June 1, 2026

Dear Rising 9th Graders:
Your summer is probably already packed with trips and camps that sound much more appealing than summer reading! Fear not---I think you will genuinely enjoy your selected book **if you will take the time to read.**

All Honors **AND** College Prep 9th Classes will read ***The Outsiders*** **by S. E. Hinton.** There is a very good movie which may help some in visualizing the text; however, be aware that there are some differences between the film adaptation and the book. Within the first week of school, we will have a short test to see how well you comprehended and retained the novel.

After completing your reading, choose **ONE** independent project from the menu listed below. *If you are an honors student, you will be expected to complete both the project **AND** the honors extension listed for each.*

Please rely on your own brain, **NOT AI** to complete these assignments. Believe me, it is obvious when you are not using your own intellect and creativity. I have included the rubric in how I will assess your final product.

Happy summer,
Mala Kelley
(your 9th grade English teacher)

The Outsiders Independent Project Menu

Choose **ONE** project

1. Character Social Media Profile
Create a social media page for a major character (Ponyboy, Johnny, Dally, Cherry, Sodapop, Darry, etc.).
Include:

- Profile picture
- Bio
- 10 posts
- Captions and hashtags
- Comments from other characters
- Evidence of character growth

Honors Extension: Include symbolism and theme connections within the posts.

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2. Soundtrack of the Novel
Create a soundtrack of 8–10 songs that represent important moments in the novel.
Include:

- Song title and artist

- Connection to a specific chapter or event
- Written explanation for each choice

Honors Extension: Analyze how lyrics connect to themes.

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3. Alternative Ending

Write an alternative ending to the novel.

Requirements:

- 3–5 pages
- Maintain character consistency
- Include dialogue
- Explain how your ending changes the message of the novel

Honors Extension: Include a reflective analysis of how the altered ending affects themes.

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4. Greaser vs. Socs Documentary

Create a video, slideshow, or podcast examining the conflict.

Include:

- Characteristics of each group
- Causes of conflict
- Important events
- Modern-day parallels

Honors Extension: Discuss social class issues and stereotypes.

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5. Character Survival Guide

Create a survival guide for a character.

Examples:

- Johnny's Guide to Surviving as a Greaser
- Ponyboy's Guide to Handling Family Conflict

Include:

- Advice sections
- Illustrations
- References to events from the novel

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6. Newspaper Front Page

Create a newspaper covering major events.

Include:

- Headline story
- Interviews
- Editorial
- Sports section covering the rumble
- Photographs or illustrations

Honors Extension: Include multiple perspectives and bias analysis.

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7. Trial of Bob's Death

Create materials for a mock trial.

Include:

- Witness statements

- Evidence
- Opening and closing arguments
- Verdict explanation

Honors Extension: Analyze legal and ethical issues.

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8. Graphic Novel Chapter

Convert a chapter into a graphic novel.

Include:

- Illustrations
- Dialogue
- Captions
- Important details from the text

Honors Extension: Use symbolism through visual elements.

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9. Theme Museum Exhibit

Design a museum exhibit focused on one theme.

Possible themes:

- Family
- Loyalty
- Identity
- Social Class
- Coming of Age

Include:

- 8–10 artifacts
- Labels
- Explanations
- Connections to the novel

Honors Extension: Connect theme to modern society.

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10. Podcast Episode

Create a 5–10-minute podcast discussing:

- Characters
- Themes
- Important events
- Personal reactions

Include:

- Introduction
- Multiple segments
- Conclusion

Honors Extension: Include literary analysis.

College Prep Rubric (50 Points)

Category	Excellent (10)	Good (8)	Fair (6)	Needs Improvement (4)
Understanding of Novel	Demonstrates thorough understanding	Good understanding	Basic understanding	Limited understanding

Category	Excellent (10)	Good (8)	Fair (6)	Needs Improvement (4)
Accuracy	Information consistently accurate	Minor errors	Several errors	Many errors
Completion	All requirements completed	Most completed	Some completed	Significant portions missing
Creativity	Highly engaging and original	Creative	Some creativity	Minimal effort
Presentation	Organized and polished	Mostly organized	Some organization	Difficult to follow

Total: 50 points

Honors Rubric (100 Points)

Category	Points
Understanding of Plot and Characters	20
Theme Analysis	20
Use of Specific Textual Evidence	20
Creativity and Originality	15
Organization and Presentation	15
Mechanics and Quality of Work	10

Honors Performance Levels

A (90–100)
- Sophisticated understanding
- Strong thematic analysis
- Specific textual support
- Exceptional effort

B (80–89)
- Good understanding
- Clear analysis
- Adequate evidence

C (70–79)
- Basic understanding
- Limited analysis
- Some evidence

D/F (Below 70)
- Incomplete or inaccurate
- Little analysis
- Weak support