation (e.g., p. 3, "The three of us get to stay together only as long as we behave").</p>	<p>having been worried, slaps Ponyboy when he comes home late. Ponyboy talks back to him. This is an important conflict because it impacts the bigger conflict (without this fight, Ponyboy wouldn't have left the house), and it also mirrors it in violence. "Today, identify what you think is the main conflict, as well as a minor conflict, in your book. Think about problems characters have, even minor characters. Think about subtle inner conflicts within characters, in addition to the story's overall plot line." sure to add details about what you learn</p>	<p>"We've identified and explored the main character or protagonist and done this work in earlier units. Today, in your notebook, identify the antagonist(s). Also, what can we infer about our main characters and their motivations and backstory? Even when we don't get concrete information that rationalizes bad behavior, good readers still see those characters are complex with back stories that justify their actions. How can we see them as nuanced and two-dimensional?" A possible sentence starter to frame your</p>
<p>What he wants: A good relationship with his brother, to not be treated like a kid, to not get caught or separated from his brothers, to not be labeled, and for others not to be defined by these separations. "Today, choose one or two characters to explore, notice everything you can about them,</p>	<p>What he wants: A good relationship with his brother, to not be treated like a kid, to not get caught or separated from his brothers, to not be labeled, and for others not to be defined by these separations. "Today, choose one or two characters to explore, notice everything you can about them,</p>	<p>characters have, even minor characters. Think about subtle inner conflicts within characters, in addition to the story's overall plot line." sure to add details about what you learn</p>	<p>those characters are complex with back stories that justify their actions. How can we see them as nuanced and two-dimensional?" A possible sentence starter to frame your</p>

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before plowing through our first chapters.”

“Readers, today you will take time to read the first pages (or chapter) very carefully, stopping to take note in your notebooks of all the key details about setting, character, and conflict.

and chart it in your notebooks. Make about the characters’ physical traits, personality traits, how they are similar to or different from others, and what they want.”

thinking is “One of the antagonists in my story is [name]. Some of the reasons he/she acts this way may be . . .”

Lesson 6	Lesson 7	Lesson 8	Lesson 9	Lesson 10
<i>Readers can push their thinking beyond their first impression by using thought prompts to explore an idea in more depth.</i>	<i>Readers can identify and track how conflicts escalate throughout the novel, knowing that major conflicts are rarely resolved early on in the book.</i>	<i>Readers can revisit their initial ideas about characters, looking at how characters have developed and changed.</i>	<i>Yesterday we were paying attention to characters’ development. Today we can use those reflections on character change to help us see themes emerging in our novels.</i>	<i>Readers can pay attention to the actions of supporting characters, and notice how those actions can propel the story forward.</i>
Text excerpt: pp. 60–61 Model: “Our initial thinking might be that Dally shouldn’t give them a gun. He’s a bad influence. But . . .” Good readers will push their thinking beyond this initial thinking by	Text excerpt: Chapter 4, when Bob gets killed by Johnny. But as good readers, we know this can’t be the ultimate escalation or climax—it’s too	Text excerpt: pp. 77–78 “The dawn was coming then . . . ‘I guess we’re different’ . . .” We model our new thinking about these	Text excerpt: p. 89: “‘Johnny,’ Dally said in a pleading voice, using a tone I had never heard from him before, ‘Johnny, I ain’t mad at you.	Text excerpt: p. 107 “How do I like what?” p. 61 where Dally gives them the gun and tells them where to go p. 38 where Cherry says, “Stop feeling so sorry for yourself”

