

AEP 8th Grade English

2025 Summer Reading Assignment

Please feel free to contact Mrs. Kellye Ketchum (ketchum@aephillips.latech.edu) via email if you have any questions.

REQUIRED READING FOR 8th GRADE ENGLISH

The assignment is based on *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton, a historic story of friendship and belonging in a setting not too unlike our own. You will need to purchase a copy of the novel on Amazon as you will be making annotations in the text as you read.

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton is a coming-of-age novel that explores the clash between two rival gangs: the Greasers, a working-class group, and the Socs, the wealthy upper-class, in 1960s Tulsa, Oklahoma. The story is narrated by Ponyboy Curtis, a 14-year-old Greaser, who finds himself caught in the middle of gang violence and the struggle for belonging. The novel delves into themes of poverty, social class, violence, friendship, and the importance of loyalty.

ASSIGNMENT #1: CHARACTER JOURNALS

For each passage (see following pages), you will have to complete a character journal. The first character journal has been completed for you as a sample. **Make sure that your name (first and last) is on each character journal entry.** The character journals are due on **Thursday, July 25** by 2 p.m. to the box outside the office labeled Summer Reading.

ASSIGNMENT #2: Annotations

Use the annotation guide provided to make 3-5 annotations per chapter in the text. Also, interact with text by adding questions and/or thoughts you have as you read. You will turn in your book with your character journals on **Thursday, July 25.**

ASSIGNMENT #3: TEST/TIMED WRITE

During the first week of school, you will have a timed essay. All instruction for the first week will be based upon this book.

Your timed essay prompt is as follows:

Identify a theme conveyed in the novel *The Outsiders* explain how the theme is developed over the course of the novel.

Keep in mind that the timed essay is an assignment that will be done in class; **do not** complete this essay in the summer. However, if you keep this big question in mind as you read, you will be more prepared for the beginning of English.

***These assignments are due to the office by **Thursday, July 25** by 2 p.m. No exceptions.**

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Instructions for the Character Journals

The purpose of the character journals is to support your understanding of the characters and the theme of the novel. You may choose to stop in your reading of the novel to complete each journal, or you may want to read the entire novel and go back to the assigned passages to complete each journal. The chosen passages are instances in which the main characters encounter some kind of conflict. The way that characters respond to the conflicts ultimately reveals what type of characters they are. The changing characters are going to contribute to **themes** of the novel—the meaning of the work as a whole. For each character journal, you will need to choose two pieces of textual evidence from the passage (the text evidence does not necessarily have to include dialogue) that you think best showcase the conflict the character is experiencing. Copy the textual evidence and citation in the left column, and in the right column, write thoughtful, well-written commentary about each character’s response to conflict. You will be graded based on the quality and insight of your answers.

For each journal entry, you will choose character traits and abstract nouns that correspond with the passages. Make sure that you look at the Character Trait resource and the Thematic Topics/Abstract Nouns resource before getting started, but you do not necessarily have to use words from those lists. A sample character journal is provided.

Character Traits Resource¹

Able	Energetic	Loving	Rude
Accepting	Excited	Loyal	Sad
Adventurous	Expert	Manipulative	Sarcastic
Aggressive	Fair	Materialistic	Self-confident
Ambitious	Faithful	Mature	Self-conscious
Annoying	Fancy	Melancholy	Selfish
Arrogant	Fighter	Merry	Sensible
Articulate	Forgiving	Mischievous	Sensitive
Awkward	Free	Naïve	Serious
Boastful	Friendly	Nervous	Short
Bold	Friendly	Noisy	Shy
Bossy	Frustrated	Obnoxious	Silly
Brave	Fun-loving	Opinionated	Simple
Busy	Funny	Organized	Smart
Calm	Generous	Outgoing	Stable
Careful	Gentle	Passive	Strong
Careless	Giving	Patient	Stubborn
Cautious	Gracious	Patriotic	Studious
Cheerful	Grouchy	Personable	Successful
Clever	Handsome	Pitiful	Tantalizing
Clumsy	Hard-working	Plain	Tender
Compassionate	Helpful	Pleasant	Tense
Conceited	Honest	Pleasing	Thoughtful
Confident	Hopeful	Popular	Thrilling
Considerate	Humble	Prim	Timid
Cooperative	Humorous	Proper	Tireless
Courageous	Imaginative	Proud	Tolerant
Creative	Impulsive	Questioning	Tough
Curious	Independent	Quiet	Tricky
Daring	Intelligent	Radical	Trusting
Defiant	Inventive	Realistic	Understanding
Demanding	Jealous	Rebellious	Unhappy
Determined	Judgmental	Reflective	Unique
Devout	Keen	Relaxed	Unlucky
Disagreeable	Kind	Reliable	Vain
Disgruntled	Knowledgeable	Religious	Warm
Dreamy	Lazy	Reserved	Wild
Eager	Light-hearted	Respectful	Willing
Efficient	Likeable	Responsible	Wise
Embarrassed	Lively	Reverent	Witty

