



# Literary Skills

## Chapters 1-2 Characterization

### Just Picture It!

In the opening chapters of *The Outsiders*, Hinton introduces a number of characters. It is important to distinguish these characters from the start and recognize their relationships to each other. Often character relationships can be better understood when shown on a simple visual diagram.

#### Directions

Read the descriptions below. Match each description with a character listed in the box and write the character's name on the blank.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. hardworking head of the house
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. happy-go-lucky and handsome
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. smart but no common sense
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. toughest and meanest of the gang
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. Soda's best friend
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. pet of the gang
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. wisecracker and shoplifter

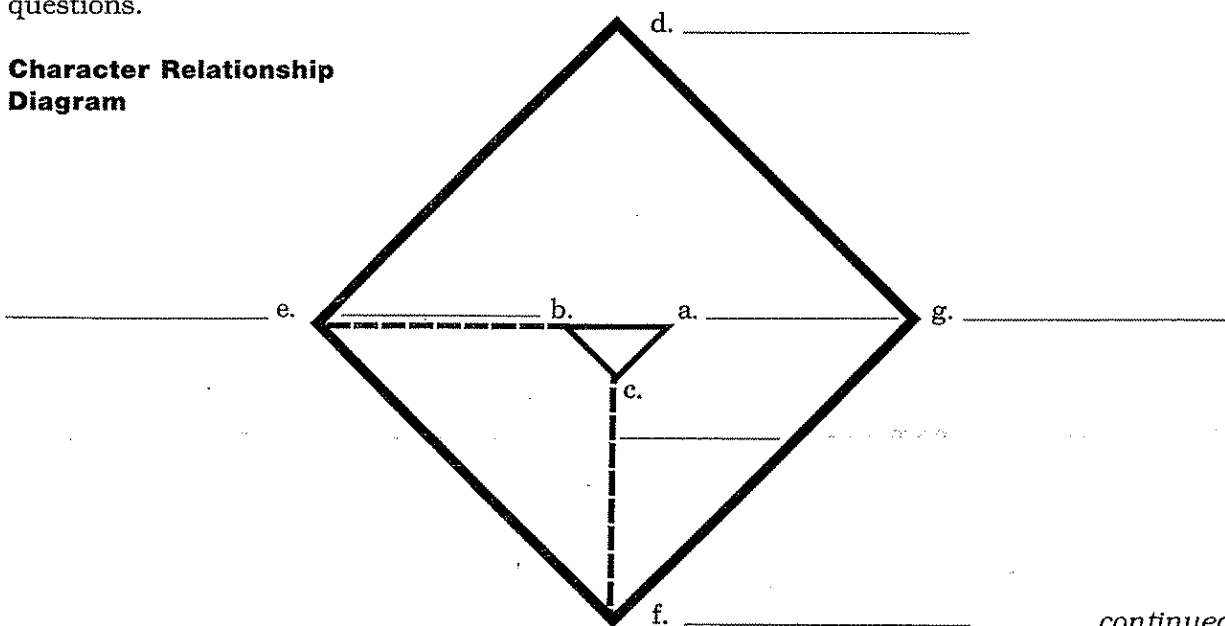
Dally  
Sodapop  
Steve  
Johnny  
Ponyboy  
Two-Bit  
Darry

#### Directions

Now transfer the names you wrote on the previous blanks to the corresponding blanks on the diagram below. For example, the name written on blank a should be written on blank a in the diagram.

Once you complete the diagram, use it to answer the questions.

#### Character Relationship Diagram



*continued*

**Literary Skills: Characterization**

Just Picture It!  
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**Questions**

1. What does the triangle in the center of the diagram represent? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Which character in the triangle seems the weakest link or the one most likely to desert the group? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What might the diamond surrounding the triangle represent? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which character within the diamond seems the weakest link or the one most likely to desert the group? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Why do you think the triangle is placed *inside* the diamond? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What link is there between characters e and b? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Give two reasons why you might associate characters c and f. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**One Step Further**

On the back of this sheet, make your own diagram showing how the following three *groups* of characters are related.

- Ponyboy and greaser gang
- Tim Shepard's gang
- the Socs



# Check for Understanding

Chapters 1-2

## ■ Choosing the Best Response

### Directions

Test your understanding of what you read by completing the statements below. Write the letter of the best response in the blank.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Darry, Sodapop, and Ponyboy are a. cousins; b. orphans; c. Socs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. On his way home from the movies, Ponyboy a. finds Johnny beat up in the corner lot; b. gets jumped by some Socs; c. sees Dally slashing Shepard's tires.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The greasers help Ponyboy by a. chasing the Socs off; b. rumbling with Tim Shepard's gang; c. lying to Darry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Soda secretly tells Ponyboy that a. Dally is wanted for murder; b. Darry is in poor health; c. he (Soda) plans to marry Sandy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Pony feels that Darry a. wants Soda to leave home; b. longs to move to the country; c. does not care for him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. At the drive-in movie, Dally a. spills his Coke on Cherry Valance; b. talks dirty to two Soc girls; c. fights a Mexican hitchhiker.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Ponyboy and Dally are shocked when Johnny a. tells Dally to leave the girls alone; b. asks Cherry out to the rodeo; c. pulls a knife on Two-Bit.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. At the concession stand, Ponyboy tells Cherry about a. the two rules of the greasers; b. his troubles with Darry; c. what the Socs did to Johnny.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Ever since being attacked, Johnny has a. carried a six-inch switchblade; b. stayed close to Dally for protection; c. tried to pick fights with the Socs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Cherry helps Ponyboy to realize that a. the gang is doing him more harm than good; b. Darry really cares for him; c. not all Socs or greasers are alike.

