The Outsiders Unit

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Response to Text

Understanding by Design Themes

• Good literature transcends time and is relevant to modern-day students

Essential Questions

• What characteristics does an admirable person possess?
• Why is there violence in the world?
• How do people deal with grief?
• How do art, music, literature, and film influence culture and societal attitudes?
Planning Questions

Grade Level — 8
Subject — Language Arts

1. What are the learning outcomes for this lesson? Why are these particular learning outcomes appropriate at this time?

The learning outcomes of this lesson are two-fold. One outcome is to have students work together in groups to brainstorm and list character traits of the main characters in the book, The Outsiders, by S.E. Hinton. The other outcome will be for the students to gather the character traits from the group work to use in a character analysis paper as a response to literature assignment.

2. How will you know if your students have achieved the learning outcomes established for this lesson? (i.e. what assessment strategies will you utilize)

We will know that the students have achieved the learning outcomes from the notes they have taken on their graphic organizers. Ultimately, we will know that they generated, and gathered from others, the necessary information to write a meaningful character analysis.

3. Why have you chosen these particular assessment methods and how will you use the results?

The state requires responses to literature as part of the writing assessments for the eighth grade students. Upon completion of the writing assignment, we will be able to determine any areas of need for further instruction.

Planning Questions

a) G. E.’s (Which grade expectations will be addressed in this lesson?)

R8:13 Analyze and interpret elements of literary texts, citing evidence where appropriate by:

Describing characterization (e.g., stereotype, antagonist, protagonist), motivation, or interactions, citing thoughts, words, or actions that reveal characters’ personalities or their changes over time

b) Instructional strategies (Identify the teaching method(s) or approach(es) you plan to use.)

Whole class instruction, small group work, and individual student discussion with the teacher.
Rationale: Multiple approaches to the lesson and changes of states is more likely to engage students.

c) **Grouping of students** *(Individual work, pairs, small groups, whole class)*

Combination of whole class instruction, small group work, and individual work.

Rationale: Multiple forms of instruction is more likely to keep students engaged and on task.

d) **Activities** *(What will students be doing? Include planned time allocation for each activity.)*

The students will listen to the teacher explain the lesson and follow the outline of activities listed on the board *(3-4 minutes)*. They will be broken into small groups, assigned by the teacher, and visit different stations with the group. At each station there will be large easel paper for writing down the groups observations and impressions of each of the main characters in the book, *The Outsiders* *(3-4 minutes per station)*. There will be approximately seven stations corresponding with the seven main characters in the book.

Rationale: Students will be able to write observation/impressions of each character as they rotate. They will have a chance to see other group comments and star any previous comments that they disagree with or have questions about. This will help all students understand each character’s role in the book.

e) **Instructional materials, resources, and technology** *(Attach a copy of handouts, worksheets, questions to be answered, etc.)*

Verbal teacher instruction, easel paper, different colored markers, graphic organizers

Rationale: To achieve instructional goals

f) **Specific modifications for students with behavioral, physical, and/or learning needs** *(How will you differentiate instruction during this lesson for students in this class?)*

Differentiated small groups, differentiated graphic organizers, individual check-ins by the teacher to determine understanding.

Rationale: Differentiated instruction will address the needs of all students.
Lesson Plan

The Outsiders-Reading Comprehension

Vermont Framework of Standards

Reading Comprehension

1.3 Students read for meaning, demonstrating both initial understanding and personal response to what is read. This is evident when students:

1.3.c. Make connections among various parts of a text, among several texts, and between texts and other experiences in and out of school.

Responses to Literature

1.7 In written responses to literature, students show understanding of reading; connect what has been read to the broader world of ideas, concepts, and issues; and make judgments about the text. This is evident when students:

1.7.b. Go beyond retelling of plot by reflecting on what is read and making connections to broader ideas, concepts, and issues

1.7.c. Support judgments about what has been read by drawing from experience, other literature, and evidence from the text, including direct quotations

1.7.d. Clearly articulate a point of view, or state a firm judgment about the piece to be discussed

Goal:

The students will make text connections by evaluating and using information from a variety of sources. The students will express individual perspectives through analysis of personal, social, cultural, and historical events.

Objective:

Students, after reading The Outsiders, will choose from a menu of items to demonstrate an understanding of the book and society around them. Each student will make connections to the book, modern society, and the life of an American teenager today.
Topics include:

Examination of Violence
Responses to Grief
Exploration of Music & Poetry
Advertisements
Expository Essay Writing
News Reporting
Professional Letters

Materials needed:

The book the student has finished reading (The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton)
The folders with the various activities (see attached for examples of tasks)

Procedure:

Prior to the lesson, the student will be introduced to the various activities, have a chance to vet each of them, choose a favorite, and begin thinking about the task. The student will be given the opportunity to work with members of a group who have chosen the same assignment, or they may choose to work on his/her own for this class period. Each student, however, is responsible for an individual project. The project work will continue for several days until a clear deadline emerges (3-5 days).

