**Literary Essay for *The Outsiders***

**Formal Essay: Choose one of the following topics:**

* Character Analysis Essay: Choose one of the characters from The Outsiders. Describe them both physically and emotionally. Make judgments about them by examining their actions/inactions, words, other characters’ words about them and author’s direct characterization. How does the character grow, change, react to experiences, etc. Be sure to support your ideas and quotes with specific examples from the novel.
* Write an essay explaining how the Socs are more of a disgrace and menace to society than the Greasers. Look at how society views and treats the two groups. Examine the characteristics of each group, their actions, and the choices each make. Be sure to support your ideas with examples and quotes from the novel.
* Write an essay explaining why you believe each of the 'main' Greasers can be considered a hero. Include your own definition of hero in the essay, and be sure to explain how each boy, in his own way, meets your definition. Remember to support your ideas with examples from the novel.
* We have looked at “motif” in literature, specifically with the repetition of eyes in *The Outsiders.* Ponyboy seems to define his relationships with each character through the description of their eyes. Explain if you feel his judge of character is accurate. Use specific examples from the novel to support your writing.
* Discuss Ponyboy’s evolving conception of the Socs. How does his opinion of the Socs at the end of the novel differ from his opinion at the beginning?
* S.E. Hinton never uses the word "outsider" in her novel, yet it's the title of the book. Maybe she wants us to ponder who the outsiders are. Write an essay in which you explain whom she may have meant by *The Outsiders*. Be sure to define what you mean by an outsider, and then explain whom you think Ms. Hinton meant. Be sure to use extensive examples from the book to back up what you say.

It is important that your essay includes a strong introductory paragraph, body and effective conclusion. Use the graphic organizer provided to help you plan and organize.

**Essay should be between 400-500 words.**

**Things to remember when writing a literary essay:**

1. Write about the characters and the book using present tense.

Correct: Ponyboy **is** different from the other greasers because of his sensitivity and way he **thinks** about things in the world around him.

Incorrect: Ponyboy **was** different from the greasers because of his sensitivity and the way he **thought** about things in the world around him.

2. Cite all sources both in text and with a Works Cited page (see examples).

3. The title of the novel must be either italicized if typed, or underlined if handwritten, anytime it appears in the essay.

Correct: *The Outsiders* or The Outsiders

Incorrect: The Outsiders

4. Use your own words and ideas to express your thoughts and opinions. If you do use someone else’s words or ideas from another source, you must cite this work properly to avoid plagiarism.

5. State the title of the novel and full name of the author somewhere in the introductory paragraph.

6. Double space and use Times New Roman

**MLA Format: For this essay, we will be using MLA format for organization and citation. Throughout your academic career, you may be asked to use this format, or APA format.**

Here is a link to a great site that shares all the tricks of the trade for both formats.

**Owl at Purdue**

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/2/>

When in doubt, use the site for reference and don’t be heedless.

**Example of an in-text citation:**

In his last words “Stay gold, Ponyboy” (Hinton 148), Johnny references the same Robert Frost poem that Ponyboy recited aloud when they were sitting on the back porch of the church, watching the sunrise. By dying, Johnny fulfills the prophecy of Frost’s poem that "Nothing gold can stay" (8). He wishes that Ponyboy would fulfill his own potential by not becoming a convict and using his intelligence to get out of the hood.

(Hinton 120): Author last name and page number

(8): Line number in poem