

Exposition Annotation Guide

Text: The Outsiders, Chapters 1-2

Lens: Social — "Class-Naive Witnessing"

Focus: How Ponyboy reveals class structures he can't fully articulate

Annotation Color Key

Use these colors (or symbols) to mark different types of passages:

Class Signifiers

Objects showing group identity (hair, cars, clothes)

Social Boundaries

Places or barriers separating groups

Innocence Markers

Vulnerability, helplessness, naivety

What to Look For

Semantic Family: Class Signifiers

As you read Chapters 1-2, look for objects that signal group membership:

- **Hair/Grooming:** Greaser hair (long, greased) vs. Soc hair (clean-cut)
- **Vehicles:** "Old souped-up cars" vs. Mustangs, Corvairs
- **Clothing:** T-shirts, leather jackets vs. madras shirts, nice clothes
- **Cultural References:** What movies, music, activities each group likes

Key Question: Does Ponyboy see these as class markers or just as "how things are"?

Semantic Family: Social Boundaries

Look for physical and symbolic barriers:

- **Geographic:** East Side vs. West Side
- **Spaces:** Where each group feels safe or unsafe
- **Crossing Points:** What happens when someone enters the other group's territory

Key Question: Who controls access to different spaces? Who gets to feel safe?

Annotation Activities

Activity 1: Mark Class Signifiers

As you read, highlight or underline every object that signals whether someone is a Greaser or a Soc. Use the color code above or write "CS" in the margin.

After marking, list 5-6 signifiers you found:

How they look, such as:

- eyes, dark brown, lively, dancing, recklessly laughing eyes that can be gentle and sympathetic
- clothes - jeans, tennis shoes and boots, leather jackets, t-shirts and madras shirts,
 - cars, red corvair, tough looking mustang
 - smells, tobacco, shaving lotion
 - cigarettes, shows toughness, being tuff.

Activity 2: Find the Boundaries

Mark every mention of places, territories, or barriers between groups. Use the color code above or write "SB" in the margin.

What spaces are "safe" for Greasers? What spaces are dangerous?

- greasers shouldnt walk alone
- east and west side - socs (socials) are the west side rich kids, greasers are east side and poor.

Activity 3: Catch the Casual Mentions

Mark moments where Ponyboy mentions violence or danger in a casual, matter-of-fact way. His tone tells us as much as his words.

Find one example and copy it here. What does his casual tone reveal?

When he is told that he was cut and can only see it when he sees the handkerchief.

He's used to seeing violence all the time and it doesn't mean much.

Activity 4: Spot the Gap

Find a moment where Ponyboy shows us something he doesn't fully understand. There's a gap between what he sees and what a reader can understand.

Example: When Ponyboy talks about his hair, he sees personal style. We see a class marker that makes him a target.

Find your own example:

Discovery Questions

Consider these as you read and annotate Chapters 1-2:

1. What objects or details immediately tell you whether someone is a Greaser or a Soc?
2. How does Ponyboy describe the Socs compared to how he describes his own gang?
3. When Ponyboy mentions danger or violence, what is his tone? What does this reveal?
4. What does Ponyboy accept as "normal" that a reader might question?
5. Where is the gap between what Ponyboy sees and what he understands?

After Reading Chapters 1-2

Look back at your annotations and answer these questions:

1. What patterns did you notice in how Ponyboy describes his world?

2. What class signifiers appear most frequently?

3. Find one moment where Ponyboy shows us something he doesn't fully understand. What is it?

4. What questions do you have going into Chapter 3?

Key Passages Reference

Use this section to check your annotations against key passages, or to find specific quotes for discussion.

First-Person Narration

Opening Perspective

Chapter 1, Opening

"When I stepped out into the bright sunlight from the darkness of the movie house, I had only two things on my mind: Paul Newman and a ride home. I was wishing I looked like Paul Newman—he looks tough and I don't—but I guess my own looks aren't so bad."

What to Notice: Ponyboy's first thoughts are about movies and appearance—superficial concerns. He's about to be jumped, but he doesn't know that yet. What does his focus tell us?

Mark: The contrast between what Ponyboy is thinking about vs. the danger that's coming. This gap between awareness and reality is central to the novel's pattern.

Imagery

class_signifiers

Chapter 1, Opening

"When I stepped out into the bright sunlight from the darkness of the movie house..."

What to Notice: Light and dark imagery. The movie house is escape (darkness = safety, fantasy). The sunlight is reality (brightness = exposure, danger).

Mark: Light/dark contrasts throughout the novel. They often signal transitions between safety and danger, fantasy and reality.

Symbolism

class_signifiers

Chapter 1

"My hair is longer than a lot of boys wear theirs, squared off in back and long at the front and sides, but I am a greaser and most of my neighborhood rarely bothers to get a haircut. Besides, I look better with long hair."

What to Notice: Ponyboy sees his hair as personal style ("I look better"). He doesn't see that his hair is a class marker that makes him a target for violence.

Mark: Every mention of hair, grooming, or appearance differences between groups. Hair becomes one of the novel's most important symbols.

The Gap:

What Ponyboy thinks:

Personal style choice

What readers see:

Visible class marker / target

Juxtaposition

social_boundaries

Chapter 1

"It seems funny to me that he should look just exactly like my father and act exactly the opposite from him. My father was only forty when he died and he looked twenty-five... But they only looked alike— my father was never rough with anyone without meaning to be."

What to Notice: Ponyboy contrasts Darry with their father. He sees personality differences. What he doesn't see: economic necessity has forced Darry into a parental role that demands harshness.

Mark: Comparisons between how things were (before parents died) and how they are now. These reveal class pressure without Ponyboy naming it.

Foreshadowing

casual danger

Chapter 1

"Greasers can't walk alone too much or they'll get jumped, or someone will come by and scream 'Greaser!' at them, which doesn't make you feel too hot, if you know what I mean. We get jumped by the Socs."

What to Notice: Ponyboy states this casually—it's just how life is. He accepts class-based violence as normal. The casual tone reveals how deeply this system is internalized.

Mark: Moments where violence or danger is mentioned matter-of-factly. The tone tells us as much as the content.