This lesson is designed to let students begin researching/organizing the assignment requirements. They will have access to laptop computers, as many of the assignments involve some Internet research, and several have relevant web sites listed. During this lesson, the teacher will float around and check in with students about their thoughts and initial organization.

Near the end of class, the teacher will hand out progress forms for the student to complete. The form will give the teacher feedback about the students organization, specific needs, questions, clarification issues, etc.

Assessment:

Work Session
Anecdotal evidence of understanding as the teacher interacts with the group/individual
Progress Forms
Project Completion
Student presentation in front of class
Student self-assessment
Student/teacher conference to discuss the final product
STUDENT HANDOUTS:

- What a Character!
- The Outsiders Project Expectations
- Grief Essay Assignment
- Multiple Essay Topic Sheets
- Journalism — Reporting
- Movie Poster
- Music/Poetry
- Biography
- Recommendation Letter
- Violence Research
The Outsiders Project Expectations

Your project needs to be thoughtful, creative, informative and relevant.

• It must be evident that you put much thought into your project. You need to include your thoughts about the book and your life as a teenager living in America.

• You must show your creative side — show your talents.

• Your project needs to show knowledge of S.E. Hinton’s book, The Outsiders, and demonstrate wider knowledge through research of your topic.

• All of your work needs to be relevant to the book and you as a teenager. What connections can you make to your life and the world around you?
What a Character!

Write a character sketch of a person you know and admire. This person must be a real person you know well. For this assignment, it cannot be a peer. Use the techniques used by S.E. Hinton (The Outsiders) as a guide for your own character sketch.

The purpose of this writing piece is to describe a character in a way that defines who he/she is and what makes him/her tick. Also, it is important for you to include those admirable qualities that have compelled you to choose this person for your writing piece.

Character sketches only give snapshots of people; therefore, you should not try to write a history of the person.

When you write a character sketch, you are trying to introduce the reader to someone. You want the reader to have a strong mental image of the person – to know how the person talks, to know the person’s characteristic ways of doing things, to know something about what the person values.

A character sketch highlights several important characteristics or personality traits of a person. You must provide support detail for each identified trait.

A good way to write a character sketch is to tell a little story about one encounter you had with him or her. If you do that, you could:

- briefly describe a place that is important to the person
- describe what the person would be doing in that space
- explain what they love to do
- mention how the person is dressed
- use details to describe what happened as you spent time together
- capture the person’s gestures or facial expressions
- include direct quotations

Show, don’t just tell. 
Writing a Character Sketch

Include most of the following items about your character:

- gender, age and name
- physical appearance
- physical and personal strengths and weaknesses
- his/her likes and dislikes
- his/her feelings about other people
- feelings of other people about your character
- feelings himself/herself
- his/her personality traits
- his/her beliefs
- your opinion or judgment about the character

1. The introductory paragraph introduces the subject. This is a thesis statement that includes the important character traits (behavior/personality) of the person. This is the place to express your admiration of the person.

2. The body paragraphs each have a topic sentence. A topic sentence is a statement that portrays a particular trait, which will be discussed in detail in that paragraph.

3. Each paragraph includes sufficient detail to support the trait being discussed. What are the most interesting things about the character that will captivate and involve the reader? What are those qualities you admire so much?

4. Conclude with a focused comment about the most important character traits that have been developed and supported throughout the entire paper. What positive impact has the person had on you?

Adjectives often used to describe a person

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bright</th>
<th>interesting</th>
<th>tall</th>
<th>friendly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>curious</td>
<td>short</td>
<td>strange</td>
<td>compassionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brave</td>
<td>talkative</td>
<td>shy</td>
<td>devious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entertaining</td>
<td>caring</td>
<td>responsible</td>
<td>patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fair</td>
<td>helpful</td>
<td>scruffy</td>
<td>energetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>busy</td>
<td>stubborn</td>
<td>stem</td>
<td>active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>funny</td>
<td>loving</td>
<td>daring</td>
<td>quick-tempered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lively</td>
<td>gentle</td>
<td>impatient</td>
<td>calm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quiet</td>
<td>supportive</td>
<td>irritable</td>
<td>mysterious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reliable</td>
<td>faithful</td>
<td>wise</td>
<td>prankster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensible</td>
<td>disorganized</td>
<td>patient</td>
<td>kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slim</td>
<td>smart</td>
<td>reassuring</td>
<td>stocky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strong</td>
<td>trustworthy</td>
<td>fickle</td>
<td>cool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>honest</td>
<td>excitable</td>
<td>mischievous</td>
<td>determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unsmiling</td>
<td>foolish</td>
<td>serious</td>
<td>thoughtful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wild</td>
<td>unhappy</td>
<td>deceitful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grief Essay

