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Peer Relations, Peer Influence and Conformity

Ninth Grade Unit of Study

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Peer Relations, Peer Influence and Conformity Unit

Notes, Policies and Procedures

\* We have devoted the first five minutes of each class period to "Paperwork and Objectives." During this time, we will take roll, hand out papers and materials needed for class, and explain to students the day's agenda.

\* Late work: We plan to issue one "late pass" to students each semester. If a student does not complete work on time, he will be allowed to use this late pass to turn the assignment in one day late. The late pass will be stapled to the assignment when it is turned in. When a student has used his late pass, he will receive a letter grade deduction if he turns in any more work after the due date (a paper that would have earned an A would receive a B if turned in one day late).

\* In planning this unit, we have assumed that students have some familiarity with writing in journals, taking notes on readings and class discussions, keeping an organized notebook, role-playing and script writing, participating in groups, participating in peer editing groups and in a writer's workshop setting. If students do not possess these skills, the teacher should allow more time for instruction in these areas.

\* We have devoted approximately three days of this unit to watching the film version of S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*. To allow for unforeseen events such as pep rallies and snow days, we have identified this activity as one that might be excluded from the unit. We feel that there is value in watching the film, but would sacrifice this activity if more time were needed for other things.

## Materials List

### Poetry:

"We Real Cool," Gwendolyn Brooks

"The Road Not Taken," Robert Frost

"Summer in the Middle Class," Daniel Halpern

"The Unknown Citizen," W.H. Auden

### Short

### Stories:

"Bernice Bobs Her Hair," F. Scott Fitzgerald

"Harrison Bergeron," Kurt Vonnegut

### Novel:

The Outsiders, S.E. Hinton

### Movie:

The Outsiders, directed by Francis Ford Copolla

### Video:

"Library of Congress Interview with Gwendolyn Brooks"

## Peer Relations, Peer Influence and Conformity Unit

### Rationale

The teenage years are a period of self-discovery. As teens are learning who they are as people and finding their places in the world, many feel the need to fit in with others at all cost. The predominance of gangs in our schools is evidence of this fact. It is at this age, then, that many

teenagers succumb to the influence of their peers. Because many teens are still finding out who they are and what they believe in, it is easy for them to be swayed by the opinions of others, especially when they admire them and desire their acceptance. Teenagers often find themselves acting in ways contrary to their beliefs in order to belong.

According to research by Judith Rich Harris, a child's peer group seems to be primarily responsible for shaping whom that child will become. In her group socialization theory of development, Harris states that "outside-the-home socialization takes place in the peer groups of childhood and adolescence," and feels that group interaction, not dyadic relationships, "are responsible for the transmission of culture and for environmental modification of children's personality characteristics" (1995).

Furthermore, Harris feels that adolescents go so far as to overtly reject adult behavior. In explaining the phenomenon of "peer pressure" and the fact that well-behaved children often commit acts of delinquency, Harris states that adolescents who commit such acts are "not aspiring to adult status," as others would suggest, but are "contrasting themselves with adults." She goes on to say that adolescents

adopt characteristic modes of clothing, hairstyles, speech and behavior so that, even though they are now the same size as adults, no one will have any trouble telling them apart. If they truly aspired to adult status, they would not be spraying graffiti on overpasses, going for joyrides in cars they do not own, or shoplifting nail polish from drug stores. They would be doing boring adult things, like figuring out their income tax or doing their laundry.

Harris feels that peer pressure is often not exhibited as an overt act on the part of group members, but that adolescents often conform to the behavior of a group because of the need within themselves to fit in. She states that "peer pressure is less a push to conform than a desire to participate in experiences that are seen as relevant, or potentially relevant, to group identity."

When an adolescent joins a peer group, membership in that group affects his or her behavior in innumerable ways. Harris cites research that suggests that adolescents favor the members of their own group over others, and often show hostility towards kids who belong to other peer groups. Members of a peer group often modify their behavior to be less like other groups, and to be more like the group in which they belong. Furthermore, if an adolescent is labeled by his peer group, the label will have far-reaching effects on the child's personality. Harris states that "the gang is quick to seize on any idiosyncrasy of appearance, manner, skill or whatever, and thereafter to treat the child in terms of this trait." Such labels "become self-fulfilling prophecies" as the labeled child interacts with others.

As teenagers move toward adulthood, the influence of peers on their thoughts and actions weakens. Harris states that "group norms of behavior are no longer enforced so stringently; the consequences of being different are not so serious for adults."

However, adult life is not without pressures to conform. Adults must obey the laws established by their country and state, as well as the unwritten code of behavior established by society. In their professional lives, adults must follow the guidelines of conduct set forth by their employers or face

unemployment. For example, many companies today require their employees to follow a dress code - to not adhere to its guidelines means disapproval and possible termination.

By teaching a unit on peer pressure and conformity, we hope to make students more aware of the influences that peers have on their lives and the choices that they make. Using examples from literature, we plan to show how a peer group functions and how it can exert control over its members, as well as how young people can avoid the pitfalls of peer pressure. Students will be asked to draw parallels between the examples of peer groups in their texts and events in their own lives, in order to make it more apparent that students are, to some degree, influenced by their membership in a peer group. By making peer influence and the motivations behind it more obvious, we hope that students will become more resistant to its sometimes negative effects, and to learn to think for themselves. Students should also realize that they can use their influence over other peers in positive ways, by intervening when they see their peers acting in a manner that might be harmful or dangerous. Additionally, peer influence can be used as a positive influence in group work and collaborative learning.

To achieve these goals, we plan to have students examine the poem, "We Real Cool," by Gwendolyn Brooks, and the short-story, "Bernice Bobs Her Hair," by F. Scott Fitzgerald. We feel that "We Real Cool" displays the typical attitudes of one peer group (a gang of "tough" street punks), and will provide the opportunity to examine the values of a peer group, and how these values affect the group's behavior. Fitzgerald's "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" is a classic example of "peer pressure" at work, and how adolescents can influence others to act in ways contrary to their own judgment. By studying the actions of Bernice, we hope that students will learn that it is not always best to succumb to the influences of peers.

The main work we have chosen for our examination of peer groups is S.E. Hinton's, *The Outsiders*. We feel that the novel effectively depicts two rival peer groups, the Greasers and the Socs, and the animosity these groups exhibit towards one another (this is a prime example of Harris' conclusion that peer groups often exhibit hostility towards other groups). This novel will allow students to explore the stereotypes that each of the rival gangs in the book holds about the other, as well as the validity of such stereotypes. Because the novel is told from the point of view of one of the gang members, we feel that it will allow students to examine the thoughts and actions of an adolescent as he struggles with the conflict between his own values and the beliefs of his gang. We also plan to use Robert Frost's poem, "The Road Not Taken," to discuss the choices that this character makes, and how those choices will affect his life.

From our discussion of peer influence, we plan to broaden our topic to a discussion of conformity in general. We feel that by discussing issues of conformity, we will better prepare students to function in the "real world." Students should learn that as adults, they will be asked to follow rules that they might not necessarily agree with in order to get along in society. For example, a nose ring that is considered really cool by peers in high school would be frowned upon by a prospective employer. Again, students will be forced to make choices.

We hope to also teach students that when taken to extremes by a society, conformity can become a bad thing. When do rules that foster "sameness" begin to squash diversity? We hope to teach students that while some rules must be followed to insure one's place in society, rules and norms

should not be followed blindly and without question. Variety should, in some contexts, be celebrated and cherished.

To achieve these ends, we plan to examine several poems and the short story, "Harrison Bergeron," by Kurt Vonnegut. Daniel Halpern's poem, "Summer in the Middle Class," deals with the routines of one section of American society, and pokes fun at the "sameness" its members exhibit. "The Unknown Citizen" by W.H. Auden examines the life of one man, and how he devoted his life to adhering to the norms of his society. We feel that by studying these two poems, students will begin to question norms and conformity, and to recognize how they can exert control over the members of a society.

Vonnegut's "Harrison Bergeron" looks at a society where everyone has been made equal through a "handicapping" system. For instance, if you are exceptionally pretty, you are forced to wear a mask that hides your beauty. We feel that this work will allow students to examine a society that has taken the idea of conformity to extremes. At this point, we hope that students will begin to question the purposes for and value in "sameness," and to what extent they will allow peer influence and societal norms to affect the choices they make in their lives.

### Work Cited

Harris, Judith Rich. (1995). Where is the child's environment? A group socialization theory of development. *Psychological Review*. 102(3), 458-489.

## Peer Relations, Peer Influence and Conformity Unit

### Main Objectives

#### Journal Assignment:

- \* Students will respond to the in-class activities and readings in a journal format.
- \* Through their writing as a whole, students will demonstrate their knowledge of the ideas of peer influence and conformity.
- \* Students will relate these ideas to the texts that they have studied, as well as situations from their own lives.

(See Journal Assignments Handout, Week One, Day Five, for information on specific journal assignments and assessment.)

## Final Paper Assignment:

\* In the context of a writer's workshop, students will write a paper which demonstrates an understanding of peer pressure and/or conformity, in relation to class discussions and assigned texts.

\* Students will write well-developed introductions, bodies and conclusions, and demonstrate an effective use of the writing instruction provided.

\* Students will make evident the use of peer advice and suggestions received in the writer's workshop through the process of revision.

(See Final Paper Topic Handout, Week Seven, Day Five, more information on this assignment.)

