

***The Outsiders: A Tuff Study of the Novel through Music***

Grade 8

**Outline**

- 1. Overview**
- 2. Core Lessons with Objectives and Common Core Standards Addressed**
- 3. Handouts**

## 1. Overview

When I asked my three sections of eighth grade students what they knew about the 60's, the typical responses were hippies, Martin Luther King Jr., and "some war." My classroom was filled with blank faces when I asked if they had ever heard of JFK, the Vietnam War, racial segregation, the space race, or even John Lennon. It seems like every year I get a new batch of eighth graders who are less familiar and less familiar with these words and the time period, so I decided to create a unit of study around S.E Hinton's coming of age novel *The Outsiders*.

Closely analyzing this coming of age novel gives the students an opportunity to bridge the gap between the past and the present by easily relating to the novel's characters, conflicts, themes, and plot lines. This allows the students to relate the novel to their own lives, thus I will be able to promote identity awareness. The essential questions around identity consist of: What makes an identity? What determines what you will become? What makes you who you are? These questions are important for eighth graders to think about because they are at an age of change. High school is right around the corner, so this unit will help them understand their own changes and identity.

This unit integrates literature, history, and music as a way to explore the novel's themes. Students will learn about the 60's, listen to songs from the 60's paired with excerpts from the novel, read supplemental non-fiction texts in addition to the novel, write an argumentative essay, and create a radio show. Student participation includes listening, writing, reading, and speaking in collaborative and independent ways, which makes the learning more engaging and meaningful for the students.

## **2. Core Lessons with Objectives and Common Core Standards Addressed**

### **Intro to the 60's**

Objectives: SWBAT consider what they know about the 60's, identify significant figures and events from the time period, and begin to think about how the 60's shaped the future of the U.S.

Common Core Standards: RL 8.1, RI 8.1, RI 8.10, SL 8.1, W 8.4, SL 8.1a, SL 8.6, L 8.3

Texts: The 1960's in America: Crash Course US History #40 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkXFb1sMa38> and The Who - "My Generation"

Introduction: Begin the class by beginning a K-W-L chart about what the students know about the 60's.

Collaborative Activity: Students will be working with a group of four to jigsaw the Crash Course video. Each student will be designated a section of the text. While watching the video, they will jot down notes on what they learned. When they are finished, the groups will take turns sharing their knowledge.

We Do: Go back and finish the K-W-L.

Assessment: As a class we listen and read the lyrics to The Who's song "My Generation." After, they will write a written response on how they think The Who were able to define the generation with their song.

## **CH. 1 - Are We Born to Be Wild?**

Objectives: SWBAT discuss the differences between group identity and individuality, distinguish the characters, and demonstrate an understanding of the events in chapter one.

Common Core Standards: RL 8.1, RL 8.2, RL 8.3, W 8.1, W 8.10, SL 8.1

Texts: Steppenwolf's "Born to Be Wild" and S.E Hinton's "The Outsiders"

Introduction: We will begin by listening to Steppenwolf's "Born to Be Wild." Students will then write a quick write response to their thoughts on if they believe we are born to be wild or if there are external forces that influence us act in certain ways. After writing, they will share their responses with their table groups and then as a whole class discussion.

We Do: Together we will begin reading chapter one of "The Outsiders."

They Do: While reading students will be closely reading with sticky notes. They will be marking passages for characterization, identity, group identity, and connections to Steppenwolf's "Born to Be Wild."

Assessment: Students will go back and review their initial response to the quick write and the beginning of class. First they will discuss, how they can elaborate on their responses using evidence from the opening chapter. After discussing, they will add on their quick write.

## CH. 5 - "Stay Gold" vs. "Nothing Gold Can Stay"

Objectives: SWBAT compare and contrast how two authors present different points of view on the same subject, explore what "stay gold" really means, and use poetic devices to analyze poetry.

Common Core Standards: RL 8.1, RL 8.2, RL 8.4, SL 8.1, SL 8.4, L 8.3

Texts: S.E Hinton's "The Outsiders," Robert Frost's "Nothing Gold Can Stay," and Stevie Wonder's "Stay Gold."

We Do: Students arrive having read chapter five of "The Outsiders" for homework. We begin discussing initial ideas of what they think "gold" means in the novel. As a class, we listen to the Stevie Wonder's "Stay Gold." The students read it again a second time, this time we analyze the song together for poetic devices in order to understand the theme of the song.

They Do: After I have modeled how closely read a text for theme, they practice independently with Robert Frost's "Nothing Gold Can Stay."

Assessment: Split the class into two sides. The two sides will have to take on the persona of the author's and debate whether or not they think the theme of the novel so far is stay gold or nothing gold lasts.

