

Focus ON READING

Vocabulary

READING
COMPREHENSION

The Outsiders

S. E. Hinton

ACTIVATE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Reproducible Activities

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?

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
 - shoplifting
- 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

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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1. Why are greasers and Socs so concerned about their reputation? How are they seen by society?
2. Why does Ponyboy dream about the country?
3. Why does Ponyboy think that Dally could never love anyone or anything?
4. Why does Ponyboy feel bad when he talks about his home life to Johnny?
5. What does Ponyboy believe isn't fair about being a greaser?

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

- When he is talking to Cherry, what does Ponyboy say separates greasers and Socs?
 - money
 - location
 - feelings
- According to Cherry, what is the main difference between greasers and Socs?
 - money
 - location
 - feelings
- Why is it surprising that Ponyboy talks so much with Cherry?
 - He already has a girlfriend.
 - He is usually quiet.
 - He knows Darry will be angry if he finds out.
- Who does Ponyboy usually talk to?
 - Dally
 - Soda
 - Darry
- Why is Johnny so jumpy when he sees the blue Mustang?
 - He thinks it is his father coming to get him.
 - He is naturally very jumpy.
 - That is the car driven by the Socs who beat him up.
- Who was Mickey Mouse?
 - Soda's horse
 - Soda's puppy
 - Soda's car
- In Ponyboy's fantasy, where would there be "plain, ordinary people"?
 - the city
 - the country
 - the suburbs
- According to Bob, what is a greaser?
 - white trash with long hair
 - white trash without a car
 - white trash in need of a bath
- What does Johnny do to protect Ponyboy?
 - He runs for the police.
 - He threatens Bob.
 - He kills Bob.
- Where do Ponyboy and Johnny hide out?
 - in a school
 - in a church
 - in a railroad car

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Questions to Think About

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1. What does Darry tell Ponyboy after the fire? How does it make Ponyboy feel?
2. How does Ponyboy feel about hunting? Why is he afraid to tell Dally he feels this way?
3. How does Johnny feel when he learns that his parents aren't out looking for him?
4. What does Dally mean when he is worried that Ponyboy and Johnny will "get hardened in jail"?
5. Why is Johnny happy to be in the burning church?

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. What special item does Johnny buy for Ponyboy when he buys supplies?
 - a. his favorite food—baloney
 - b. a book he had been wanting to read
 - c. shampoo
2. What is Ponyboy's "pride"?
 - a. his hair
 - b. Dally's jacket
 - c. his madras shirt
3. When can Ponyboy finally relax at the church?
 - a. after he reads his book
 - b. after Johnny cuts his hair
 - c. after he cries
4. What makes Johnny think of Dally as "gallant"?
 - a. the way he coolly accepted blame for something another gang member did
 - b. the way he helped the boys hide out
 - c. his success with girls
5. What does Ponyboy find scary about Dally?
 - a. He is so real.
 - b. He is so violent.
 - c. He is not bright.
6. Who writes Ponyboy a letter while the boys are hiding out?
 - a. Darry
 - b. Cherry
 - c. Soda
7. What does the letter urge Ponyboy to do?
 - a. go to Texas until things quiet down
 - b. go to the police
 - c. come home after a few days of hiding out
8. Who is the "spy" for the greasers?
 - a. Two-Bit
 - b. Cherry
 - c. Tim Shepard
9. Why does Dally hit Ponyboy on the back?
 - a. to keep him from going back into the burning building
 - b. to smother the fire on his back
 - c. to teach him who is boss
10. What does Ponyboy realize is Darry's "silent fear"?
 - a. that Ponyboy will become a criminal
 - b. that Ponyboy will drop out of school
 - c. that he will lose someone else he loves

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. What kinds of things does Ponyboy imagine happened when he wakes up alone?
2. What impresses Johnny the most in *Gone with the Wind*?
3. Who wants to go to the police? Why?
4. What does Dally deliver to Ponyboy when he comes to see him at the hide-out?
5. What type of a gang is Tim Shepherd in? Whose side is he on?
6. Why does Cherry decide to tell people that she will testify for Ponyboy and Johnny?
7. When does Dally start carrying a gun?
8. What will happen if the greasers win the next fight against the Socs?
9. Why do you think Johnny is so determined to save the children in the church?
10. What happens to Johnny in the fire?

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.

hesitation—a pause or doubt before acting, speaking, or deciding

genuine—real; sincere

delinquents—people who fail to do what is required by law or obligation

self-defense—the right to use whatever means reasonably necessary to protect oneself against violence or threatened violence

recognized—known to be something perceived or experienced before

hitch—to catch

charity—help or relief given to the poor

gasp—inhaled sharply with emotion or shock

absent-mindedly—preoccupied; forgetful

aghast—stricken with horror; appalled

Things to Know

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

Public appeal is a term reporters use to describe what is appealing or interesting to the community or people in town.

The **press** refers to the newspapers and television stations that report news, and the people who do that work.

When Steve says that Sandy had to move because “it was either that or get married,” he is suggesting that Sandy is pregnant. At the time of the story, an unmarried pregnant girl would have had few acceptable options.