¹ List adapted from http://www.ltl.appstate.edu/reading_resources/Character_Trait_Descriptive_Adjectives.htm and used by the Louisiana Department of Education.

Thematic Topics/Abstract Nouns Resource²

Acceptance	Doubt	Insecurity	Reliance
Achievement	Dreams	Inspiration	Religion
Adolescence	Duty	Integrity	Responsibility
Adoration	Education	Intelligence	Retribution
Adventure	Ego	Jealousy	Revenge
Ambition	Emptiness	Journey	Reward
Anger	Enlightenment	Joy	Risk
Appearance	Enthusiasm	Judgment	Rivalry
Artistry	Envy	Justice	Romance
Atonement	Eternity	Kindness	Sacrifice
Beauty	Evolution	Kinship	Sadness
Belief	Exhaustion	Knowledge	Sanity
Belonging	Exhilaration	Language	Self
Betrayal	Expectations	Law	Self-respect
Bitterness	Failure	Liberty	Sensitivity
Bravery	Fairness	Literacy	Service
Brilliance	Faith	Loneliness	Shame
Brotherhood	Family	Loss	Sin
Calm	Fate	Love	Sisterhood
Charity	Fear	Loyalty	Skill
Charity	Feelings	Maturity	Society
Childhood	Feminism	Memory	Sorrow
Chivalry	Folly	Misery	Status
Classism	Foolishness	Morality	Strength
Comfort	Freedom	Nature	Strictness
Coming of Age	Friendship	Obsession	Submission
Communication	Frustration	Omen	Success
Community	Future	Pain	Survival
Compassion	Government	Passion	Sympathy
Conflict	Gratitude	Patience	Talent
Confusion	Greed	Patriarchy	Thoughtfulness
Connection	Grief	Patriotism	Thrill
Cooperation	Growth	Peace	Truth
Courage	Happiness	Penance	Tyranny
Creativity	Hate	Perfection	Values
Cruelty	Heroic	Perseverance	Vengeance
Culture	Honesty	Pleasure	War
Curiosity	Honor	Poverty	Wealth
Death	Hope	Power	Wisdom
Deceit	Hubris	Pride	Worry
Dedication	Humility	Principle	
Depression	Humor	Punishment	
Destiny	Hypocrisy	Racism	
Devotion	Idea	Reality	
Dexterity	Impression	Redemption	
Disaster	Independence	Regret	
Discovery	Infatuation	Rejection	

² Thematic Topics/Abstract Nouns resource by Emily Howell

Sample Character Journal

Please note that the sample is not one of the assigned passages for character journals.

Passage: Sample Name of Passage:

Pages:

Activity One—Close Reading and Context [RL.8.2, RL.8.10]

In one or two complete sentences, write a brief summary that provides context for the scene. Include **who** is in the scene and **what** is happening.

Victor Frankenstein starts his formal education at Ingolstadt. After being discouraged by Professor Krempe, Frankenstein is encouraged by Professor Waldman to pursue a wide range of knowledge.

Activity Two—Conflict [RI.8.3]

Use the checklist below to indicate what type of conflict Frankenstein encounters. You may check more than one.

- ☒ two or more individuals (individual versus individual)
☒ an individual and his/her environment

- ☐ an individual versus society
☐ an individual versus himself or herself

Activity Three—Evidence and Commentary [RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3]

In the left column, provide textual evidence or quotations from the novel that demonstrate Frankenstein's conflict. In the right hand column, write commentary to explain how he is changing throughout the novel.