asking questions and using thought prompts to explore that first thinking.	early in the book. The teacher can create a chart that tracks this conflict, knowing it will be added to as he or she reads.	characters and how they are changing: "At first I thought Johnny was just the gang's pet. But now I'm thinking there's a lot more to him.	I just don't want you to get hurt."	"I'm thinking that these peripheral characters help us understand the main characters in a new light, and they add to our perspective. If Cherry hadn't said this, or if Dally hadn't moved them to this vulnerable spot, or if the newspaper hadn't shown them as heroes in need of protection, the story wouldn't have been propelled forward."
Here's how I pushed my thinking past this, by using these sentence starters to write more, elaborate, and see where I end up:	"Today, in your notebooks, identify two or three moments, or rising actions, leading up to a major event and write long off this questions: How do these moments impact the greater story? Where are they leading to? How do they create greater suspense or anticipation?"	Here he and Ponyboy are isolated from the rest of their gang, and they feel more comfortable tapping into who they really are. They are free of stereotypes, societal pressures, and internal restraints so that they can be more than who others see them as. That seems more cautious and thoughtful."	"I'm noticing that Dally changes here in a moment of vulnerability and kindness versus his typical hard character. At the beginning he was only tough, but now he's much more nurturing and protective. If I want to use that change to look at theme, I could say what I think Dally's learned, or what S. E. Hinton wants us to think about by having Dally change in this way. For example, Dally's new nurturing side reveals a theme of showing love by protecting others	Cherry hadn't said this, or if Dally hadn't moved them to this vulnerable spot, or if the newspaper hadn't shown them as heroes in need of protection, the story wouldn't have been propelled forward."
For example . . .	moments, or rising actions, leading up to a major event	and they feel more comfortable tapping into who they really are. They are free of stereotypes, societal pressures, and internal restraints so that they can be more than who others see them as. That seems more cautious and thoughtful."	only tough, but now he's much more nurturing and protective. If I want to use that change to look at theme, I could say what I think Dally's learned, or what S. E. Hinton wants us to think about by having Dally change in this way. For example, Dally's new nurturing side reveals a theme of showing love by protecting others	"Today, in your books, look carefully at the supporting characters and ask yourself, 'How do they propel the story forward, or reveal something essential about the main characters?'"
This makes me realize . . .	actions, leading up to a major event	and they feel more comfortable tapping into who they really are. They are free of stereotypes, societal pressures, and internal restraints so that they can be more than who others see them as. That seems more cautious and thoughtful."	only tough, but now he's much more nurturing and protective. If I want to use that change to look at theme, I could say what I think Dally's learned, or what S. E. Hinton wants us to think about by having Dally change in this way. For example, Dally's new nurturing side reveals a theme of showing love by protecting others	"Today, in your books, look carefully at the supporting characters and ask yourself, 'How do they propel the story forward, or reveal something essential about the main characters?'"
This is giving me the idea that . . .	and write long off this questions: How do these moments impact the greater story? Where are they leading to? How do they create greater suspense or anticipation?"	and how they've	more nurturing and protective. If I want to use that change to look at theme, I could say what I think Dally's learned, or what S. E. Hinton wants us to think about by having Dally change in this way. For example, Dally's new nurturing side reveals a theme of showing love by protecting others	"Today, in your books, look carefully at the supporting characters and ask yourself, 'How do they propel the story forward, or reveal something essential about the main characters?'"
This is important because . . .	How do they create greater suspense or anticipation?"	and how they've	more nurturing and protective. If I want to use that change to look at theme, I could say what I think Dally's learned, or what S. E. Hinton wants us to think about by having Dally change in this way. For example, Dally's new nurturing side reveals a theme of showing love by protecting others	"Today, in your books, look carefully at the supporting characters and ask yourself, 'How do they propel the story forward, or reveal something essential about the main characters?'"
This connects with . . .	How do they create greater suspense or anticipation?"	and how they've	more nurturing and protective. If I want to use that change to look at theme, I could say what I think Dally's learned, or what S. E. Hinton wants us to think about by having Dally change in this way. For example, Dally's new nurturing side reveals a theme of showing love by protecting others	"Today, in your books, look carefully at the supporting characters and ask yourself, 'How do they propel the story forward, or reveal something essential about the main characters?'"
On the other hand . . .	How do they create greater suspense or anticipation?"	and how they've	more nurturing and protective. If I want to use that change to look at theme, I could say what I think Dally's learned, or what S. E. Hinton wants us to think about by having Dally change in this way. For example, Dally's new nurturing side reveals a theme of showing love by protecting others	"Today, in your books, look carefully at the supporting characters and ask yourself, 'How do they propel the story forward, or reveal something essential about the main characters?'"
This is similar to . . .	How do they create greater suspense or anticipation?"	and how they've	more nurturing and protective. If I want to use that change to look at theme, I could say what I think Dally's learned, or what S. E. Hinton wants us to think about by having Dally change in this way. For example, Dally's new nurturing side reveals a theme of showing love by protecting others	"Today, in your books, look carefully at the supporting characters and ask yourself, 'How do they propel the story forward, or reveal something essential about the main characters?'"
I used to think . . . , but now I think . . .	How do they create greater suspense or anticipation?"	and how they've	more nurturing and protective. If I want to use that change to look at theme, I could say what I think Dally's learned, or what S. E. Hinton wants us to think about by having Dally change in this way. For example, Dally's new nurturing side reveals a theme of showing love by protecting others	"Today, in your books, look carefully at the supporting characters and ask yourself, 'How do they propel the story forward, or reveal something essential about the main characters?'"
Many people think . . . , but I think . . .	How do they create greater suspense or anticipation?"	and how they've	more nurturing and protective. If I want to use that change to look at theme, I could say what I think Dally's learned, or what S. E. Hinton wants us to think about by having Dally change in this way. For example, Dally's new nurturing side reveals a theme of showing love by protecting others	"Today, in your books, look carefully at the supporting characters and ask yourself, 'How do they propel the story forward, or reveal something essential about the main characters?'"