## Peer Relations, Peer Influence and Conformity Unit

### Assessments and Percentage of Grade

#### Main Assessments - 40% of Grade

1. Journal (assignments throughout unit, see Journal Assignments Handout on Week One, Day Five)
2. Final Paper Assignment (Week Seven, Day Five)

#### Other Assessments - 40% of Grade

1. "We Real Cool" Poem or Expressive Piece (Week Two, Day Two)
2. Independent Reading Presentation (assigned Week Three, Day One)
3. Newspaper Article in response to *The Outsiders* (Week Four, Day One)
4. Role Play of Event showing Conformity to Norms (Week Five, Day Five)
5. "Harrison Bergeron" Handicap Activity (Week Seven, Day One)

#### Participation Assessments - 20% of Grade

1. Notebook (checked throughout unit, see Notebook Handout on Week One, Day One)
2. Role Play Peer Pressure Scenario (Week One, Day Two)
3. Reading Quiz - *The Outsiders* (Week Four, Day Five)
4. "Harrison Bergeron" In-class Drawing (Week Seven, Day One)

## Peer Relations, Peer Influence and Conformity Unit

### Week One - Introduction

#### Day One

**Objective:** Students will examine several scenarios (see below) and decide to what degree the characters in each situation are affected by peer pressure. Students will rank their choices, showing which scenario exhibits the most clear cut example of peer pressure and which scenario least shows peer pressure at work. Students will then begin to examine their own ideas about peer pressure and to form a "working definition" of the term.

5 minutes

**Paperwork and Objectives.** Teacher will explain that they are to keep a notebook during the course of the unit, and distribute handout below.

10 minutes

On their own, students will read each scenario and decide if and to what degree peer pressure is at work by ranking the scenarios (1 being the least best example of peer pressure and 5 being the best).

20 minutes

Students will form small groups (six groups of approximately four people) and discuss the scenarios. Groups will discuss individuals' ranking and then form ranking for group. Students will discuss why they chose to rank the scenarios in the order that they did.

25 minutes

Discuss scenarios as a class. Students will be asked to explain their decisions. How did each student's group affect his opinion of the scenario? Did anyone change their mind about a scenario after their group discussion?

(The parenthetical comments following each scenario represent our own ideas about the situation. They will not appear on students' copies of the handout, but could serve as a basis for discussion.)

### Peer Pressure Scenarios Handout

Directions:



To introduce the concept of peer pressure, we will study the following five scenarios individually, and then in groups. You should read each scenario, thinking about how it fits in with your ideas about peer pressure. Once you have read each scenario individually, rank each situation on a scale from one to five. A five would represent the most clear-cut, obvious example of peer pressure, a one would represent the situation least exhibiting peer pressure at work. You should be prepared to discuss with a group why you chose to rank the scenarios as you did. Record your rankings on this handout in the column marked "student."

You will then form a group of approximately four people, where you will discuss the scenarios. In groups, you will discuss each members' ranking, and then form a ranking for your group. Groups should be prepared to discuss with the class why they ranked the scenarios as they did. Record your group's ranking on this handout in the column marked "group."

Scenarios:

Student Ranking

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Group Ranking

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1. Alyssa normally hangs out at the mall after school with her three best friends, Heather, Carla and Mindy. Alyssa is new to the school, and she feels very fortunate to be included with this group of girls - they are very popular. One day while looking at some silver jewelry in the mall's biggest department store, Alyssa sees Heather slip some earrings into her purse. When Heather notices that Alyssa is staring at her, she puts her fingers to her lips and smiles. Alyssa cannot sleep that night, and feels that she should talk to her parents about Heather's actions. But, she does not want to risk her place in their group of friends. Alyssa decides to remain silent. (We feel this scenario plainly exhibits peer pressure, although maybe not to the degree that scenario number 4 does. Heather never tells Alyssa outright that she must be quiet in order to remain a part of their group - it is merely implied.)

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Student Ranking

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Group Ranking

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2. Pleasantville High School's dress code plainly states that "No shirts which come above a students midriff are to be worn on school property." Megan has just bought a cool new shirt at the mall which barely skims the top of her jeans. When she meets her friend Kennedy for cappuccino before school, Megan is upset when Kennedy tells her that she cannot wear the shirt to school. "But you



will get detention if you do," Kennedy explains. Megan decides to go home and change clothes. (We feel that this scenario deals more with conformity to a rule than conformity to peer pressure.)

Student Ranking

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Group Ranking

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3. Chelsea loves her little brother, Jake, even though he is five years younger than her. He idolizes her, and prefers her company to friends his own age. Chelsea enjoys telling Jake about high school and what she learns there, and wishes that Jake were older so that he could attend school with her. Chelsea is very excited about an upcoming Halloween party that she has been invited to. She has bought a cool new outfit, and plans to attend the party as one of the Spice Girls. When Jake hears of her plans, however, he is very upset. Chelsea normally takes him out trick-or-treating. Even though Scotty Parker, the cutest boy in ninth grade, will be at the party, Chelsea decides not to go. She decides that Jake's feelings mean more to her than some silly party. (We feel that this scenario does not really exhibit peer pressure - Jake is Chelsea's brother - not a peer.)

Student Ranking

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Group Ranking

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4. Todd is a member of a group of guys that calls itself "The Suwanee Stingrays." They are not exactly a gang, but they do hang out together and party together on the weekends. Todd more focused on school than the rest of the guys, and plans to go to college and major in business. He hopes to one day become an executive at a Fortune 500 company. When the other members of the group decide that they should all get tattoos of Stingrays on their ankles, Todd is very apprehensive. He knows that a tattoo would not go over well at IBM. The guys persuade him, however, by saying that if he is truly one of them he will get the tattoo. As soon as the tattoo artist inserts the needle into his ankle, Todd regrets his decision. (We feel that this scenario plainly shows peer pressure in action - the members of Todd's gang talk him into doing something that he does not want to do.)

Student Ranking

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## Group Ranking

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5. Amy sits in front of Harrison in Mrs. Jackson's first period science class. He is constantly bothering her by pulling her hair and making fun of her when the teacher's back is turned. Amy thinks that Harrison is the ugliest boy in school. One morning while she is walking the halls, Amy is approached by Harrison, who has a frantic look on his face. "I totally forgot about the science test today. Would you let me look on your paper?" he asks. "Mrs. Jackson will never know." Amy thinks about Harrison's request. He is right - Mrs. Jackson would never catch Harrison cheating - she stays too busy reading romance novels during their tests to notice anything. In the end, however, Amy decides that she will not cheat for anyone, especially yucky old Harrison. (We feel that this scenario demonstrates that in order for peer pressure to work, you must value the opinion of the peer. So while Harrison is trying to pressure Amy into cheating, it does not work because Amy does not care what Harrison thinks of her.)

\*This scenario activity is adapted from Smagorinsky, McCann and Kern's "Scenario Worksheet for The Scarlet Letter," which appears in the appendix of their Explorations: Introductory Activities for Literature and Composition, 7-12 (see resource list for further information).

## Notebook Handout

You will be asked to keep a notebook, in which you will keep handouts from the teacher and take notes from your reading and class discussions. Notebooks will be collected at the same time that journals are taken up, and checked to be sure that you are taking notes and keeping up with handouts. When the teacher has the notebooks for notebook checks, you will still be expected to take notes in response to your readings. You will receive a participation grade for the material in your notebooks.

### Assessment:

Notebooks that are well organized into sections with the appropriate material in each section, contain all of the handouts and detailed notes from class discussion and readings will receive an A.

Notebooks that are fairly well organized into sections with the appropriate material in each section, contain most of the handouts and a majority of notes from class discussions and readings will receive a B.

Notebooks that are only somewhat organized into sections with the appropriate material in each section, contain only some handouts and some notes from class discussions and readings will receive a C.

Notebooks that are not organized into sections with the appropriate materials in each section, are missing most of the handouts and contain only very sparse notes from class discussions and readings will receive an F.

## Day Two

Objective: Student groups will create a working definition of the term peer pressure, and create a scenario exemplifying this definition to be role played in front of the class.

5 minutes

### Paperwork and Objectives

10 minutes

Students will return to the small groups established on Day One and attempt to define "peer pressure." What qualifications must exist for a situation to be considered "peer pressure"? Students will also discuss if and how the class discussion on day one changed their opinions.

35 minutes

As a small group, students will write their own scenarios showing peer pressure at work, based on the definition their groups have generated. Students will then write scripts for scenarios, insuring that each member of the group has a part (students will receive a participation grade for taking part in role-playing the scenario). Students will think about what specific aspects of their scenario make it an example of peer pressure, and how the scenario exhibits specific points of group's definition of peer pressure.

10 minutes

Students will participate in a warm-up activity, to "loosen them up" for the role-playing that they will be asked to do on the following day and accustom them to interacting with others in front of that class. \*See "Hello Non-verbally" warm-up activity in Smagorinsky, McCann and Kern's Explorations: Introductory Activities for Literature and Composition, 7-12, p.9 (see resource list for further information).

## Day Three

Objective: Students will present scenarios that they have created to the class, explaining how their scenario relates to the group's definition of peer pressure. Each member of the group will take part in the role play.

5 minutes

## Paperwork and Objectives

10 minutes

Students will participate in a warm-up activity, to "loosen them up" for the role-playing that they will be asked to do and accustom them to interacting with others in front of that class. \*See "circle/change action" warm-up activity in Smagorinsky, McCann and Kern's Explorations: Introductory Activities for Literature and Composition, 7-12, p. 9 (see resource list for further information).

25 minutes

Students will return to small groups and practice role plays.

20 minutes

Groups will present scenarios to class. After role playing, they will share their definition of peer pressure and tell how the scenario they have role played relates to this definition. (Two groups will be allowed 10 minutes each).

