The Outsiders Literary Essay

In *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton, two rivals gangs, the rich Socs and the poor Greasers are constantly fighting until something changes for all of them. In both *The Outsiders* and life, your place in the social structure is important. Although your social standing is important, your place in it does not affect who you are as a person.

Being at the top of the pyramid does not mean you are unfeeling and mean. In the Outsiders, when Darry takes the boys to Dairy Queen and tells them that Cherry will be testifying against the Socs, Ponyboy says “So Cherry Valance, the cheerleader, Bob’s girl, the Soc, was trying to help us. No, it wasn’t Cherry the Soc trying to help us, it was Cherry the dreamer who watched sunsets and couldn’t stand fights.” Ponyboy’s correction of himself relates back to page 40, where he tries to imagine Cherry watching the sunsets. He had to remember that just because Cherry was better off than he was that she watched the sunset like he did. She, like him, a Greaser, was a dreamer. Their financial state didn’t make a difference at all.

If you’re poor, that doesn’t mean you’re stuck there for the rest of your life and there’s no chance of you changing that fact. Darry, Ponyboy’s brother, was the star football player before their parents died. He could have gone to college but instead, he stayed behind to raise Ponyboy and Sodapop. In Chapter 8, Ponyboy is trying to talk Two-Bit and Dally into letting him participate in the rumble but Dally and Two-Bit are worried what Darry will say. “You know, the
The only thing that keeps Darry from bein’ a Soc is us,” (pg. 126) Dally notes. Like Ponyboy said in the next paragraph, Darry was too smart to be a Greaser. **Not only did he have good grades,** but he was also a football player, and a good one at that. Darry could have been a Soc but his brothers were what was stopping him, not his being.

Unlike most people believe that when you have money, you don’t have problems. In Chapter 7, Randy calls Ponyboy over and talks with him about Bob. The two of them talk about the dead Soc for awhile until Randy mentions Bob’s parents. “One time he came home drunker than anything. He thought sure they were gonna raise the roof… They thought it was their fault—that they’d failed him driven him to it or something,” (116) he says.

Though Bob’s problems weren’t specifically mentioned, his parents’ were definitely defined in the text. Later on, Randy says if Bob’s father had just punished him than he would still be alive. Bob’s parents were probably too busy revelling in their wealth to see that Bob was acting out.
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<th></th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Basic</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction &amp; Claim</strong></td>
<td>-Introduction <em>cohesively</em> includes: connection, summary, claim. -Thesis statement <em>clearly presents</em> claim(s) to be proven.</td>
<td>-Introduction includes: connection, summary, claim.</td>
<td>-Has only a claim statement to open the paper.</td>
<td>Incomplete/Missing</td>
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<td><strong>Body Paragraphs:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Content (weighted)</strong></td>
<td>-Claim: <em>all paragraphs have a clear focus from the claim, using key words.</em> Evidence: -Examples support claims in various ways (quoted, paraphrased). Connections: -Statements are positioned around all examples to connect the examples to the claim.</td>
<td>-Claim: <em>some paragraphs could be more clear about the focus from the claim.</em> Evidence: -Examples support claims, but lack variety in presentation. Connections: -Statements are positioned around some examples to connect the examples to the claim.</td>
<td>-Claim: <em>paragraphs still need to stay focused on claim.</em> Evidence: -Many examples weakly support the claim and are not quoted or paraphrased correctly. Connections: -Many examples are missing statements to connect the examples to the claim.</td>
<td>Incomplete/Missing</td>
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<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>-Evidence <em>presents</em> claim(s) in an effective, logical structure (chronologically or by priority). -Transition words are cohesive to the structure used.</td>
<td>-Evidence <em>presents</em> claim(s) in a logical structure (chronologically, or by priority). -Transition words are cohesive to the structure used.</td>
<td>-Evidence does not seem to be presented in a logical structure. -Transition words are unsupported or not used.</td>
<td>Incomplete/Missing</td>
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**Unit:** Literary Essay  
**Grade:** 7 — Meets Expectations/Developing  
**Assessment Task:** Literary Essay Summative Assessment  
**Title:** The Outsiders Literary Essay

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<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Teacher Comment:</th>
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<td>- Evidence of editing for spelling, capitalization &amp; punctuation (especially quotation marks and commas).</td>
<td>The literary essay unit required students to use what they learned during the argument paragraph unit to write an extended argument proving a claim about the theme of a novel using multiple pieces of evidence. While it is clear that this writer has a good understanding of the novel and is able to explain what her evidence means in the context of the book, she needs support in writing her commentary to connect her evidence back to her claim. This writer would also want to focus on rhetorical moves to engage her readers in the topic in her introduction. This in as example of a 7th grade literary essay that is in the Meets Expectations/Developing range.</td>
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<td>- Uses formal vocabulary/word choice.</td>
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<td>- Attempts were made to edit, but needs improvement.</td>
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<td>- Vocabulary/word choice is casual.</td>
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<td>- Lacking conventions; no evidence of editing.</td>
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<td>- Vocabulary/word choice needs improvement to be clear.</td>
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