

Case Study – 7th Grade Language Arts

- Students are sitting in a circle with reading notebooks open on their laps. The *Outsiders* books are closed and on the desks behind them. The students are talking about how the character Cherry Valance has changed across the *Outsiders*.
- In the reading notebooks, students have lists of vocabulary words, collections of their personal connections, reflections, and a sampling of quotations from the text.
- Students often engage in whole class discussions using the information in their notebooks.

Class Discussion Excerpt

Teacher: What do you think caused Cherry to change?

Student 1: Well, based on my notebook entry from last week, I think she changed because of peer pressure.

Student 2: I also think it was peer pressure. The book talks about how Cherry is considering becoming more like a Greaser.

Discussion Excerpt (cont.)

- Teacher: OK, good. Thanks for building on each other's thinking. We've been talking a lot about how the *Outsiders* is about class differences – like rich and poor – and what happens when people cross lines of class. How successfully did Cherry cross class lines?
- Student 3: She didn't because she's rich and the Greasers are poor.
- Teacher: Good.