## Day Four

Objective: After all groups have presented scenarios and definitions, class will attempt to use each groups' definition of peer pressure to create a class definition of the term.

5 minutes

## Paperwork and Objectives

40 minutes

Remaining four groups will present scenarios to class, sharing definition of peer pressure and how their scenario relates to it. (Four groups will be allowed 10 minutes each)

15 minutes

Teacher will have made an overhead containing each groups' definition of peer pressure. Using overhead as reference, class will discuss various definitions and then create one class definition of the term peer pressure.

## Day Five

Objective: Students will write in their journals about a personal experience with peer pressure, using class-generated definition of the term.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

10 minutes

Teacher will explain that students are to begin keeping a journal in which they will periodically respond to assignments made by the teacher. Students will be given a handout containing all of the journal assignments for the entire unit and the requirements of each, the due dates for the assignments, as well as a discussion of the means which will be used to assess the journals. They will keep this handout in their notebooks for future reference (see handout below).

15 minutes

Teacher will explain first journal assignment, sharing expectations which will be used for assessment. Students will be instructed to write about a personal experience that they have had with peer pressure. They will relate this experience to the class-generated definition, and explain how this experience fits the definition. Students will also explain why peers were or were not effective in persuading them to do or say something which they might not have ordinarily done or said.

30 minutes

Students will work on journal assignment in class. Teacher will be available to students for help with writing (i.e. organizing thoughts).

At Home

Students will complete journal assignment for homework.

Journal Assignments Handout

1. Personal Experience Narrative: Students will write about a personal experience that they have had with peer pressure. They will relate this experience to the definition of peer pressure which the class generated as a group, and explain how their experience fits the definition. Students will also explain why peers were or were not effective in persuading them to do or say something which they might not have ordinarily done or said.

Assigned: Week 1, Day 5

2. "Bernice Bobs Her Hair": You will respond to the short story, "Bernice Bobs Her Hair." You should either: (1) Express how you feel the main character in the story, Bernice, is influenced by her peers, stating the motivations for her actions (i.e. why does Bernice cut her hair? Who influences her to take this action and why are they able to influence her?) or (2) Write about a personal experience that in some way relates to the reading. Have you ever done something because you felt pressured by your peers, and then later regretted your decision? Why did you allow

yourself to be influenced by your peers instead of making the decision based on your own judgment?

Assigned: Week 2, Day 5

3. Comics, Quotes and Questions: You will choose a comic strip, quote or question from the packet of materials provided by the teacher, and explain how the item that you choose applies to peer pressure. You should make use of the class-generated definition of peer pressure in your writing, explaining how it applies to the comic, quote or question. You are free to write anything in response to your item - reactions, arguments, responses - but should clearly explain your opinion and how you feel the item relates to peer pressure.

Assigned: Week 3, Day 1

Journals will be collected on Week 3, Day 3. The three assignments above will be read and given either a check minus, check or check plus (see below).

Journals will be returned no later than Week 3, Day 5.

4. The Outsiders/"The Road Not Taken": After discussing the Robert Frost poem, "The Road Not Taken," in class, you will write about the poem in relation to the novel, *The Outsiders*, focusing on the idea of choice. You should discuss how Dallas, Johnny, and Ponyboy's lives may have been very different had they not chosen to rescue the children from the fire, and how this choice may have represented a "narrow road" for these characters (most gang members would probably not risk their lives to save others). Also discuss how you think Ponyboy will feel about his choices as he looks back on them later in life.

Assigned: Week 3, Day 5

5. *The Outsiders*: You will write in response to the novel, *The Outsiders*, discussing the actions and motivations of Ponyboy. Why does he choose to participate in the final rumble with the Socs, even though he has come to know Randy and Cherry (Socs) and begun to understand that the Socs are not that different from himself? Does he feel that he would let down the other members of the gang if he does not fight? How does Ponyboy give in to peer influence (though it is never stated that Ponyboy must fight, it is implied that he is expected to) and conform to the other gang members' expectations of him? Would you have participated in the rumble if you were in Ponyboy's shoes?

Assigned: Week 5, Day 1

Journals will be collected on Week 5, Day 4. The two assignments above will be read and given either a check minus, check, or check plus.

Journals will be returned no later than Week 3, Day 5.

6. "Summer in the Middle Class": You will write in response to the poem, "Summer in the Middle Class," and either (1) Explain how the poem relates to conformity. Why do all of the families in the poem seem to lead very similar lives? What is the force behind this similarity? What do you think Halpern means when he writes, "It's what happens in unison that makes America America"? or (2)



Write about a personal experience that somehow relates to the poem. For instance, do all the families in your neighborhood seem to always do the same kinds of things? Or is each family very different? Do you feel that the people in your neighborhood feel the need to conform to some ideal, or do the people in your neighborhood appreciate diversity?

Assigned: Week 6, Day 4

7. "Harrison Bergeron": You will write in response to the short story, "Harrison Bergeron." You should discuss why you feel the society in the story goes to such lengths to create sameness. Why do you think this society would want everyone to be alike? What do you think it would be like to live in a place where everyone is equal? Do you think that you would like to live in such a society, or do you feel that it is better to live in a society which celebrates diversity?

Assigned: Week 6, Day 5

Journals will be collected on Week 7, Day 1. The two assignments above will be read and given either a check minus, check or check plus.

8. Extra Credit - Comics, Quotes and Questions: You will choose a comic strip, quote or question from the packet of materials provided by the teacher on Week 3, Day 1, and explain how the item that you choose applies to conformity. You should make use of the ideas about conformity that we have discussed in class, explaining how they apply to the comic, quote or question that you choose. You are free to write anything in response to your item - reactions, arguments, responses - but should clearly explain your opinion and how you feel the item relates to conformity.

Assigned: You may write this journal entry during Week 7 for extra-credit, but it should be turned in no later than Week 7, Day 5. You may use it to substitute one of the other seven journal assignment grades (a check minus, for instance), but it will be assessed based on the same criteria as the other assignments (check minus, check or check plus).

Journals will be returned on Week 8, Day 1. At this time you will be given a letter grade for the work in your journals as a whole (see below).

## Means of Assessment

### Individual Journal Assignments:

**Check Plus:** Your writing clearly fulfills the requirements of the assignment, you demonstrate that you have read and understood the reading (if applicable). Your thoughts are well developed and clearly explained.

**Check:** Your writing fulfills the requirements of the assignment, but you do not fully develop your thoughts and ideas. You demonstrate that you have read the poem, story or novel (if applicable), but do not clearly relate your reading to your writing.



**Check Minus:** You do not fulfill the requirements of the assignment (i.e. you do not discuss the major points that are outlined in the assignment). Your writing does not demonstrate that you have read the poem, short story or novel (if applicable).

**Final Journal Grade:**

**A:** You have consistently (i.e. 6-7 check plusses, no check minuses) met the requirements of the assignments and demonstrated a clear understanding of the reading. On the whole, your writing demonstrates a clear understanding of the concepts of peer influence and conformity, and relates these ideas to the assigned texts and/or personal experiences.

**B:** You have fairly consistently (i.e. 3-5 check plusses, only one check minus) met the requirements of the assignments and demonstrated a clear understanding of the reading. Some of your writing demonstrates a clear understanding of the concepts of peer influence and conformity and relates these ideas to the texts and/or personal experiences, but perhaps not consistently.

**C:** You have only sometimes (i.e. only 1-2 check plusses, two check minuses) met the requirements of the assignments and demonstrated a clear understanding of the reading. Your writing has only sometimes demonstrated a clear understanding of the concepts of peer influence and conformity and related these ideas to the texts and/or personal experience.

**F:** You have consistently failed (i.e. more than four check minuses, no check plusses) to meet the requirements of the assignments and to demonstrate a clear understanding of the reading. Your writing has failed to demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of peer influence and conformity, and to relate these ideas to the texts and/or personal experience.

**Week Two - Peer Influence and Peer Relations**

**Day One**

**Objective:** Students will read the poem, "We Real Cool," by Gwendolyn Brooks and discuss how readings of poetry can vary. Students will also examine the issue of validity among diverse readings.

5 minutes

**Paperwork and Objectives**

5 minutes

Students will read the poem, "We Real Cool," by Gwendolyn Brooks, silently.

10 minutes

The teacher will ask a volunteer to read the poem aloud. Next, the teacher will read the poem aloud,

and the class will discuss how the two readings were different. Then, the class will discuss how readings of poetry differ from person to person (differences in voice inflection and stress on certain words).

20 minutes

Students will explain how they think the poem exemplifies peer relationships. The teacher will help students point out possible attitudes and emotions of characters in the poem and how Brooks conveys these attitudes and emotions in the poem through word choice and rhythm (the lines are short and choppy, a verb begins each line and the subject, we, is at the end of each line).

10 minutes

Show video of Gwendolyn Brooks reading the poem. (We chose to use this video because we think Brooks has a very unique way of reading this poem and we want the students to hear the way the author reads her own work. She also gives some insight into her intent when writing this poem.)

10 minutes

The class will discuss the author's reading and talk again about different readings. The teacher will emphasize that each reading is different, but valid.

Day Two

Objective: Students will either write their own poem, modeling the poem, "We Real Cool," or create any type of expressive piece which shows some form of peer relationships, and expresses possible attitudes and emotions felt by the pool players in "We Real Cool."

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

10 minutes

Teacher will explain the following assignment which will be written on the board:

Choose one of these activities to complete by the next day:

Option #1

Write a poem that models the style, tone, and subject of "We Real Cool."

