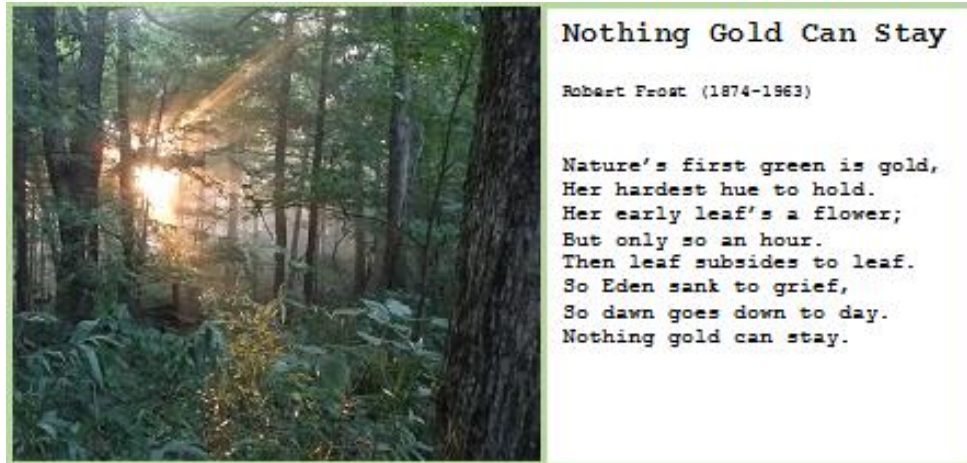


# Understanding Poetry

S.E. Hinton uses a poem by Robert Frost in *The Outsiders* to give the reader a glimpse into Ponyboy's true personality. Not necessarily the one his peers know, but who he really is. Understanding the poem leads to understanding Ponyboy, his motives, and his reactions to the action of the story.



The first line of the poem may confuse young readers. How is green gold?

It is a metaphor: Nature's first green is spring, and spring is a golden moment in the year. So green is not also gold; Frost is saying that spring is one of those times that shine brilliantly.

However, do not discount the colors—the very first signs of spring are not green at all. In New England, where Frost was writing, birch and willow trees take on a golden hue just before they burst into leaf. I have notice that here in the Midwest the very first leaf buds are actually red. The trees shimmer with a red hue for about a week before they burst into green. Therefore here, nature's first green is red. Your littles should understand that Frost is also saying that before the green comes the gold.

That gold is fleeting, it lasts a very short time before spring becomes green, which is why it is nature's hardest hue to hold. Just like a moment we can't stop and hold onto forever, that gold fades quickly into the true shade of spring—green.

Nature's early leaf is, indeed, like a flower to us. After months of winter's barrenness, those first leaf buds are miraculously gorgeous, just as pretty as a flower to our eyes. Then just as quickly the leaf becomes just a leaf as we anxiously await the true flowers of spring. So our moments pass us by, almost without our noticing.

The reference of Eden sinking to grief shows that humans got tired of even that paradise in the search for what came next. Just as the leaves become just leaves in the spring, so Eden became just Eden to Adam and Eve. That made their willingness to sacrifice it even stronger.

The final lines, “So dawn goes down to day/nothing gold can stay,” remind us that even a beautiful sunrise passes and we forget it or at least let go of it more than we might want in anticipation of the day ahead. It is true of morning, and it is true of all the golden moments of our lives.

This poem is about human nature more than anything. It is about how we cannot hold onto the golden moments and so we let them pass as we move on to something new.

On the next page, have your students write a short essay about what the poem might tell us about Ponyboy—how it gives us insight into his personality and how it demonstrates that he is not quite the Greaser he tries so hard to be.