# Vocabulary Building

## Chapters 1-2

### ■ Supplying Definitions

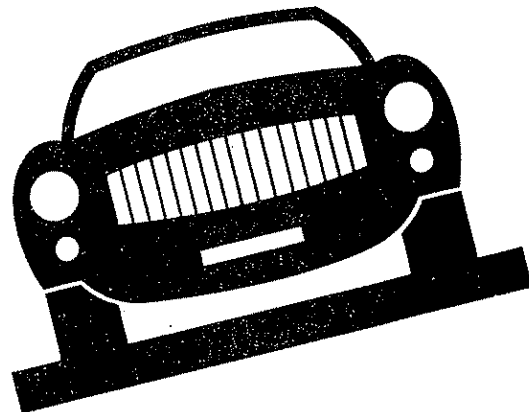
#### Directions

In the sentences below, the vocabulary words have been underlined. A definition for each word can be found at the bottom of the page. Match each vocabulary word with the correct definition.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Ponyboy rubbed his cheek gingerly where the Socs had hit him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Cherry gave Dally an incredulous look when he had the nerve to boldly sit down beside her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. In a daze, Pony slowly digested the fact that the running figures were members of his gang.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Along with fights and blondes, Two-Bit liked school for some unfathomable reason.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Newspaper editorials sometimes portrayed the Socs as an asset to society and at other times as a disgrace.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Dally grinned roguishly when he provoked the girls to anger by talking dirty.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. When the girls invited Pony and Johnny to join them, Pony acted nonchalantly, trying to hide his excitement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Steve commented sagely when you asked him about cars; they were his specialty.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. There were other gangs around Pony's part of town, but there was no gang rivalry in the Southwest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The Curtis boys were law-abiding partly because they knew they would be separated if they were arrested.

#### Definitions

- a. understood; absorbed
- b. in a casually unconcerned manner
- c. mischievously; impishly
- d. something of value
- e. disbelieving; doubting
- f. in a wise way
- g. competition
- h. carefully
- i. obeying
- j. not able to be understood



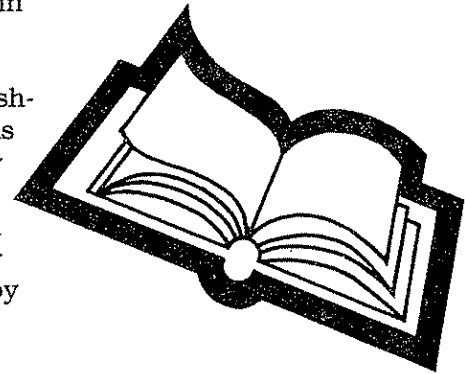


### ■ Making Head or Tail of Idioms

*The Outsiders* is written in an informal style that imitates the everyday speech of the narrator, Ponyboy. The text is peppered with slang expressions and *idioms* that are typically found in spoken language.

An idiom is like a coded message. It communicates a special meaning to those who know the "code." Most English-speaking people know that when Dally describes Ponyboy as "always having his nose in a book," he merely means Pony reads a lot.

But imagine the confusion such a phrase might cause a reader new to our culture. Without an understanding of our idioms, the phrase might lead that reader to believe Ponyboy has a strange habit indeed.



#### Directions

Read each sentence. Then write the idiom and its decoded meaning on the lines below.

1. Unlike Ponyboy, Soda never cracked a book or went to the movies.

Idiom \_\_\_\_\_

Decoded meaning \_\_\_\_\_

2. After Soda's teasing remark, Darry stared at him a moment and then cracked a grin.

Idiom \_\_\_\_\_

Decoded meaning \_\_\_\_\_

3. Two-Bit just couldn't keep his mouth shut and always had to get his two-bits worth in.

Idiom \_\_\_\_\_

Decoded meaning \_\_\_\_\_

4. Ever since seeing Ponyboy with a switchblade, the girl had looked down on him.

Idiom \_\_\_\_\_

Decoded meaning \_\_\_\_\_

5. Cherry smiled softly at Johnny, showing that she had sized him up right.

Idiom \_\_\_\_\_

Decoded meaning \_\_\_\_\_

*continued*

**Literary Skills: Idioms**

**Making Head or Tail of Idioms**

**Chapters 1-2**

6. Johnny worshipped the ground Dallas walked on.

Idiom \_\_\_\_\_

Decoded meaning \_\_\_\_\_

7. Two-Bit thinks that fist fighting blows off steam better than anything.

Idiom \_\_\_\_\_

Decoded meaning \_\_\_\_\_

8. Dally was just getting kicks by slashing the Shepard gang's tires.

Idiom \_\_\_\_\_

Decoded meaning \_\_\_\_\_

9. Two-Bit and Marcia were hitting it off fine at the movies.

Idiom \_\_\_\_\_

Decoded meaning \_\_\_\_\_

10. If Sylvia flirted with Johnny, Steve threatened to beat the tar out of her.

Idiom \_\_\_\_\_

Decoded meaning \_\_\_\_\_

**One Step Further**

On the lines below, write three idioms or slang expressions you use in your everyday speech. Decode the meaning of each expression.

1. Idiom \_\_\_\_\_

Decoded meaning \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Idiom \_\_\_\_\_

Decoded meaning \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Idiom \_\_\_\_\_

Decoded meaning \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_