Option #2

Create an expressive piece (song, dance, artwork, etc.) from the perspective of one of the pool players in "We Real Cool," showing how the pool player feels about peer relationships.

Each student will receive a copy of the expectations sheet and rubrics for this assignment at this point (see below). Teacher will explain the goals and evaluation of the assignments by going over the following expectations sheet and rubrics that will be used for assessment.

45 minutes

Students will decide which option of the assignment they will do, and will begin working on their project. Teacher will walk around the class to monitor their progress and offer assistance and further direction as needed.

At Home

Students should continue working on and complete their poem or perspective piece to be presented in class on Wednesday and Thursday (Days Three and Four).

Expectations of "We Real Cool" Projects

Option #1

If you choose Option #1-to write a poem that is modeled after "We Real Cool"-make sure that you meet the following expectations.

- \* Show some form of peer relationships in your poem.
- \* Use language (perhaps slang) that is typical of the characters in your poem.
- \* Use some stylistic techniques similar to those used by Gwendolyn Brooks in "We Real Cool" (rhyme, rhythm, short lines in which each word is significant, strong use of verbs).
- \* Create a sense of attitude for the characters in your poem. For example, it can be said that the pool players in Brooks' poem exhibit attitudes of defiance or rebellion.

Option #2

If you choose Option #2-to create an expressive piece (song, dance, artwork, etc.), showing how one of the pool players in "We Real Cool" might feel about life and peer relationships-make sure you meet the following expectations.

- \* Show some form of peer relationships in your creative piece.
- \* Your creative piece must be original, meaning that you cannot just take a song and explain how its lyrics can be applied to this poem. However, you may create a parody of another work (use the music of a well-known song and write your own lyrics which show how one of the pool players feels about peer pressure).
- \* The work you create should express possible emotions felt by one of the pool players. The types of emotions that the pool player displays are entirely up to you, but keep in mind that they should be a response to the peer pressure or peer relationships shown in the poem (think about our class discussions of the poem).

## Presentations

Be prepared to share your work with the class. Your classmates will be grading your presentation, and their assessment of your work in conjunction with my assessment will determine your grade on this project.

Whether you choose Option #1 or Option #2, you need to include the following:

- \* an analysis or explanation of your work, telling your instructor and your classmates why you decided to create this particular type of representation (poem, song, artwork, etc.)
- \* how you think it relates to the poem, "We Real Cool" (your intentions when creating the piece)
- \* any struggles or problems you encountered during the creative process as well as how you overcame those problems.

## Rubrics for "We Real Cool" Projects

Evaluator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Creator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Creator chose to do \_\_\_\_\_ Option #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Option #2

### Option #1 Rubric

\* The poem shows some form of peer relationships.

Fully fulfilled requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Moderately fulfilled requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Did not fulfill requirement \_\_\_\_\_

\* The poem uses language that is typical of its characters.

Fully fulfilled requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Moderately fulfilled requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Did not fulfill requirement \_\_\_\_\_

\* The poem uses some stylistic techniques similar to those used by Gwendolyn Brooks in "We Real Cool" (rhyme, rhythm, strong use of verbs).

Fully fulfilled requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Moderately fulfilled requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Did not fulfill requirement \_\_\_\_\_

\* The poem creates a sense of attitude for its characters. Example: the pool players might exhibit attitudes of defiance or rebellion.

Fully fulfilled requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Moderately fulfilled requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Did not fulfill requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Option #2 Rubric

\* The expressive piece shows some form of peer relationships.

Fully fulfilled requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Moderately fulfilled requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Did not fulfill requirement \_\_\_\_\_

\* The piece is original or falls within the guidelines provided on the expectations handout (parodies).

Fully fulfilled requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Moderately fulfilled requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Did not fulfill requirement \_\_\_\_\_

\* The piece expresses possible emotions felt by one of the pool players in "We Real Cool" resulting from peer pressure or peer relationships shown in the poem.

Fully fulfilled requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Moderately fulfilled requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Did not fulfill requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation Evaluation (Use for all projects, Option #1 and Option #2)

The presenter/creator explained his or her work, telling us why they decided to create this particular type of representation. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

The presenter/creator told us his or her intentions when creating the piece and how the it relates to the poem, "We Real Cool". \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

The presenter/creator shared any struggles or problems he or she encountered during the creative process, as well as how those problems were overcome. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Comments:

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### Day Three

**Objective:** Students will present their work to their classmates, and those classmates will offer peer evaluations of the projects that are presented.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

55 minutes(5 minutes per student)

Students will begin presenting their poems or expressive pieces. Classmates will fill out peer assessment rubrics for each project that is presented and turn them in to the teacher as the presenter is turning in his or her project. Half of the class will have time to give their presentations today.

### Day Four

**Objectives:** Students will have an opportunity to present their work to their classmates, and those classmates will have an opportunity to offer peer evaluations of the projects that are presented.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

55 minutes(5 minutes per student)

The remaining students will give their presentations. Their classmates will evaluate their work, using the provided rubrics, during the presentations.

### At Home

Read the short story, "Bernice Bobs Her Hair," by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Think about how your class definition of peer pressure does or not apply to this story.

### Day Five

**Objective:** Students will review their class definition of peer pressure and apply it to the short story,

"Bernice Bobs Her Hair." Students will examine the motives of the characters in the story and how these motives might help readers understand how peer pressure operates.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

20 minutes

Teacher will have an overhead prepared with the class definition of peer pressure (from an earlier activity during Week One) on it, and display it for reference while the students discuss, as a class, how the story, "Bernice Bobs Her Hair," fits with the definition or how it does not fit.

20 minutes

Students will group themselves in pairs. One student will pretend to be Bernice and one student will pretend to be her cousin, Marjorie. Students will imagine that the cousins have just reunited, several weeks after the events of the story, and both want to apologize for their actions. They will explain to each other the characters' motives for their actions in the story and how those actions were influenced by peers. Students will make a jot list of the motives and peer influences and put them in their notebooks to help them with potential assignments later in the unit.

10 minutes

In a whole class discussion, students will review their lists of jot notes and the discussions among partners that prompted them. They will attempt to answer the question, How do these motives and peer influences help us understand how peer pressure operates?

At Home

Students will write a journal entry on the short story, "Bernice Bobs Her Hair." (Refer to Journal handout for expectations)

Week Three - The Outsiders

Day One

Objective: Students will use a quotation, rhetorical question, or comic strip to examine the ways this item applies to peer relations and peer influence.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

10 minutes

Teacher will tell students that, as a journal entry, they will be examining a quotation, rhetorical question, or comic strip in order to explain how this item might apply to peer pressure. Explain that



they are free to write anything—reactions, arguments, responses, but they are expected to explain their statements, reactions, responses or arguments. Students should consider their assignments and readings over the past two weeks to help them make their decisions and arguments. Teacher will pass out packets containing comic strips, quotations, and rhetorical questions to each student (create your own packet of quotations, quotes, and comics that apply to the unit's themes. We found some helpful sources to be the weekly newspaper comic strips, The Far Side daily calendar, The Book of Questions, by Gregory Stock, and various books of quotes ), and explain that they should keep their packet because they can complete one more journal entry like this one as extra credit during the part of the unit that deals with conformity. Students can bring in their own cartoon, quote, or question for the extra credit journal entry, but it must be approved by the teacher.

30 minutes

While students are choosing an item to work with from the packet, the teacher will move around the room to help individuals decide how to approach the particular quote, question or cartoon they have chosen.

15 minutes

Teacher will explain the Independent Reading Assignment. Students will be told that during this unit they should complete one outside reading and prepare a presentation based on this reading for the class. At this point, the teacher will give students a handout that provides a list of choices for their independent reading and a rubric for assessment of their presentation. (see attached handouts) Teacher will inform students that they should have chosen a work from the list and begun reading by Week 4, Day 4 in order for them to have enough time to finish their work and prepare their presentation by the due date—Week 7, Day Two.

At Home

Students should finish their journal entry.

## Independent Reading List

You may choose a work from the following list or bring in your own book to be approved by me. If you choose your own book, it must be one that addresses the issues of peer relations, peer influences or conformity.

Plays:

Am I Blue, Beth Henley

The Crucible, Arthur Miller

Novels:

Nothing But the Truth, Avi

Lord of the Flies, William Golding

The Giver, Lois Lowry

Shabanu, Daughter of the Wind, Suzanne Fisher Staples

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Mildred Taylor

Jacob Have I Loved, Katherine Patterson

After the First Death, Robert Cormier

Carrie, Stephen King

A Separate Peace, John Knowles

The Red Badge of Courage, Stephen Crane

Native Son, Richard Wright

Their Eyes Were Watching God, Zora Neale Hurston

The Moves Make the Man, Bruce Brooks

Packet of Poetry and Short Stories (you must read the entire packet to count as equal to one book)

The Packet Contains:

"Nothing Gold Can Stay," Robert Frost

"Patterns," Amy Lowell

"A Song in the Front Yard," Gwendolyn Brooks

"Woman," Nikki Giovanni

"Life Cycle of Common Man," Howard Nemerov

"Blue Winds Dancing," Whitecloud

"The Necklace," Guy de Maupassant

"Everyday Use," Alice Walker

"No Name Woman," Maxine Hong Kingston

"In Response to Executive Order 9066: All Americans of Japanese Descent must Report to Relocation Centers," Dwight Okita

"I Got A Name," Zachary Gold

## Independent Reading Presentation Requirements

Presentations will be made on Week 7, Days 2, 3, & 4.