Name _______________________

Assignment:

Visit these three web sites on grief —

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry — Children and Grief
http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/children_and_grief

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross & David Kessler — On Grief and Grieving
http://grief.com/questions-answers/on-grief-grieving/

The National Mental Health Information Center — How to Deal With Grief

Now that you have learned about grief, write an essay in which you report what Ponyboy experienced after Johnny and Dally died. Describe Ponyboy’s behavior and what he was feeling. Be sure to use examples from the novel to support your ideas.

How You Will Be Graded

At the end of this activity give your teacher the following:

1. Notes from the three web sites about the stages of grieving.
2. A descriptive essay that reports information about Ponyboy’s experience with grief.

The essay should include the following:

1. Title - Outsiders: Grief Essay.
2. Explanation of what Ponyboy does that is evidence of grief.
3. Explanation of what Ponyboy must have been feeling while he was in mourning.
4. Explanation of what grieving behaviors were typical for Ponyboy, based on your web research.
5. Perhaps some personal experience with grief that reflects your research
5. Good English language skills (capitalization, usage, punctuation, spelling).
Essay Topics

Choose one of the essay topics below and write a well-organized and well-thought-out essay. Be sure to use examples from the novel to support your ideas.

Topic # 1
"Sixteen years on the streets and you can learn a lot. But all the wrong things, not the things you want to learn" (p. 122). Discuss this quote from the novel and how it applies to one of the boy’s lives. What things did they learn? What things might they have liked to learn? Support your ideas with what you know about the characters — use examples from the novel.

Topic # 2
Write an essay explaining how expectations played a role in the lives of the Socs or the Greasers. How did external and internal expectations influence the group’s actions in the novel?

Topic # 3
Write an essay explaining why you believe one of the “main” Greasers could be considered a hero. Include your own definition of hero in the essay, and be sure to explain how the character meets your definition of the word hero. Remember to support your ideas with examples from the novel.

Topic # 4
Write an essay explaining how the Socs or Greasers created problems for society. Look at how society viewed and treated the group. Be sure to support your ideas with examples from the novel.
Journalism — Reporting

"The Outsiders" by S.E. Hinton

Background Information:

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton can be viewed from many angles. The major incidents are still contemporary. Society still deals with arson, gang violence, and police shootings. These kinds of incidents show up in local newspapers all the time.

Activities and Procedures:

Choose one of the following topics and write your own news story. Describe the incident using the information presented in the novel.

a) the murder of Bob

b) the rescue of the children from the burning church

c) the police killing of Dallas Winston

Look at newspaper reports as examples.

Go to this link for some help with professional newspaper reporting.

http://www.freep.com/jobspage/academy/writing.htm
Movie Poster

You will create a movie poster that accurately and creatively displays an invitation to view the new movie, *The Outsiders*.

This movie poster needs to be skillfully drawn and depict the major issues faced by the teenagers in the book. You can create character sketches, important scenes, plot highlights, etc.

Along with the poster, you will write a movie promotion for newspapers/television stations. This might include a brief review of the movie and its actors, a social commentary, etc.

You can use the actual movie poster to give yourself ideas, but you must create an original poster for your project.

*The purpose of the assignment is to get across the issues teenagers faced in the book, but it also needs to relate to the issues faced by teenagers in our society today.*
They grew up on the outside of society.

They weren't looking for a fight.

They were looking to belong.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA

The Outsiders

S.E. Hinton's classic novel about youth.
Music & Poetry

Music – listen to Stevie Wonder’s – Stay Gold
Read Robert Frost’s – Nothing Gold Can Stay
Read Langston Hughes’ – Harlem

Choose one of the following activities:

1. Write an essay about how poetry and music is used to make a statement.

   To do:

   Explain how the poems and song relate to a theme in The Outsiders?

   Why did Hinton choose the Frost poem for her book? Why did Stevie Wonder’s song get used for the movie?

   Nothing Gold Can Stay

   Nature's first green is gold,
   Her hardest hue to hold.
   Her early leaf's a flower;
   But only so an hour.
   Then leaf subsides to leaf.
   So Eden sank to grief,
   So dawn goes down to day.
   Nothing gold can stay.

