

Grade 7: Unit 1

The Outsiders: Connected Text Seminars

Seminar 1: Connected Texts

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars articulate the poets' messages about isolation and the cycle of life.

Seminar 1:

"Alone" by Maya Angelou (Poem) and "Nothing Gold Can Stay" by Robert Frost (Poem)

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Play classical or jazz music to establish a calm work environment.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from yesterday's seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Tell scholars that today, they will be reading two poems: "Alone" and "Nothing Gold Can Stay." Build excitement by telling scholars that both texts will develop their background knowledge about prevalent themes in *The Outsiders*.

Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes

Display "Alone."

Preview the Text (2 minutes):

- Have scholars read the title and scan the poem to frame their thinking.
- Call on scholars to share what they noticed about the text and what they will think about as they are reading.

Read (3 minutes):

- Say: *As you are reading, think, "What is this poem mostly about?"*
- Read the poem aloud while scholars follow along on their digital copies.

Discuss (3 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is this poem mostly about? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

Read (15 minutes):

- Say: *As you are rereading, think, "Why did the author write this poem?"*
- Read the poem aloud as scholars follow along on their digital copies. While reading aloud, pause to ask the questions below:
 - Stop after stanza 2, "...make it out here alone."
 - Partner Talk: What is the speaker's tone in this poem?
 - Stop after stanza 3, "...make it out here alone."
 - Partner Talk: What is the speaker's message in lines 14–22?
 - Stop after stanza 6, "...make it out here alone."
 - Partner Talk: What is the purpose of the speaker's repetition?
 - Discuss: Why did the author write this poem?

Main Idea Jot (2 minutes):

- Scholars jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars are working, circulate to determine which scholars have a bull's-eye main idea jot and which do not.

Discuss (8 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:
 - What is Angelou's message about isolation?
 - How does Angelou convey this message to the reader?

Give scholars two minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.

Write — 10 minutes**Write an essay of no more than 200 words:**

- How does the poet convey her message about isolation? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from "Alone."

Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Set your expectations for what scholars must do differently when approaching the next text.

Read and Discuss 2 — 30 minutes

Display “Nothing Gold Can Stay.”

Preview the Text (2 minutes):

- Have scholars read the title and scan the poem to frame their thinking.
- Call on scholars to share what they noticed about the text and what they will think about as they are reading.

Read (10 minutes):

- Say: *As you are reading, think, “What is this text mostly about? Why did the author write this text?”*
- Scholars independently read and annotate the text on their Chromebooks. When they are finished, they jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars work, circulate to determine the major trend in scholars’ work and conference with two to three scholars.

Discuss (5 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: What is this text mostly about? Why did the author write this text? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

Give scholars two minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.

Read (6 minutes):

- Say: *As you are rereading, think, “What arguments does Frost make about the cycle of life?”*
- Reread the poem with scholars.

Discuss (5 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following question as a whole class: How does Frost convey his perspective on the cycle of life to the reader?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- What does Frost mean when he writes “nature’s first green is gold”? (line 1) Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from “Nothing Gold Can Stay.”

Seminar 2: Connected Texts

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars explain the writers' messages about identity.

Seminar 2:

“Crewcuts” by Donald Hall (Poem) and “How Do You Define a Gang Member?” by Daniel Alarcón from *The New York Times* (Nonfiction)

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Play classical or jazz music to establish a calm work environment.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from yesterday's seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Tell scholars that today, they will be reading two texts: “Crewcuts” and “How Do You Define a Gang Member?” Build excitement by telling scholars that both texts will develop their background knowledge about concepts important in *The Outsiders*.

Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes

Display “Crewcuts.”

Preview the Text (2 minutes):

- Have scholars read the title and scan the poem to frame their thinking.
- Call on scholars to share what they noticed about the text and what they will think about as they are reading.

Read (6 minutes):

- Say: *As you are reading, think, “What is this poem mostly about?”*
- Read the poem aloud while scholars follow along on their digital copies.

Discuss (3 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is this poem mostly about? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

Read (10 minutes):

- Say: *As you are rereading, think, “Why did the author write this poem?”*
- Read the poem aloud as scholars follow along on their digital copies. While reading aloud, pause to ask the questions below:
 - Stop after stanza 1, “...the Oriental mind.”
 - Partner Talk: Who are the “men with crewcuts”? (line 1) How do we know?
 - Stop after stanza 2, “...about the stupid natives.”
 - Partner Talk: What is the author's tone toward the men with crewcuts? Which words in stanzas 1 and 2 reveal his tone?
 - Stop after stanza 3, “...as women.”
 - Partner Talk: What is the meaning of the last stanza?

- Discuss: Why did the author write this poem?

Main Idea Jot (2 minutes):

- Scholars jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars are working, circulate to determine which scholars have a bull's-eye main idea jot and which do not.

Discuss (10 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:
 - What is the author's message about identity?
 - How does the author convey this message to the reader?

Give scholars two minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Why does the speaker believe that men with crewcuts are “impossible” (line 2)? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from “Crewcuts.”

Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Set your expectations for what scholars must do differently when approaching the next text.

Read and Discuss 2 — 30 minutes

Display “How Do You Define a Gang Member?”

Preview the Text (2 minutes):

- Have scholars read the title and scan the passage to frame their thinking.
- Call on scholars to share what they noticed about the text and what they will think about as they are reading.

Read (10 minutes):

- Say: *As you are reading, think, “What is this text mostly about? Why did the author write this text?”*
- Scholars independently read and annotate the text on their Chromebooks. When they are finished, they jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars work, circulate to determine the major trend in scholars’ work and conference with two to three scholars.

Discuss (5 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: What is this text mostly about? Why did the author write this text? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

Give scholars two minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.

Read (6 minutes):

- Say: *As you are rereading, think, “How are gangs defined in this paragraph?”*
- Reread lines 46–54 with scholars.

Discuss (5 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following question as a whole class: How are gangs defined in lines 46–54?
- Why did the author include this definition?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- How does the title “How Do You Define a Gang Member?” contribute to the article’s central idea? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from “How Do You Define a Gang Member?”