

'The Outsiders'

Introduction

The novel 'The Outsiders' by S.E. Hinton is about gang members in the 1960s. The crimes committed by gangs of this era pale in comparison to the level of violence displayed by modern gangs.

In *The Outsiders*, S.E. Hinton tells the story of 14-year-old Ponyboy Curtis who is an outsider. He is part of a lower-class gang called the "Greasers" who battle the "Socs," who are the rich kids. Hinton touches on social issues that were just beginning to gain momentum during the 1960s and that are still relevant to today's teens, making *The Outsiders* as pertinent and popular today as it was a half-century ago.

Author

Her Works

- [The Outsiders](#) (1967)

Hinton wrote her first novel, *The Outsiders*, when she was seventeen years old. She said she wrote it because she wasn't satisfied with the literature that was being written for young adults. This novel, filled with gritty realism, began a revolution in young adult literature. And now, more than twenty five years later, *The Outsiders* is still viewed as one of the "most important and taboo-breaking books in the field."

- *That Was Then, This Is Now* (1971)
- *Rumble Fish* (1975)
- *Tex* (1979); *Taming the Star Runner* (1988):
- *Big David, Little David* (1995)
- *The Puppy Sister* (most recent)

Interesting Facts

- She uses her initials S.E. when writing because she often writes from a boy's perspective. She explains, "I figured most boys would look at the book and think, what can a chick know about stuff like that?"

- Four of her novels (*The Outsiders*, *That Was Then, This Is Now*, *Tex*, and *Rumble fish*) became movies. She was involved in making *The Outsiders*, *Tex*, and *Rumble fish*.
- She suffered from writer's block while writing her second novel, *That Was Then, This is Now*. Her boyfriend turned husband, David, helped her work through this by declaring that unless she wrote two pages a day he wasn't going out with her that night. They were married when she finished the book.
- During her junior year of high school, when she was doing most of her work on *The Outsiders*, she received a D in creative writing. She said her revenge is to print that fact as often as she can.
- Her favorite authors are Jane Austen, Scott Fitzgerald, Mary Renault, and Shirley Jackson.

Questions To Ponder Before Reading:

1. What does it mean to you to be an “outsider”?
2. What kind of cliques can you identify? How are they stereo-typed?
3. Why do you think people join gangs?
4. What are some contributing factors to youth and gang violence? In your opinion, which is the most important factor?
5. What consequences are faced by youths who join gangs?
6. From reading the introduction for *The Outsiders*, what do you think are some possible themes for the story?
7. What do you think may happen throughout this book?
8. Why do you think this book resonates with youth?
9. Why is this book still popular today even though it was published in the 1960s?
10. What do you think you will like/dislike about the book?