The Outsiders Guided Questions

Directions: These guided questions are to be answered as you would the StudySync Skills Focus Questions. All questions below are to be annotated and answered as marginal notes. You may use the “Other” category to annotate or assign a new annotation category.

Chapter 1

1. How does the girl in Ponyboy’s class react when he uses a switchblade to dissect a worm? How does Ponyboy feel, and what does this reveal about his character?

2. Reread the paragraph in which Ponyboy describes Two-Bit at length. What are some of the words and phrases he uses that sound the way a teen might actually talk at that time?

3. Why is it useless to attempt to retaliate against the Socs?

4. Ponyboy does not like Dally, but he respects him because he is “smart.” What does Ponyboy mean by “smart,” and how does it differ from Ponyboy’s own intelligence?

Chapter 2

1. Consider Dally’s relationship with Johnny. How does Dally treat Johnny differently, and why?

2. In what ways do Two-Bit and Marcia get along? Does their connection come as a surprise? Why or why not?

3. Reread the passage in which Ponyboy remembers when Steve’s female cousin from Kansas visited. How did the gang choose to treat her? Why?

4. Based on what you’ve read so far, what distinguishes Cherry’s character from other girls her age? How is she different from a typical teenage girl in the 1960s?

5. Reread the second-to-last paragraph of Chapter 2. Ponyboy doesn’t know what Socs worry about. What words does he repeat, and what does this repetition say about Ponyboy’s point of view?

Chapter 3-4

1. Reread Chapter 3, paragraphs 17–18, in which Cherry and Ponyboy talk about sunsets. What is funny about sunsets to Ponyboy? What does this say about Socs and greasers?

2. Why does Ponyboy idealize the country while he and Johnny look at the stars in Chapter 4? Do you think he is wrong or right about it?

3. What does Johnny notice on Bob’s hand? What does this tell Ponyboy?

4. In Chapter 4, how does Johnny say his parents treat him? Why would he prefer to have Darry than his parents?
Chapter 5

1. Chapter 5 is one of the few chapters in which the narrator pays attention to food. What do the boys eat? What does this tell us about the time and place of the story?

2. Why do teachers think Johnny is stupid? How does Johnny demonstrate that this isn’t true?

3. What does Ponyboy think a few times after reading Sodapop’s letter? What does this imply about the nature of their relationship?

4. Who does Dally claim is the “spy” for the greasers?