You should select a play, book or the packet of short stories, poetry and essays to read from your independent reading list. Prepare an oral presentation for the entire class. You may use note cards, but you must not read from a written book report. You should also bring a visual aid of some sort. You may choose to create a small poster, a collage, a diorama, a character puppet, or a book jacket related to your novel. You can even dress like a main character. If you have your own creative ideas, just check with your instructor for approval. If you choose the packet of readings as the basis for your presentation, you must read all of the works included in it and write a paragraph for each work, showing how peer relations, peer influence or conformity was shown in the work, but for your presentation, you only need to focus on one of the works.

Your oral presentation should include the following:

1. The title of the work and the author's name.
2. The setting of the work (if applicable-this might be difficult with some poems).
3. An introduction to the main characters in the work (if applicable-this might be difficult with some poems).
4. A brief summary of the events in the work.
5. An explanation of how the work relates to peer relationships, peer influence or conformity. This should be the "meat" of your presentation.

I will evaluate your presentation based on the following scoring sheets.

## Score Sheet For Presentation

### Novels and Plays

Presenter's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class period \_\_\_\_\_

Book Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Included information on title [ ], author [ ], setting [ ], major characters [ ]

(worth up to 10 points) \_\_\_\_\_

The summary was brief, interesting, and informative

(worth up to 10 points) \_\_\_\_\_

The presenter's explanation of the use of peer relations, peer influence or conformity was well-prepared and used information from the work as well as information from our class discussions

(worth up to 20 points) \_\_\_\_\_

The presenter used a visual aid to add interest to the presentation

(worth up to 10 points) \_\_\_\_\_

Total points earned = \_\_\_\_\_

(maximum of 50 pts.)

### Scoring Sheet For Presentation

#### Reading Packet of Poetry and Short Stories

Presenter's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class period \_\_\_\_\_

Title of item from poetry/short story packet: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Included information on title [ ], author [ ], setting-if applicable [ ], major characters-if applicable [ ] The summary was brief, interesting, and informative.

(worth up to 10 points) \_\_\_\_\_

The presenter's explanation of the use of peer relations, peer influence Or conformity was well-prepared and used information from the work as well as information from our class discussions

(worth up to 20 points) \_\_\_\_\_

The presenter used a visual aid to add interest to the presentation

(worth up to 10 points) \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraphs (to be handed in immediately following presentation)

show how peer relations, peer influence or conformity are

represented in each work. You should have one paragraph for

each work contained in the packet.

(worth up to 10 points) \_\_\_\_\_

Total points earned = \_\_\_\_\_

(maximum of 50 pts.)

## Day Two

Objective: Students will make use of the split-page note taking method to record their reactions to and characteristics of each character as they begin reading the novel.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

5 minutes

Teacher will describe split-page note taking method. Teacher will instruct students that each time a new character is introduced, class will pause in reading and students will record character's name in their notes. It will be left up to students, then, to write down characteristics of the characters and their reactions to them as the class reads on.

50 minutes

Class will read first two chapters of the book aloud in class, popcorn style (one student reads until he/she no longer wants to, then names another student to continue reading). Students will take notes on characters in manner described above. (Most of the significant characters in novel will be introduced in the first two chapters, but students will be encouraged to continue taking notes as they read the remainder of the book.)

At home

Students will be asked to read Chapter 3 for homework.

## Day Three

Objective: Students will identify characteristics of each of the two social groups presented in the book, the Greasers and the Socs, and stereotypes that surround each. Students will then apply what they have discussed about the peer groups in *The Outsiders* to peer groups in their own school.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives; teacher will collect student journals and notebooks.

5 minutes

Individually, students will write down characteristics of the Greasers and the Socs. In general, what are the Greasers known for? What about the Socs?

15 minutes

Class will discuss two groups, Greasers and Socs, and their characteristics. Discuss stereotypes that might be applied to each group and how they might not really be true (i.e. Socs are thought by Ponyboy to have no problems, Cherry tells him that in reality, they do). How does the author portray Darry, Soda Pop and Ponyboy as caring people, not typical hoods?

30 minutes

Students will pair off into groups of two. They will think of several examples of peer groups ("cliques") in their own school and describe each. Next, they will discuss the stereotypes that are held about each peer group and give examples of how each may not be valid (i.e. football players may be considered dumb jocks, but the quarterback of the team is taking AP classes).

5 minutes

Teacher will read beginning of Chapter 4, to the point when the headlights of Randy's blue Mustang appear (so that students will be brought back into the book, and that they will be interested in reading for homework).

At home

Students will read remainder of Chapter 4.

Day Four

Objective: After thinking and free writing about the idea of choice in relation to social groups, class will compose a letter from Ponyboy to Darry and Soda Pop about the night of Bob's murder.

5 Minutes

Paperwork and Objectives.

10 minutes

Class will conduct open discussion of the idea of choice in the lives of Ponyboy and Johnny, as

well as the other Greasers. How does choosing to become part of a gang limit the choices that you will have as a result? For example, because Johnny and Ponyboy are Greasers, they must fight Socs. They cannot renounce their identity when it is convenient. Because they are Greasers, must Ponyboy and Johnny do things that they do not feel are right?

15 minutes

Students will free write about choice in relation to peer group - either from their own perspective or from the perspective of a Greaser or Soc.

30 minutes

Using an overhead, students will compose a letter as a class from Ponyboy to his brothers, Soda Pop and Darry, discussing Ponyboy's identity as a Greaser and how it limits the choices in his life. (i.e. Because Ponyboy is a Greaser, the Socs attack him, forcing Johnny to kill Bob. Because they are Greasers, Johnny and Ponyboy do not trust the police to look at murder as self-defense and thus must run away to Windrixville). Ponyboy will explain the motives for his and Johnny's actions (why they chose to run away instead of facing the police - police would not believe their word over that of the Socs').

At home

Students will read Chapters 5 and 6.

Day Five

Objective: Students will begin watching the movie version of The Outsiders. As they watch the film, they will begin to think about and take notes on the questions on the handout below. Students will then read Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and think about how the poem applies to Ponyboy and Johnny. (We both studied the effects of visualization on reading comprehension in studies for our research class. We found that watching a movie version of a story aids students in visualizing the characters and settings of the book, which in turn improves reading comprehension.)

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives. Teacher will pass out handout of questions about film version of The Outsiders. Teacher will return students' journals and notebooks.

5 minutes

Teacher will explain how questions on the handout should be used during the film. Students will read questions, and then take notes as they watch the movie. These notes will help them answer the questions on the handout later.

25 minutes

Students will watch movie version of The Outsiders, up to the point where Soda Pop and Darry



visit Ponyboy in the hospital (the end of Chapter 6, which students were to have finished for homework). (We feel that this will allow students who did not complete assigned reading to participate in class discussion.)

20 minutes

Students will read Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" aloud. Students will discuss its relevance to the idea of choice.

5 minutes

Teacher will explain journal assignment. Students will write about "The Road Not Taken" as it relates to Ponyboy and Johnny. How might Johnny and Ponyboy's lives have been different if they had not saved the kids in the fire? Did this act represent the "narrow road" for them (most gang members would probably not risk their lives to save others)? How do you think Ponyboy will feel about his choices as he looks back on them later in life?

At Home

Students will read Chapter 7 and complete journal writing assignment.

### Questions in Response to the Film Version of The Outsiders

1. What do you think the film say about friendships and peer relationships, and the effects peer influence?
2. How do you think the film compares the Greasers and the Socs? How are the two groups contrasted? Can you make comparisons between these two groups and groups that you are acquainted with?
3. Compare the conflict between Greasers and the Socs to a division between two other groups that you know of. Are some of the basic causes of conflict the same in both cases?
4. How do visual images in the film present the Greasers' world as a dangerous and threatening place?
5. Explain the visual symbolism in Ponyboy and Johnny's journey following the murder. Think specifically of the images of the golden sunlight, the spider web, the reflections in the pond and the rabbit.
6. Are the characters in the film depicted in the way that you had imagined them during your reading of the novel? How did the film's portrayal of the characters influence your mental image of them?

## Week Four - The Outsiders Continued

### Day One

**Objective:** Students will write a newspaper article about the fire at the church and the heroic actions of Johnny, Ponyboy and Dally, modeling their article after one that they find in an actual newspaper. Students will explore the stereotypes a reporter might hold about Greasers and his/her expectations of them versus reality. Students will include as many details about the fire as possible, accurately portraying the events as a true newspaper article might.

5 minutes

### Paperwork and Objectives

25 minutes

Students will discuss reporters' attitudes towards Greasers and how their opinions might have changed since Bob's murder only one week ago as a result of the boys' actions in the fire (Greasers go from bad boys to heroes). How do Ponyboy, Johnny and Dallas betray the stereotypes that the reporters might have held? How do their actions not conform to the expectations normally held about this peer group (Johnny, Ponyboy and Dallas are hoods - most people would probably not expect them to risk their lives to save others).

30 minutes

Teacher will instruct students on how to write a newspaper article and explain assignment (see handout below). Students will be given a copy of rubric which will be used to assess their articles.

### At Home

Students will find an article from either the main news or Lifestyles section of their local paper which they will use as a guideline for style and tone. Students will write a newspaper article about the fire and the heroic actions of Johnny, Ponyboy and Dally, showing reporter's surprise at non-stereotypical action by the boys. Students will discuss what actions are expected of Greasers versus their actions in reality.

### How To Write a Newspaper Article

\* The five main points that news stories usually address are Who? What? When? Where? and Why? For instance, a story about a plane crash might address who was on board the plane (Americans, Canadians, three businessmen from Winder, etc.), what happened (the plane crashed landed into a farmer's pasture), when it happened (the plane crashed at 11:32 a.m. EST) where it happened (the crash occurred in the mountains of extreme north Georgia) and why it happened (the pilot became disoriented as the plane traveled through dense fog).