### 3. Handouts

Reader \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions: Using the poetic elements we've discussed in class, analyze the poems to see how the authors develop theme.**

#### **Stevie Wonder - "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

**Robert Frost's "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.

## Radio Show Project



# *Stay Gold Radio Show Project*

**TASK:** Each student will work in a group of 4 to write, produce, and record a radio show around S.E Hinton's *The Outsiders*.

**MUST INCLUDE:**

- Station Identification
- Introduction to the show
- A discussion on the novel (1st Half and 2nd Half)
- News or Weather report as it relates to the novel
- Symbolism commercial break
- Two songs from the 60's that relate to the novel
- A multiple paragraph response answering: Is *The Outsiders* relevant today?

**GRADING:** You will receive a group grade for your radio show, but you will also receive an individual grade for the writing portions of the project.

- Each group must produce a twenty minute - twenty five show.
- **Tuffness:** Is the show entertaining? Show you can creatively interpret *The Outsiders* in a way that is an enjoyable listening experience.
- **Understanding of the Text:** Are you exploring the topics in depth? Is there enough evidence of a clear understanding of the work of literature?
- **Quality:** I can easily follow the plot of the script, hear consistent audio levels, convincing acting, and evidence of editing.



Names of Group Members: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

<p><b><u>First Half of the Novel</u></b> <b><u>Discussion Topics and</u></b> <b><u>Questions</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Second Half of the Novel</u></b> <b><u>Discussion Topics and</u></b> <b><u>Questions</u></b></p>
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Explain your choice of news or weather report as it relates to the novel:

Justify your song choice as it applies to the novel:

Analyze the symbol you used in your advertisement as it develops in the novel:

## *Radio Script Sample*

Johnny: It's another Golden afternoon and we welcome you to another trip down memory lane here at JB608 with Mr B and , Student A and Student B, the voices of Greaser radio.

Johnny: We have Stevie Wonder on tap tonight along with a little of The Who and a healthy serving of Outsider discussion. So let's start the evening with a tribute to Robert Frost's "Nothing Gold Can Stay" by playing Stevie Wonder's "Stay Gold."

----- Play Song -----

You just heard "Stay Gold." The first time I heard the song was when I watched *The Outsiders* for the first time. Luckily for you listeners out there, we have a few experts on the show today to talk about the classic coming of age novel that is celebrating it's 20th anniversary.

Here are two greasers themselves,

Johnny: Hey guys welcome to the show.

Jimmy: Hey everyone.

Sally: Hey Mr. B. Thanks for having us on.

Johnny: Now since we are on the subject of Stay Gold. Can we talk about your thoughts on the Robert Frost's poem "Nothing Gold Can Stay and what it meant in terms of the first half of the novel?

Jimmy: In terms of the first half of the novel, I think the poem is hinting to us that nothing lasts forever. By that point, Johnny has already lost his innocence after killing a Soc.

Sally: I disagree, even though the poem is a bit negative, I think Pony interprets it in a positive light. I think it's more on the positive side with him beginning to realize that all Soc's aren't all that bad after he had those conversations with Cherry Valance.

Jimmy: At that point he hasn't realized it yet. He is still unsure of it all. He even says, "If I had those problems, I'd consider myself lucky."

Sally: But he does begin to recognize that he and Cherry appreciate the same sunset.

Cont. discussion in more depth.

Okay, we are going to continue with our discussion on *The Outsiders* when we come back, but first a word from our Sponsors.

Sponsor Advertisement: Do you wish you had hair like you used to ? Well, look no further to PEROXIDE. One simple splash of peroxide on your hair and you'll feel like a brand new person. The people around you might even shed a tear and give you hugs out of nowhere. We promise this or your money back. Peroxide it's the way to be.

Okay, we are back here at JB608 with Mr B and Jimmy and Sally , the voices of Greaser radio. But before we begin we have a special news report.

Student: Hey this is Bobby and we're dealing with a tough fire out here. An abandoned church just caught fire, creating a huge wave of smoke in the air. Stay indoors people until they can get the thing taken care of.

Continue with the second half of the script...

## **Supplemental Texts + Argumentative Essay**

Supplemental texts we read during the unit of the study include:

- Brent Staples' essay "Black Men and Public Space"
- Evan Hunter's short story "On The Sidewalk Bleeding"
- Colin Stokes' Ted Talk "How Movies Shape Manhood"

Argumentative Essay Prompt:

**Directions:** You will have 45 minutes to plan and write an essay on the topic assigned below. Before you begin writing, read the passage carefully and plan what you will say. Your essay should be as well organized and as carefully written as you can make it.

### **Essay Question**

S.E Hinton explores the themes of staying gold and nothing lasts forever. Explain the argument Hinton makes and discuss the ways in which you agree or disagree with her analysis and conclusions. Support your position by providing reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations, or readings.