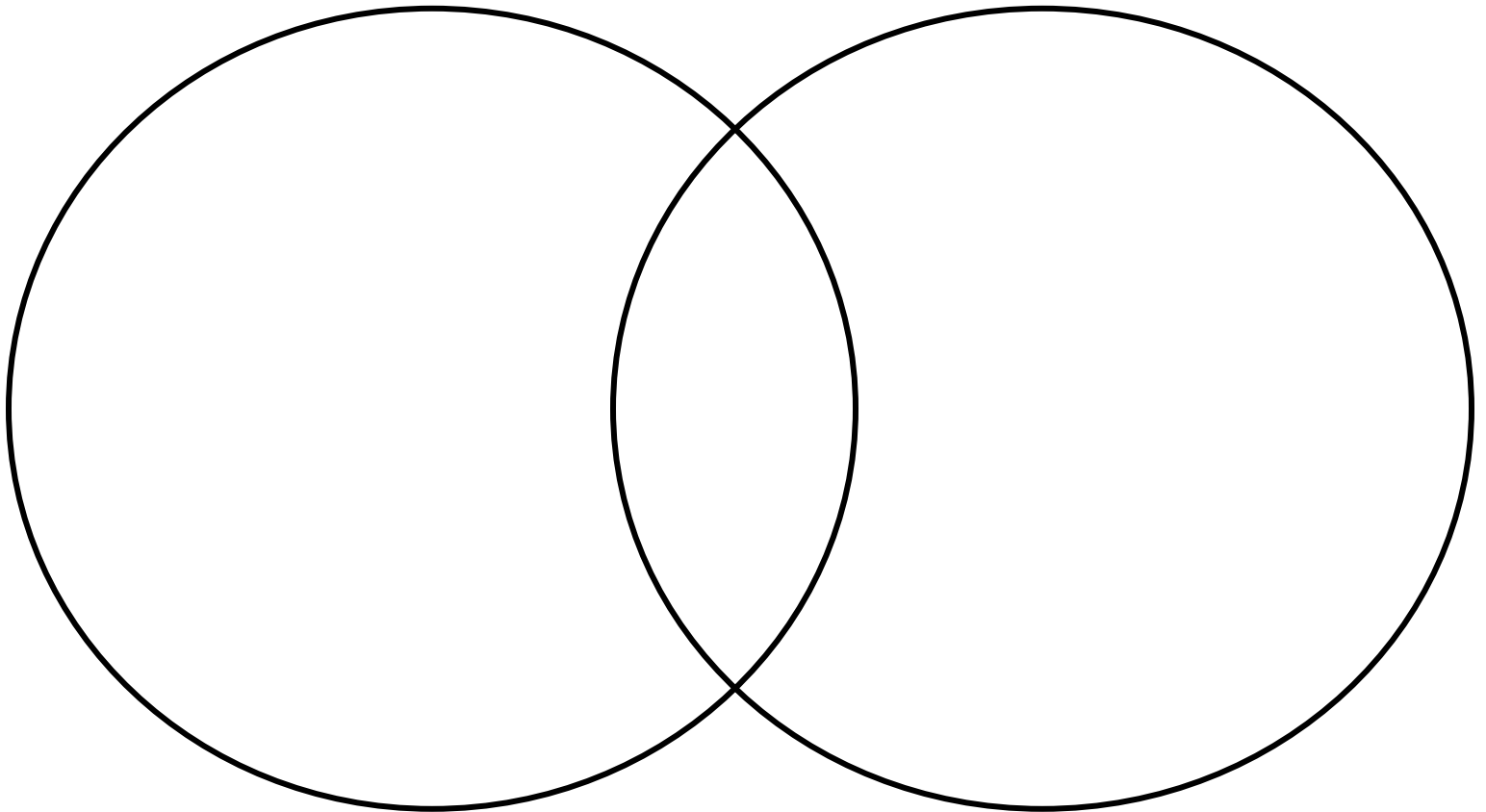


# Greasers and Socs Venn Diagram

List the differences between the greasers and the socs in the separate circles and the similarities in the place where the circles meet

**Greasers**

**Socs**



# WANTED

FOR ACTS OF: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME

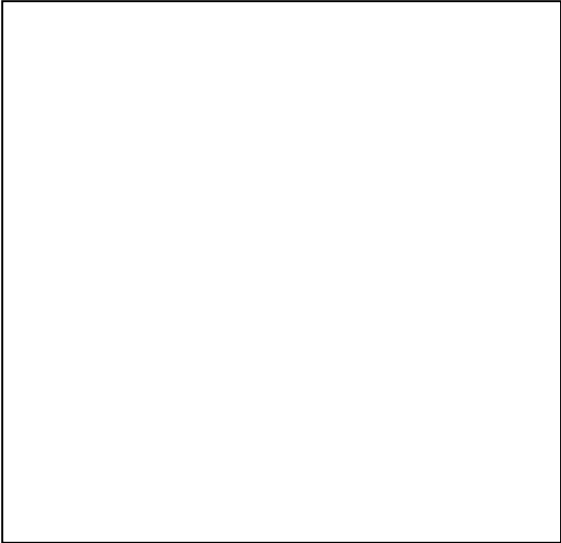
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ALSO KNOWN AS (AKA)

\_\_\_\_\_

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



LAST SEEN WEARING:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

KNOWN HANGOUTS:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

IF FOUND, CONTACT:

\_\_\_\_\_

REWARD

\$





# Character Chart

Put a checkmark or X next to the character's name to indicate whether he or she is a good or bad person and whether good or bad choices were made. In the last box, explain why you made your marks where you did.

Character	Good Person	Bad Person	Good Choices	Bad Choices	Explain Your Answers
Ponyboy					
Johnny					
Darry					
Sodapop					
Dallas					
Two-Bit					
Steve					
Cherry					
Bob					
Tim					
Marcia					
Randy					