Critical Thinking Questions for *The Outsiders*

Chapters 1-3

Answer in complete sentences. Value 2 each

1. Why do the greasers continue to fight the Socs, even though, as Ponyboy says, "You can’t

win against them no matter how hard you try, because they’ve got all the breaks"?

2. Why is Ponyboy sure that Darry doesn’t love him? Do you agree with Ponyboy?

3. Why does Dallas Winston hate "the whole world"?

4. Why does Ponyboy suddenly become angry and bitter just after he’s discovered that

he has a lot in common with Socs?

5. What does Ponyboy mean when he says maybe he can talk to Cherry for the same reason

she can talk to him?

6. Why does Ponyboy start telling Cherry about Johnny’s run-in with the Socs?

7. Why does Johnny say he likes it better when his parents hit him?

8. Why does Ponyboy decide to go home, in spite of Darry?

Chapters 1-3

Answer in complete sentences. Value 2 each

1. What happens to Ponyboy on his way home from the movies?

2. What happened to Ponyboy’s parents?

3. Why is Ponyboy uncomfortable about how Dally and Two-bit treat the girls at the drive in?

4. What does Ponyboy mean when he says he doesn’t use his head, even though he’s

smart and does well in school?

5. What happens when the greasers walk Cheery and Marcia home from the movies?

6. Why does Darry get so angry with Ponyboy?

Critical Questions

Chapters 4-6

1. Why is it Johnny, the most "law-abiding" member of the gang, who ends up committing

a murder? (56)

2. Why does Johnny start to become less timid and more in charge after the murder? (71)

3. Why does Ponyboy relax after he and Johnny have a cry and fall asleep? Why is he sure

he and Johnny "could take whatever was coming now"? (75)

4. Although Johnny and Ponyboy are similar in many ways, why does Johnny worship

Dally, while Ponyboy likes him least of all the gang members? (76)

5. Why can Ponyboy talk about nature and poetry to Johnny, but not to most of the

others? (78)

6. Why do Johnny and Ponyboy rush into the burning church to save the children?

Why aren’t they scared? (92)

7. Why does Johnny look like he is having "the time of his life" as they risk their lives

to save the children? (92)

8. Why is Ponyboy finally able to realize that Darry loves him? (98)

Critical Questions

Ch. 7-12

1. Why is Randy, a Soc, "sick" of the fighting because the greasers "can’t win"?

2. Why does Ponyboy end their conversation by telling Randy that he would have saved

the kids in the church?