Textual Evidence What type of conflict?	Commentary How does he deal with conflict? How is he changing?
"As a child I had not been content with the results promised by the modern professors of natural science... I had a contempt for the uses of modern natural philosophy" (38).	Victor Frankenstein has always had a thirst for knowledge that was unmet. His curiosity—even from a young age—left his appetite for learning unsatisfied.
"So much has been done, ... more, far more will I achieve; ... I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation" (39).	After beginning his formal education, a spark is ignited in the young student. His powerful diction associated with creation demonstrates his overwhelming ambition.

Based on this passage, Frankenstein is curious and but/yet ambitious.
 [character trait] [circle one] [character trait]

Write three abstract nouns/thematic topics that you think correspond with the passage.

PRIDE CURIOSITY AMBITION

Student Name: _____

Character Journal #1

Passage#: 1 Name of Scene: Walking Home

Pages: pp. 1-7

Activity One—Close Reading and Context [RL.8.2, RL.8.10]

In one or two complete sentences, write a brief summary that provides context for the scene. Include **who** is in the scene and **what** is happening.

PONYBOY IS WALKING HOME FROM A MOVIE WHEN HE GETS JUMPED BY A GROUP OF SOCS. THE ONLY REASON HE IS JUMPED IS BECAUSE HE IS A GREASER FROM THE WRONG SIDE OF TOWN.

Activity Two—Conflict [RI.8.3]

Use the checklist below to indicate what type of conflict **Ponyboy** encounters. You may check more than one.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> two or more individuals (individual versus individual) | <input type="checkbox"/> an individual and his/her environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> an individual versus society | <input type="checkbox"/> an individual versus himself or herself |

Activity Three—Evidence and Commentary [RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3]

In the left column, provide textual evidence or quotations from the novel that demonstrate **Ponyboy's** conflict. In the right column, write commentary to explain how he is changing throughout the course of the novel.

Textual Evidence <i>What type of conflict?</i>	Commentary <i>How does he deal with conflict? How is he changing?</i>
"GREASERS ARE ALMOST LIKE HOODS; WE STEAL THINGS AND DRIVE OLD SOUPED UP CARS AND HOLD UP GAS STATIONS AND HAVE A GANG FIGHT ONCE IN A WHILE" (3).	PONYBOY SEES WHAT HE IS AND ACCEPTS HIS LIFE AND HIS FRIENDS AND FAMILY. HE ALSO SEES THE INJUSTICE IN THE WAY GREASERS ARE VIEWED AND TREATED BY OTHERS.
"NOT LIKE THE SOCS, WHO JUMP GREASERS AND WRECK HOUSES AND THROW BEER BLASTS FOR KICKS AND GET EDITORIALS IN THE PAPER FOR BEING A PUBLIC DISGRACE ONE DAY AND AN ASSET TO SOCIETY THE NEXT" (3).	PONYBOY DESCRIBES WHO AND WHAT THE SOCS ARE—KIDS WHO ARE RICHER THAN GREASERS. BECAUSE THEY ARE RICH, THEY GET AWAY WITH DOING TERRIBLE THINGS WITH NO CONSEQUENCES.

Based on this passage, **Ponyboy** is DEFENSIVE and/but/yet RESOLVED.
[character trait] [character trait]

Write three abstract nouns/thematic topics that you think correspond with the passage.

FRIENDSHIP FAMILY SOCIETAL STEREOTYPES

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Passage#: 2 Name of Scene: _____Pages: 39-46**Activity One—Close Reading and Context** [RL.8.2, RL.8.10]

In one or two complete sentences, write a brief summary that provides context for the scene. Include **who** is in the scene and **what** is happening.

Activity Two—Conflict [RI.8.3]

Use the checklist below to indicate what type of conflict **Johnny** encounters. You may check more than one.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> two or more individuals (individual versus individual) | <input type="checkbox"/> an individual and his/her environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> an individual versus society | <input type="checkbox"/> an individual versus himself or herself |

Activity Three—Evidence and Commentary [RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3]

In the left column, provide textual evidence or quotations from the novel that demonstrate Johnny's conflict. In the right column, write commentary to explain how he is changing throughout the course of the novel.

Textual Evidence <i>What type of conflict?</i>	Commentary <i>How does he deal with conflict? How is he changing?</i>

Based on this passage, **Johnny** is _____ and/but/yet _____.
[character trait] [circle one] [character trait]

Write three abstract nouns/thematic topics that you think correspond with the passage.

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Student Name: _____

Passage#: 3 Name of Scene:

Activity One—Close Reading and Context [RL.8.2, RL.8.10]

In one or two complete sentences, write a brief summary that provides context for the scene. Include **who** is in the scene and **what** is happening.