\* The writer normally begins with the point that he feels is most important (perhaps the what), and

then goes on to the item that he feels is next most important (perhaps the when), devoting a paragraph or two to each point. Think of a newspaper article as an inverted pyramid - the most important item goes at the top (the largest layer of the pyramid), and then you work down the pyramid until you reach the item of least importance (the triangular, tip of the pyramid).

\* Most newspaper articles make use of short, to-the-point sentences and contain only one or two sentences in each paragraph. They are very different from the well-developed essays you normally write for school assignments.

\* Normally, the reporter does not insert his or her own feelings into the news article, but in this case, I think that this would be warranted because it is an unusual situation. Most people would not expect three street hoods to risk their lives to save children from a burning building, so a reporter covering this situation would probably express his/her surprise. This would especially be true if it were an article for the Lifestyles section of the paper instead of a main news story.

### Rubric for Evaluating Newspaper Article

1. Did student accurately depict story - did they cite correct facts about fire, those involved, etc. in their article?
2. Did student effectively convey reporter's surprise at heroic actions of the three Greasers and the fact that their actions did not conform to the expectations normally held of their peer group?
3. Did student effectively use the advice and suggestions of peers to revise newspaper story?
4. How well did students model their own story after the style of an actual newspaper story?

### Day Two

Objective: Students will form groups of two to three people to peer edit news stories, focusing on the points mentioned in the rubric.

5 minutes

### Paperwork and Objectives

5 minutes

Teacher will go over newspaper article assignment again, reviewing rubric which will be used to grade news stories so that peer editors will be aware of what to look for (students were given copy of rubric on the previous day).

50 minutes

Students will form groups of two or three people to peer edit news stories written the night before. Peer editors will focus on the four items in the rubric when reading news stories, and refer to handout "How to Write a Newspaper Article."

At Home

Students will revise newspaper articles, which will be turned in the following day for assessment, along with their rough draft and the newspaper article they used as a model of style.

Day Three

Objective: Students will read Chapters 8 and 9 in class, and finish the book for homework.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives. Students will turn in their revised news article, rough draft and news story from paper which they used as a model for style.

30 minutes

Students will read Chapter 8 aloud in class.

25 minutes

Teacher will read Chapter 9 aloud in class (because Johnny dies during this section, we felt that it might be better for the teacher to read instead of the students).

At Home

Students will read the remainder of the book (Chapters 10-12). They will be told that there will be a reading quiz at the beginning of the next day's class period to encourage them to complete the assigned reading.

Day Four

Objective: Students will demonstrate that they have done their reading homework by taking a short reading quiz. Students will continue watching the film version of *The Outsiders* (beginning at the point where we ended on Week 3, Day 5), and take notes on the questions on their handout.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

5 minutes

Teacher will re-discuss independent reading assignment and ask students for the name of the work that they have chosen to read.

10 minutes

Students will take short quiz. They will be instructed to write down five things that they remember from the previous night's reading.

40 minutes

Students will watch the film version of *The Outsiders*, thinking about questions on film handout and taking notes (see Week 3 , Day 5 ).

Day Five

Objective: Students will complete the movie, *The Outsiders*, and answer the questions about the film from the handout that they were given as they began watching the movie (see Week 3, Day 5 for handout). (Again, we both studied the effects of visualization on reading comprehension in studies for our research class. We found that watching a movie version of a story aids students in visualizing the characters and settings of the book, which will in turn improves reading comprehension.)

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

20 minutes

Students will watch remainder of the movie, *The Outsiders*.

15 minutes

Students will complete handout of questions over the film version of the book. Students were to have been thinking about these questions and taking notes about them as they watched the movie.

20 minutes

Class will discuss their answers to questions on the handout. Handout should be kept in students' notebooks for future reference.

Week Five - *The Outsiders* / Begin Introduction to Conformity

Day One

Objective: Students will discuss how to distinguish between the actual author and implied author in relation to the novel, *The Outsiders*.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

10 minutes

At the end of the novel, it is revealed that Ponyboy has written the story of Johnny, Dallas and the other members of the gang as an English assignment in school. Class will discuss why they feel Ponyboy might have wanted to tell this story (to show that Greasers are not all that different than Socs, to show what a hero Johnny really was, etc.).

10 minutes

Students will discuss why they feel that Hinton might have written the novel and what they think the author is like. If students do not already know, we might discuss whether they feel that Hinton is a male or female (S.E. Hinton is ambiguous, so without prior knowledge of her work students might not know). We might also discuss how old they think Hinton might have been at the time she wrote the novel.

10 minutes

Teacher will lead discussion of implied author vs. actual author. The end of the book leads readers to believe that Ponyboy wrote the story, but in reality we know that it was S.E. Hinton. What advantages does Hinton have in writing the book from the perspective of Ponyboy as opposed to an omniscient voice (more convincing, able to go inside Ponyboy's thoughts, etc.)

15 minutes

Teacher will provide handout (see below) with facts about S.E. Hinton for class discussion. How does the knowledge that she was a sixteen-year-old girl writing the novel in response to actual events change their perspective/appreciation of the novel? Students will discuss the fact that Hinton used only her initials at the request of her publisher. How would students feel about changing their name to hide their gender in order to conform to the perceived expectations of an audience? Will discuss the students' thoughts about S.E. Hinton and what they thought she was like as they read the book - how did their thoughts conform to expectations they might hold about gender (if students did not know that S.E. was Susan Eloise, did they automatically assume she was male because of the content of the book?).

5 minutes

Students will discuss the title of the novel, *The Outsiders*, and Hinton's reasons for choosing this title. What does "outsiders" say about the Greasers in relation to conformity?

5 minutes

Teacher will explain journal assignment (students may refer to handout regarding journal assignments for more details). Students will write in response to *The Outsiders*, discussing the actions and motivations of Ponyboy. Why does he choose to participate in the final rumble with the Socs, even though he has come to know Randy and Cherry (Socs) and begun to understand that the Socs are not that different than himself? Does he feel that he would let down the other members of the gang if he does not fight? How does Ponyboy give in to peer influence (though it is never stated that Ponyboy must fight, it is implied that he is expected to) and conform to the other gang members' expectations of him? Would you have participated in the rumble if you were in Ponyboy's shoes?

At Home

Students will work on journal assignment.

### S.E. Hinton -The Outsiders Background Information

\* Hinton wrote *The Outsiders* when she was only sixteen years old. It was published when she was seventeen, and still a high school student in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

\* Hinton has said that she wrote "what she thought, felt and saw." The book was written during the late 1960's, a turbulent time in America's history. At the time the book was written, Hinton lived in a town very much like the place depicted in *The Outsiders* (division between classes, "wrong side of the tracks" mentality).

\* S.E. stands for Susan Eloise. Because a boy narrates the book, Hinton's publisher felt that it would be better to use only her initials so that readers would not know that she was a girl. They also felt that readers would not respect a "macho" story such as *The Outsiders* if it were told from a woman's perspective.

\* When asked about using her initials instead of her real name, Hinton said, "I don't mind having two identities, in fact, I like keeping the writer part of me separate in some ways. And since my alter ego is clearly a fifteen-year-old boy, having an authorial self that doesn't suggest gender is fine with me."

### Day Two

Objective: Students will use information from web sites that deal with gang issues to make connections between the peer influences and relationships seen in *The Outsiders* and a specific type of real life peer influence-gangs. Students will also examine ways of avoiding negative peer influence concerning gangs and ways to utilize positive peer influence to help friends who might be



considering joining a gang.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

20 minutes

Teacher will explain that the class will work in the computer lab, reading web sites about gangs. A list of helpful web sites will be given to the students to use for this activity (see attached handout of web sites). Teacher will explain that students should read the site information and use it in conjunction with information from *The Outsiders* to answer questions on the handout they are given (see attached handout of questions).

The teacher will inform students that two words will come up frequently in this assignment-Prevention and Intervention, and explain that they can be seen as positive ways to use peer influence. The teacher will ask students to give their own definitions of these words and will write them on an overhead. Then, the teacher will write dictionary definitions of these words on the overhead. Students will then give examples of prevention and intervention strategies and the teacher will write them on the overhead. The teacher will make copies of the completed overhead for students to put in their notebooks, to be used for future reference.

5 minutes

The class will walk to the computer lab.

30 minutes

Lab time. Teacher will walk students through the task of finding the first web site on the list in case some of them are not familiar with using the internet. After that, the teacher will move around the room and assist students with the computers and with answering their questions from the handout as the students explore the various web sites.

Day Three

Objective: Students will use information from web sites that deal with gang issues to make connections between the peer influences and relationships seen in *The Outsiders* and a specific type of real life peer influence-gangs. Students will also examine ways of avoiding negative peer influence concerning gangs and ways to utilize positive peer influence to help friends who might be considering joining a gang.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

5 minutes

The class will walk to the computer lab.

50 minutes

Lab time. The students will continue to get information from web sites and use that information to help them answer the questions on their handout. The teacher will be available to assist students individually, as needed.

Day Four

Objective: Students will begin to examine the correlation between the issues of peer relations/peer influence and the issue of conformity. Students will begin to consider what counts as conformity and whether conformity is a positive or negative force in our society, or if it can be both.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

15 minutes

The class will have an open discussion about the answers to internet questions on handout or any particular areas of interest found in the web sites.

