

The Outsiders

Chapters 1–4

by S. E. Hinton

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: aloofness, contemptuous, defiance, gallant, gingerly, incredulous, nonchalant, smoldering, stricken, unfathomable

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Vocabulary Preview 2

Answer Key — Preview 3

Caution: share only if self-checking

OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context 4

Answer Key — In Context 5

Caution: do not share with students

About the Pre-Reading Activity (open-dictionary; ungraded or completion grade):

Students preview 10 words from the upcoming reading, each in a sentence that supports understanding. They choose the best meaning from 3 choices.

About the Optional Post-Reading Quiz (use after reading, or skip):

Same words, now in real excerpts from the text, with questions that build reading and analytical skills.

Vocabulary Sections for this Book:

Section 1 · Chapters 1–4 · Ponyboy and the greasers

Section 2 · Chapters 5–8 · Hiding out in Windrixville

Section 3 · Chapters 9–12 · The night of the rumble

Bold = this section. Other sections are available at verbalworkout.com.



verbalworkout.com

(all resources free)

Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.

1. The new student's **aloofness** kept the others from approaching her.

- A. cool distance and reserve
- B. constant loud complaining
- C. quick, fiery temper

2. She gave the cheating player a **contemptuous** glare.

- A. full of scorn
- B. full of confusion
- C. full of envy

3. The crowd met the new rule with open **defiance**.

- A. bold resistance
- B. wild excitement
- C. loud confusion

4. The **gallant** knight bowed and offered the lady his arm.

- A. wealthy and well-dressed
- B. proud and boastful
- C. brave and courteous

5. She **gingerly** picked up the pieces of broken glass.

- A. in a careful way
- B. in a hurried way
- C. in a clumsy way

6. She listened to his wild excuse with an **incredulous** frown.

- A. deeply bored by it
- B. unable to believe it
- C. slightly amused by it

7. He gave a **nonchalant** shrug when asked about the test.

- A. quietly nervous
- B. mildly confused
- C. casually unconcerned

8. He stayed silent, but his **smoldering** glare made everyone uneasy.

- A. full of cold fear
- B. full of held-back anger
- C. full of deep sadness

9. When she heard the terrible news, her face went **stricken**.

- A. flushed with anger
- B. overwhelmed by distress
- C. twisted with disgust

10. The reasons for her sudden decision were **unfathomable** to all of us.

- A. easy to ignore
- B. hard to forgive
- C. impossible to understand

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

greaser — a member of the poorer East Side group of teenagers, known for their long, greased hair

Soc — short for Social; a member of the wealthier West Side group of teenagers

tuff — greaser slang for cool, sharp, or admirable — distinct from 'tough'

watching the same sunset — a reminder that greasers and Socs share the same world and can appreciate the same beauty

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	A
2	A
3	A
4	C
5	A
6	B
7	C
8	B
9	B
10	C

Vocabulary in Context

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

Read each excerpt carefully. Then choose the best answer to each question.

1 *“He liked fights, blondes, and for some unfathomable reason, school.”*

As it is used in the passage, the word ‘unfathomable’ most nearly suggests that the reason...

- A. makes no sense to him
- B. is too painful to admit
- C. is hard to believe

2 *“She gave him an incredulous look; and then she threw her Coke in his face.”*

It can reasonably be inferred that Cherry’s reaction to Dally’s offer shows she...

- A. is frightened of him
- B. can’t believe he would dare
- C. is grateful for the drink

3 *“Okay,” I said nonchalantly, “might as well.”*

The author most likely describes Ponyboy as answering ‘nonchalantly’ in order to...

- A. show he is bored by the girls
- B. hide that he is afraid
- C. mask how excited he really is

4 *“He looked up and across the field with a stricken expression on his face.”*

The passage most strongly suggests that Steve’s ‘stricken’ expression means he...

- A. realizes something is badly wrong
- B. is straining to see far off
- C. is annoyed at the delay

5 *“Two-Bit gallantly offered to walk them home—the west side of town was only about twenty miles away—but they wanted to call their parents and have them come and get them.”*

In the passage, Two-Bit is characterized as...

- A. rude and dismissive
- B. shy and reluctant
- C. courteous in a showy way

6 *“Socs were always behind a wall of aloofness, careful not to let their real selves show through.”*

The information in the excerpt primarily functions to...

- A. stress the Socs’ cold detachment
- B. explain why Socs fight greasers
- C. show the Socs’ wealth

7 *“Johnnycake made a kind of gasp and his eyes were smoldering.”*

The passage most strongly suggests that Johnny’s ‘smoldering’ eyes show he...

- A. is about to cry again
- B. is filling with quiet rage
- C. is confused by the insult

8 *“Towheaded and shifty-eyed, Dally was anything but handsome. Yet in his hard face there was character, pride, and a savage defiance of the world.”*

In the passage, Dally is characterized as...

- A. secretly gentle at heart
- B. cheerful and easygoing
- C. boldly resistant to the world

9 *“Dally glanced contemptuously over his shoulder—”*

Which choice best describes Dally’s attitude?

- A. warm and reassuring
- B. scornful and dismissive
- C. anxious and guarded

10 *“‘The first stop’ll be Windrixville,’ Johnny said, laying the gun down gingerly.”*

In context, the word ‘gingerly’ emphasizes that Johnny handles the gun...

- A. with careful caution
- B. with clumsy haste
- C. with open disgust

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	B	
3	C	Character comprehension.
4	A	Event comprehension.
5	C	Gallant is used half-jokingly here; the chivalrous offer to walk the girls home is comically impractical (twenty miles).
6	A	
7	B	Event comprehension.
8	C	
9	B	
10	A	

Teacher Context: Chapters 1–4

Ponyboy introduces himself, his brothers, and the greaser gang and their rivalry with the wealthy Socs. After he and Johnny meet two Soc girls at the drive-in, a late-night confrontation in the park turns deadly. Section ends after Chapter 4, the turning point that drives the rest of the plot.