Activity Two—Conflict [RI.8.3]

Use the checklist below to indicate what type of conflict **Ponyboy/friends** encounter. You may check more than one.

- ☐ two or more individuals (**individual** versus **individual**)
- ☐ an individual and his/her **environment**
- ☐ an individual versus **society**
- ☐ an individual versus **himself** or **herself**

Activity Three—Evidence and Commentary [RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3]

In the left column, provide textual evidence or quotations from the novel that demonstrate the boys’ conflict. In the right column, write commentary to explain how he is changing throughout the course of the novel.

Textual Evidence <i>What type of conflict?</i>	Commentary <i>How does he deal with conflict? How is he changing?</i>

Based on this passage, **the boys** are _____ and/but/yet _____.
[character trait] [circle one] [character trait]

Write three abstract nouns/thematic topics that you think correspond with the passage.

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Student Name: _____

Character Journal #4

Passage#: 4 Name of Scene: _____

Pages: 101-109

Activity One—Close Reading and Context [RL.8.2, RL.8.10]

In one or two complete sentences, write a brief summary that provides context for the scene. Include **who** is in the scene and **what** is happening.

Activity Two—Conflict [RI.8.3]

Use the checklist below to indicate what type of conflict **Ponyboy/his friends** encounter. You may check more than one.

- ☐ two or more individuals (**individual** versus **individual**)
- ☐ an individual and his/her **environment**
- ☐ an individual versus **society**
- ☐ an individual versus **himself** or **herself**

Activity Three—Evidence and Commentary [RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3]

In the left column, provide textual evidence or quotations from the novel that demonstrate the boys’ conflict. In the right column, write commentary to explain how he is changing throughout the course of the novel.

Textual Evidence <i>What type of conflict?</i>	Commentary <i>How does he deal with conflict? How is he changing?</i>

Based on this passage, **the boys** are _____ and/but/yet _____.
[character trait] [circle one] [character trait]

Write three abstract nouns/thematic topics that you think correspond with the passage.

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Student Name: _____

Character Journal #5

Passage#: 5 Name of Scene: _____

Pages: 145-149

Activity One—Close Reading and Context [RL.8.2, RL.8.10]

In one or two complete sentences, write a brief summary that provides context for the scene. Include **who** is in the scene and **what** is happening.

Activity Two—Conflict [RI.8.3]

Use the checklist below to indicate what type of conflict **Ponyboy/his friends** encounter. You may check more than one.

- ☐ two or more individuals (**individual** versus **individual**)
- ☐ an individual and his/her **environment**
- ☐ an individual versus **society**
- ☐ an individual versus **himself** or **herself**

Activity Three—Evidence and Commentary [RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3]

In the left column, provide textual evidence or quotations from the novel that demonstrate the boys’ conflict. In the right column, write commentary to explain how he is changing throughout the course of the novel.

Textual Evidence <i>What type of conflict?</i>	Commentary <i>How does he deal with conflict? How is he changing?</i>

Based on this passage, **the boys** are _____ and/but/yet _____.
[character trait] [circle one] [character trait]

Write three abstract nouns/thematic topics that you think correspond with the passage.

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Student Name: _____

Character Journal #6

Passage#: 6 Name of Scene:

Pages: 171-180

Activity One—Close Reading and Context [RL.8.2, RL.8.10]

In one or two complete sentences, write a brief summary that provides context for the scene. Include **who** is in the scene and **what** is happening.

Activity Two—Conflict [RI.8.3]

Use the checklist below to indicate what type of conflict **Ponyboy/his friends** encounter. You may check more than one.

- ☐ two or more individuals (**individual** versus **individual**)
- ☐ an individual and his/her **environment**
- ☐ an individual versus **society**
- ☐ an individual versus **himself** or **herself**

Activity Three—Evidence and Commentary [RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3]

In the left column, provide textual evidence or quotations from the novel that demonstrate the boys’ conflict. In the right column, write commentary to explain how he is changing throughout the course of the novel.

Textual Evidence <i>What type of conflict?</i>	Commentary <i>How does he deal with conflict? How is he changing?</i>

Based on this passage, **the boys** are _____ and/but/yet _____.
[character trait] [circle one] [character trait]

Write three abstract nouns/thematic topics that you think correspond with the passage.