15 minutes

The teacher will ask students how they responded to question #8 on their handout (this question asks students if they have read or viewed other works that deal with the issues of peer pressure). Ask students to extend their answers to include works they have read or viewed that deal with the issue of conformity. The teacher will point out similarities and differences in peer pressure and conformity (Perhaps peer pressure could be described as a "local" form of conformity and conformity could be considered a larger cultural or social form of peer pressure. Conformity should not always be considered a negative thing-it may be necessary in some cases).

25 minutes

The teacher will ask students to think about "gangs" of the professional world and society in general. Do groups exist outside of school that people are expected to fit into? Ex.: If Dad works for a large corporation, what is the expected dress code? What kinds of clothes are you expected to wear to church? What is considered normal behavior at a baseball game?

-----Focus of the unit begins to shift to the theme of Conformity-----

Day Five

Objective: Students will prepare for a role play of an event in which a person or group of persons conform to a set of norms.

5 minutes

## Paperwork and Objectives

20 minutes

Students will participate in two warm-up activities for role play: the circle activity and the hello non-verbally activity.

\*See role play warm-up activities in Smagorinsky, McCann and Kern's Explorations: Introductory Activities for Literature and Composition, 7-12, p. 9 (see resource list for further information).

35 minutes

Students will form groups with 4-5 members in each group. Teacher will assign each group an event-church, party, athletic event, corporate/academic conference, funeral-and students must specify the context of their assigned event-Southern Baptist church/Catholic church/Muslim, formal black-tie party/outside barbecue, etc. In their groups, students will begin discussing the norms that go along with these situations and how people are expected to conform to these norms. Teacher will explain that students should describe the norms that are typical of their event and explain how they are carried out so that each group can use their lists of norms and explanations of them in their role play the next day.

## Week Six - Conformity

### Day One

Objective: In groups, students will write a script for their role play and begin thinking about possible props, costumes, music, etc. that might enhance their ability to convey the ways their characters conform to a set of norms.

5 minutes

## Paperwork and Objectives

10 minutes

Students will receive instructions on scriptwriting. For example, students will be told to incorporate stage directions that explain the action of their role-play, to describe the specific setting of their event, as well as the dialogue they will use. (We believe by doing these things, students will be better able to visualize their event and will have more success with their role-play).

45 minutes

Students will work on writing a script for the event (party, church, etc.) they dealt with in yesterday's group assignment. They should practice the actions that are written into their scripts, and decide which group members will be in charge of completing/polishing various components of

the assignment--the script, costumes, props, and music (if they are being used). Students will collaborate on all areas of the assignment, but each group member will be "in charge" of one particular component.

### At Home

Students should complete scripts, get props, costumes, and music together and ready for presentation.

### Day Two

Objective: Students will report on their individual contributions to the group's role play and will practice full run-throughs of their role play.

5 minutes

### Paperwork and Objectives

20 minutes

Students will get in groups and report each person's progress on their assigned duties for their role play.

35 minutes

Students will practice full run-throughs of their role-play. Teacher will move around the room offering advice and assistance where needed.

### At Home

Students will finalize any preparations necessary to perform role plays for the class tomorrow.

### Day Three

Objective: Groups will perform their role plays for the class, showing how each event contains its own set of norms and people who conform to them.

5 minutes

### Paperwork and Objectives

5 groups @10-12 minutes each = 55 min.

Each group will perform role plays. Before beginning their role play, each group should explain their event (ex: party) and particular situation (ex: backyard barbecue) to the class as well as the norms represented in their situational event. After each performance, the class will discuss the

norms represented in their role play and why they chose certain clothes, music, props, etc. as well as why they think the characters chose or did not choose to conform to these norms.

## Day Four

**Objective:** Students will make connections between their role plays from the previous day and the images in the poem, "Summer in the Middle Class". Students will give examples of daily routines found in the poem and in real life and explain if and how they are examples of conformity. Students will examine the positive and negative aspects of conformity.

5 minutes

### Paperwork and Objectives

10 minutes

Teacher will ask for student volunteers to read the poem, "Summer in the Middle Class," aloud.

10 minutes

The teacher will ask students to point out similarities of some of the images in the poem to the role plays the students performed the day before. For example, in the poem, barbecues are a single type of conformity, but they have variations within them-types of grills used. In the role plays, the groups had an event to work with that was an example of a single type of conformity, but there were various types of situations with their own conformities within the event (a party could be a black-tie party or a backyard barbecue).

10 minutes

Students will be asked to give examples of daily routines in the poem and in real life, and how tell how each is a type of conformity. (This poem shows common routines of the middle class citizen such as barbecuing on a July afternoon, followed by rounding up their kids to go inside, turning off their lights, turning on their TVs, and going to bed.)

15 minutes

The class will discuss how belonging to a certain class (middle class) makes you conform to the norms and expectations of that class-or is it vice versa-you fall into the middle class because you conform to its norms?

10 minutes

Ask students if norms and conformity are good, bad, or neither? Students should give examples of good and bad types of norms/conformity. Can they be both good and bad? What criteria do we use to decide?

## At Home

Students will write a journal entry on the poem, "Summer in the Middle Class." (See journal

handout for expectations).

## Day Five

**Objective:** Students will read the poem, "The Unknown Citizen," and discuss the types of routines, norms, and conformity that are exemplified in it. Students will decide whether or not the character in the poem was happy or unhappy due to the routines, norms, and conformity that governed his life.

5 minutes

## Paperwork and Objectives

20 minutes

Students will read the poem, "The Unknown Citizen," and talk about the issues of norms, routines, and conformity in the context of this work.

10 minutes

Teacher will count students off into ones and twos, but they should not get into groups. Ones will be told to take the stance that the man in the poem was happy with his life. Twos will be told to take the stance that the man in the poem was unhappy with his life. Students will read the poem silently and underline the parts of the poem that support their assigned stance of whether or not the man in the poem is happy or unhappy with his life.

25 minutes

When everyone is done reading and underlining, the teacher will ask each student to state if they are a one or a two and explain where they found evidence in the poem to support their assigned stance on the man's view of life. The teacher will write students' comments on an overhead and make a copy for each student to put in his or her notebook for future reference.

## At Home

Students will read the short story, "Harrison Bergeron."

## Week Seven - Conformity and Independent Reading Presentations

### Day One

**Objective:** Students will make value judgments on the use of handicaps as a way of making everyone in a society equal. Students will draw a character from the story, showing the character's handicaps. Students will then choose a handicap for themselves and represent it by dressing up, writing about it, or illustrating it.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

25 minutes

Students will draw a character from the story with all their handicaps. (Ability to complete this assignment will help determine if they read the story).

20 minutes

Students will discuss the use of imposed handicaps in "Harrison Bergeron" and their intended purposes. Teacher will ask students what they think about this conformity tactic-if it is valuable.

10 minutes

Teacher will explain homework assignment.

At Home

Draw, dress up, or write about the way you would look if you had to have a handicap to make you equal to everyone else. Be prepared to turn it in or present it tomorrow. (See Rubric below for assignment expectations.)

Requirements for Handicap Assignment

Based on "Harrison Bergeron"

1. The handicap you choose for yourself should be original and creative (not one that is used in "Harrison Bergeron").
2. You should explain the purpose of your handicap. What characteristic/s do you possess that require handicapping in order for you to be equal to your fellow citizens?
3. You must express how this handicap would make you feel (Does having this handicap make you feel angry, sad, happy, proud, etc.) and why?
4. If you choose to illustrate your handicap, you must include items two and three in writing or visually represent them in some manner in your illustration.
5. If you choose to dress up to represent your handicap, you must either give a short presentation to the class, explaining items two and three.

Day Two

Objective: Students who have chosen to wear their "handicaps" will share their costumes with the



class. Students will begin presenting their independent reading presentations.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

15 minutes

Students who have chosen to wear costumes depicting their "handicaps" will share their costumes, explaining the reasons that they chose to dress as they did. Other students wishing to share pictures and essays will also be given time to share.

40 minutes

Students will present their independent reading presentations (5-6 students will be allowed approximately 5-7 minutes each).

Day Three

Objective: Students will continue to present independent reading presentations.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

55 minutes

Students will present their independent reading presentations (9-10 students will be allowed approximately 5-7 minutes each).

Day Four

Objective: Students will continue to present independent reading presentations.

5 minutes

Paperwork and Objectives

55 minutes

Students will present their independent reading presentations (9-10 students will be allowed approximately 5-7 minutes each).

Day Five

Objective: Students will choose a topic for their final paper, and begin to think about the focus of their paper.

5 minutes

## Paperwork and Objectives

20 minutes

Teacher will explain final paper assignment. Teacher will go over each of the choices, and explain how students might respond to each of them (see below for paper topics).

20 minutes

Teacher will distribute list of expectations (see below) which will be used to assess student papers, and answer any questions which students might have about the assignment.

15 minutes

Students will look over paper topics and choose one to write about. Students will begin to think about the focus of their paper and be given the handout, "Getting Started" (see handout section following writer's workshop, Week 8).

At Home

Students will brainstorm their paper topic and come up with a list of ideas for use in writer's workshop, which will begin the next school day.

## Final Paper Topics

1. Define the concepts of peer pressure and conformity. How are these concepts similar? In what ways are they different? Compare and contrast these two concepts in relation to your definitions, and the ideas that you have generated about the concepts over the course of this unit. (Your notebook will be a good place to look for ideas.)
2. Discuss the concept of peer pressure and/or conformity in relation to one of the works we have studied during this unit. Discuss how the work dealt with these issues, citing examples from the text. (The journal articles that you have written in response to texts may be a good place to look for ideas.)
3. Discuss how peer influence and/or the need to conform affected one of the characters in a work that we have studied during this unit. Discuss what actions the character took in response to peer influence or the desire to conform, as well as the outcome of those actions. Discuss the character's motivation - why did this person desire to fit in/conform?
4. Discuss a situation in which you have been influenced by peers to act in a way contrary to your beliefs, and the outcome of that situation. Discuss motivation - why were you influenced by your peers? Relate your situation to an experience of one of the characters in a work that we have studied during this unit, citing examples from the text.