   Robert Frost, 1923
"Harlem"

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore -
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over -
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

- Langston Hughes, 1951

Stay Gold

Seize upon that moment long ago
One breath away and there you will be
So young and carefree
Again you will see
That place in time...so gold

Steal away into that way back when
You thought that all would last forever
But like the weather
Nothing can ever...and be in time
Stay gold

But can it be
When we can see
So vividly
A memory
And yes you say
So must the day
Too, fade away
And leave a ray of sun
So gold

Life is but a twinkling of an eye
Yet filled with sorrow and compassion
Though not imagined
All things that happen
Will age too old
Though gold.

Stevie Wonder, 1983
2. How could songs or poems illustrate a theme in the book?

To do:

Choose a couple of your favorite songs or poems that speak to themes in the book, and lives of teenagers today.

Explain your understanding of the songs/poems and how they could easily relate to *The Outsiders*, but also how they capture the lives of teenagers today.

or

*Write* a poem or song that reflects your understanding of the book and the lives of teenagers today.
Biography of S.E. Hinton

Visit these web sites to read some well-written biographies of S.E. Hinton.

http://www.sehinton.com/
http://www.sehinton.com/bioframe.html
http://www.enotes.com/outsiders/author-biography
http://www.bookrags.com/S._E_._Hinton

Assignment:

Write your own biography about S.E. Hinton. Be sure to include original thoughts about this woman. What characteristics do you admire? Did you find it difficult to relate to any of her personal characteristics? After reading her most popular book, what could you say about her as an author? Use some strategies from your character sketch pieces.
Recommendation Letter

Write a letter of recommendation for a character in the book, *The Outsiders*. You must consider the kind of job for which the character would be well suited.

Your chosen character has applied for employment at some company or organization. Write a letter of recommendation from you to a hiring committee of that organization. The Monster Career Website will give you directions on how to write the letter. Your letter should include this information:

- how you know this character
- the character's qualifications
- general characteristics about the character that make him/her a good applicant for the job.

1. Proofread your letter.
2. Revise.
3. Rewrite.
4. Type a final copy and turn it in with all drafts and the flowchart attached.

Use the graphic organizer to organize your thoughts on your character’s qualities.

Name of character in the center — characteristics of that person in the arrows.
Gun Violence Research

There are three theories for the cause of destructive aggression:

1) man is naturally violent;
2) violence arises from frustration or human drives, goals, and desires;
3) violence is learned.

OPTION 1

What role did guns play in The Outsiders?

Present to the class a discussion of The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton. Which of the three theories of the causes of violence does Hinton support? Clearly explain your beliefs.

OPTION 2

Research gun control issues —

a. What are some of the main arguments for stricter gun control? Make a presentation to the class with an argument for stricter gun control.

or

b. Research viewpoints of the National Rifle Association. What do you think about such statements as “Guns don't kill people, people do,” and "If guns were outlawed, only outlaws would have guns." Present an argument to the class for the right to “keep and bear arms.”
## OUTSIDERS PROJECT RUBRIC

**Student Name:** __________________________

**Project Choice:** __________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meets Project Criteria</td>
<td>The project includes all required elements as well as additional information.</td>
<td>All required elements are included in the project.</td>
<td>All but 1 of the required elements is included in the project.</td>
<td>Several required elements were missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Content of project demonstrates that effort went into its creation And Direct connections with the book are very evident.</td>
<td>Content of project demonstrates that some effort went into its creation And Direct connections with the book are evident.</td>
<td>Content demonstrates familiarity with the book And Direct connections with the book are limited.</td>
<td>Content is unclear, badly organized and no connections to the book are made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar, Usage, Mechanics, Spelling (GUM)</td>
<td>The project has few distracting errors</td>
<td>The project has some distracting errors</td>
<td>The project has numerous distracting errors</td>
<td>The project has significant distracting errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks Clearly</td>
<td>Speaks clearly and distinctly all the time, using complete sentences.</td>
<td>Speaks clearly and distinctly all the time, mostly using complete sentences.</td>
<td>Speaks clearly and distinctly most of the time, sometimes using complete sentences.</td>
<td>Often mumbles or cannot be understood, rarely speaks in complete sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posture and Eye Contact</td>
<td>Stands up straight, looks relaxed and confident. Establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.</td>
<td>Stands up straight and establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.</td>
<td>Sometimes stands up straight and establishes eye contact.</td>
<td>Slouches and/or does not look at people during the presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listens to Other Presentations</td>
<td>Listens intently. Does not make distracting noises or movements.</td>
<td>Listens intently but has one distracting noise or movement.</td>
<td>Sometimes does not appear to be listening but is not distracting.</td>
<td>Sometimes does not appear to be listening and has distracting noises or movements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>