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The teacher can either write out his or her thoughts after a few of these sentence starters, or even verbally do so by thinking aloud. “Today, in your notebooks, jot down some first thoughts on stickies or in your notebook as you read. Then, use the ten minutes at the end of the reading period (I’ll let you know when) to explore one or two of these in depth, using the sentence starters. We’ll share out some examples of how you ended up with different or more sophisticated thinking by using the thought prompts.”

changed, or what new aspects to them you have learned about.” For example, “[X] used to be . . . , but now he/she is more . . .” or “I used to think [X] was . . . , but now I’m starting to think . . .”

from suffering, even if that protection comes at the cost of violence.” Create an anchor chart showing Dally at the beginning, and how he has changed, and what we can take away from that change. Or ask questions: “What does the author want me to think about this change? What did the character learn?”

“Today in your notebooks, I want you to pay close attention to how characters have changed, and then ask yourself, ‘What does the author want me to realize about that change?’ That may be a theme in this novel.”

Lesson 11	Lesson 12	Lesson 13	Lesson 14	Lesson 15
<p>Readers can pay attention to the shared qualities among seemingly opposite or different characters.</p> <p>Text excerpt:</p> <p>Chapter 1 to look at Socs and greasers</p> <p>pp. 128–129 (Use summary chart of chapters 8 and 9)</p> <p>The teacher creates an anchor chart comparing Bob and Dallas in a T-chart after reading this excerpt:</p> <p>“Both have ability to lead people, both were bound for trouble, Cherry was interested in both of them and afraid of both of them. Both were loyal to their groups . . .”</p> <p>“Today, in your reading, choose two</p>	<p>Readers can pay attention to the title and question its significance, working off the knowledge that the author chose this title above all others for a reason.</p> <p>Text excerpt:</p> <p>pp. 148–149 “The doctor didn’t bat an eye . . .”</p> <p>The teacher thinks aloud or writes in a notebook on a document camera:</p> <p>“I’m thinking the title takes on a whole new meaning here, and I’m realizing how important being an outsider is. Ponyboy didn’t belong in his family or in his school, but being a greaser was the first place he belonged.</p>	<p>Readers recognize and pay attention to repeated symbols and images in a novel.</p> <p>Text excerpt: Chapter 9, when Johnny tells Ponyboy, “stay gold.”</p> <p>The gold symbolizes the better life that he wants Pony to have, and that he should aim to escape the path he’s on and turn toward something brighter.</p> <p>The teacher can stop and look at this expression as meaning something more than simply “gold” because we know Johnny’s words (and S. E. Hinton’s) intend to carry a greater weight. Also, we’ve seen gold before Johnny’s</p>	<p>When we write about theme, we state themes in full sentences that avoid clichés. Themes can be both negative and positive.</p> <p>Text excerpt:</p> <p>throughout One of the themes in <i>The Outsiders</i> is that division between rich and poor exists in terms of possessions and privilege, but not by the shared human traits of love, fear, and hardship. Rather than state the theme as a short phrase (“rich and poor”) or a cliché (“The rich and poor aren’t so different after all”), we can explore this in a bit more detail or specificity.</p>	<p>Readers pay attention to how a novel ends, thinking about what was resolved and also what matters were left unresolved. They can question the author’s purpose behind those choices.</p> <p>Text excerpt: p. 178 “Ponyboy . . .”</p> <p>“I’m thinking this ending circles right back to the beginning. It brings us right back to the first page of the novel, and it started so innocently. Then, he wasn’t looking for this. But life unfolds in such a tragic way. This is the author’s way of saying he wants to warn others about this to guard them</p>