5. How do you see yourself as a student and a reader of literature? In what ways do you think peer influence and the need to conform influence you as a student and a reader? Do you feel that your attitudes toward school and reading might be different - better or worse - if these influences were not a factor? Think about the group work that you have done over the course of this unit (or in other situations). How have your peers influenced your beliefs and attitudes, and how have you influenced others? Give specific examples of how you or your classmates may have been swayed by group work, class discussions of the readings, or the need to conform to parental expectations or school norms.

### Expectations For Final Paper Assignment

- \* Students will demonstrate an understanding of peer pressure and/or conformity as these ideas have been discussed in class and in the literature that we have studied.
- \* Students will address all concerns related to their topic as outlined on the "Final Paper Topics" handout.
- \* Students' papers will contain well-developed introductions, bodies and conclusions which demonstrate that student has made effective use of teacher's writing instruction.
- \* Students' papers will demonstrate evidence of group effort - students will make effective use of peer advice and suggestions (this will be evident from comparing your rough drafts and final paper, which you will also turn in).
- \* Students' papers will show effective use of grammar and accurate spelling.

### Week Eight - Writer's Workshop

#### Days One through Five

Objective: \*Over the course of a week, students will write an essay which demonstrates their knowledge of the issues of peer influence and conformity, in the context of a writer's workshop. Students will learn to use specific writing instruction and the thoughts and ideas of their peers to

write more effectively.

\*We will be conducting this writing workshop as a process, insuring that students have mastered each step before moving on to the next. We plan to devote five days to the workshop, but will allow our students to dictate how much time is allowed for each step in the process. At the end of each block of writing, we plan to ask for feedback from students about their writing experience. We will also get feedback from students as they are working in groups. If students express problems or doubt after any of the steps in the process that we have outlined, we will provide them with more instruction. For this reason, we have devised this workshop in terms of steps, rather than lay it out in terms of days.

Step 1: Students will form groups of two to three people (these groups will be continuous over the course of the workshop). Each student will present the ideas that he or she has generated for the paper, then other members of the group will add their own ideas and suggestions to the student's brainstorm list.

Step 2: Teacher will provide instruction on writing an effective introduction (see handout below).

Step 3: Students will write a rough draft of their introduction, on their own, in class if time permits, and outside of class.

Step 4: Teacher will get feedback from students about the experience of writing the introduction, and provide more instruction if needed. If students have expressed no serious problems with writing the introduction, they will move on to Step 5.

Step 5: Students will meet in groups and peer edit each others' introductions for writing style, using "Effective Introductions" handout as a reference.

Step 6: Teacher will provide instruction about writing an effective body (see handout below).

Step 7: Students will work on bodies of their papers individually, in class if time permits, and outside of class.

Step 8: In groups, students will co-author the bodies of their papers.

Step 9: Students will meet in peer groups and edit the bodies of each others' papers for style, using teacher's handouts as a reference.

Step 10: Students will independently revise the bodies of their papers, in class if time permits, and outside of class.

Step 11: Teacher will get feedback on students' experience with writing the bodies of the papers. If necessary, more instruction will be provided.

Step 12: Teacher will give instruction on writing an effective conclusion (see handout below).

Step 13: Students will peer write (co-author) their conclusions in groups.

Step 14: Students will polish their conclusions on their own, in class if time permits, and outside of

class.

Step 15: Teacher will get feedback on the experience of writing conclusions and provide more instruction if needed.

Step 16: Teacher will give instruction on proofreading and editing for grammar, sentence structure, spelling and word usage, showing students how to effectively use proofreading marks.

Step 17: Students will meet in groups to peer edit entire rough drafts of papers for grammar, sentence structure, spelling and word usage.

Step 18: Students will work on final revisions of papers, choosing to either work alone, with their groups or in conference with the teacher.

Step 19: Students will complete final versions of papers on their own, outside of class.

Step 20: Students will turn in final version of their paper, as well as rough drafts of each section with peer comments and proofreading marks, brainstorm lists, and any other student-generated items which were used in the writing of the paper.

## Getting Started

\* Choose a topic that you feel comfortable with and would enjoy discussing - don't choose the topic that you think the teacher would like for you to discuss. Your writing will be much better, and the process will be more pleasant.

\* Before you begin writing, read the question over carefully several times, and think about what it asks you to do and what you might write in response.

\* Brainstorm - as quickly as you can, write down all the ideas on your topic that come into your head, without worrying if they are going to be useful (you can look over your list later, perhaps with your workshop group, and decide that).

\* Free-write - write rapidly and uncritically, letting your thoughts tumble onto paper as fast as your pen or word processor can capture them.

## Effective Introductions

A good introduction accomplishes two important goals:

1. It draws readers into the paper
2. It clearly states the topic and makes some comment on it.

The most common kind of introduction opens with a general statement about the topic and then goes into more detail, leading up to a statement of the main points of the paper at the end.

## Strategies for Introducing Your Paper

To get your reader interested in your subject matter - and to keep him or her reading - there are several different strategies that you can use. You should choose the strategy that you feel is best to get your idea across to your audience and to suit your purpose.

**A Quote:** This should tie into your subject matter and come from one of the texts that you will discuss. Chosen well, a quote can grab your reader and convince him or her to go on.

**Example:** If you chose to write about how peer pressure affected one of the characters that we have studied, you might introduce a paper about Bernice with "With her chin in the air she crossed the sidewalk, pushed open the swinging screen-door, and giving not a glance to the uproarious, riotous row that occupied the waiting bench, went up to the first barber. 'I want you to bob my hair.'"

**A Rhetorical Question:** This kind of question provokes thought and helps to get the reader involved in your subject matter. Your job in the paper is to provide the answer to this question.

**Example:** If comparing and contrasting peer pressure and conformity, you might ask the question "How are the ideas of peer pressure and conformity related?"

**An Anecdote:** This short story will involve your reader and also help you to illustrate a point or tell a moral.

**Example:** If writing about a personal experience with peer pressure, you might say "I once swallowed twenty goldfish because I was dared to at a party" and then go on to explain why.

## The Body of Your Paper

\* Again, look carefully at what is asked of you in the paper topic. Be sure to go over each of the points that is outlined in your topic, and to develop your ideas fully.

\* When writing about a specific text, cite examples from the literature to explain your thoughts and ideas. Choose your examples carefully, and be sure that they support your ideas.

\* Look closely at your paragraphs - readers expect a paragraph to develop an idea or topic. This usually requires several sentences. Make sure that each sentence relates to the overall idea expressed in your paragraph. Check to see how each paragraph is organized, and determine whether the organization is appropriate to the topic of the paragraph and if it is used fully to develop the paragraph.

\* Vary sentence structure. Long sentences are useful for developing an idea; a short sentence helps to make a strong point.

\* Choose words carefully and avoid overusing words. Try to get the most mileage out of the words that you use, and make use of a thesaurus in your writing.

## Effective Conclusions

\* A good conclusion will effectively close your paper, and give the impression that a full discussion of your topic has taken place.

\* You may wish to restate the main ideas of your paper in the conclusion, so as to remind the reader of the specific points that you have made.

## Strategies for Concluding Your Paper

**A Question:** Just as a question can effectively hook the reader in your introduction, a question at the end of your paper can prompt further thought on your topic. You should not ask a question which you have already answered, but form a new question in response to the answers that you have given.

**Example:** After fully discussing how Bernice was affected by peer pressure and her motivations for bobbing her hair, you might ask the question, "How might Bernice's life have been different had she not given in to Marjorie and cut her hair?"

**A Quotation:** A well-chosen question can effectively wrap up your paper by summing up your thoughts and ideas.

**Example:** After fully discussing your feelings about the effects of conformity on the man in W.H. Auden's "The Unknown Citizen," you might use the last lines of the poem as a quote: "Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd: Had anything been wrong, we certainly should have heard."

**Concluding with a Warning:** A well-phrased warning can leave a strong impression in the mind of your reader, and reiterate the points of your paper.

**Example:** After discussing a situation in which you have been influenced by peers to act in a way that went against your better judgment, you might admonish your reader not to make the same mistake.

## Editing Symbols

\*Types of editing symbols are listed below, but because we cannot translate these written symbols into typed characters, you should refer to a proofreading or editing list if you need to look up the correlating symbols.

### Insert Something

### Begin New Paragraph

### Transpose Letter or Words

### Delete

### Capitalize



Make Lower Case

Spelling Error

Unnecessary Comma

Agreement Problem

Comma Splice

Development Needed/Doesn't Make Sense

Sentence Fragment

Wrong Word

Run-on Sentence

(Many of the ideas in these handouts were borrowed or adapted from Lunsford and Connors' *St. Martin's Handbook* and Kennedy's *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry and Drama* (see resource list for citations), as well as material provided by our cooperating teachers.)

Resources

Kennedy, X.J. (1987). *Literature: An introduction to fiction, poetry, and drama*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company.

Lunsford, Andrea & Connors, Robert. (1989). *The St. Martin's handbook*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Smagorinsky, P., McCann, T., & Kern, S. (1987). *Explorations: Introductory activities for literature and composition, 7-12*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.