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seemingly different characters and look for the similarities between them. Chart out what common threads they have, and back it up with text evidence."	And now he's even more of an outsider. Also, they're outsiders to Johnny's death." "Within their group, they're each outsiders. They disintegrate as a cohesive group, however much they ever were, when Johnny dies." The teacher could also look at other text references for Ponyboy being an outsider in his classes and in his school. He doesn't belong there because he's in all the smart classes, and yet he's a greaser. But he's also an outsider within the greasers because he doesn't do all the bad things that they do. He's also an outsider in his own family	reference to the Robert Frost poem, in which nothing stays gold forever. "In your own novels, pay attention to recurring images and words because authors use repetition to emphasize connections that are important to understanding the story."	Students practice stating themes in their novels, making sure to use complete sentences and trying to avoid clichéd phrases.	against this tragedy, but the circular path from beginning to end makes this path of violence almost inevitable." "If you've finished your book, you can look at how, when, or where it ends and what impact that has. Consider why the author ended it in that way. Does it back up or reinforce one of the themes from the book? How so? Or does it present a new understanding of a character or theme?" "If you haven't finished your book, you can go back to a book you've already finished and think about why the author ended it that way. Even if you didn't
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because he's not given enough credit—he's overly protected.
 "Today, in your notebooks, take some time to explore the title of your novel. Consider its significance. Why this title and not another? What deeper meanings can it reveal?"

like the way the story ended, think about the author's purpose in crafting it so."

Possible lessons to use, as needed, for supporting reading habits overall

One way we can help ourselves as readers is to be picky about the books we choose.	When we find ourselves confused as we read, we can go back to the last part we did understand and reread from there.	Readers help themselves stay focused during reading time in and outside of class.	Readers connect their theories about this book to other books they've read, sometimes going and getting those books back off the shelf or leafing through notebook entries to jog their memory.
The teacher models by leafing through a stack of books and thinking aloud about which are good fits and which are not. Things to consider emphasizing	The teacher reads and thinks aloud from a text to show how readers keep track of where they get	The teacher might model all the ways to stay focused, and the way to easily get off track—for example, finding a place to sit with less distractions	The teacher models by tying any of the

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include reading the first paragraph or page to see if it feels like a smooth, not laborious, read; whether the topic is interesting and engaging; if it was recommended by other readers or authors you admire; if it suits your reading goals at the moment in terms of genre or other; how much the book jacket “pulls” you in; and more.	confused and how they retrace their steps, going back to the last part that did make sense and trying to reread from there as a way to make sense of the book.	such as not next to a friend, creating a “blind” with an open legal-sized folder upright on the desk, setting timed goals for keeping one’s eyes on the page, using headphones tuned to static as white noise, and making sure the book is of interest.	lessons in the unit to something he or she remembers in a book from a previous unit, or from personal reading. The teacher actually goes and gets that book off the shelf and leafs through it, finding the place in the book that supplies connecting textual evidence, or perhaps going back through old notebook entries to make that connection.
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