“The Teenage Story” 1st Half

Language Arts 7—Kaye

Whether in novel format or film, some of the very best fiction allows us to momentarily escape the troubles and burdens of our own lives, while at the same time learn from the actions and behaviors of the characters whose lives we’re immersed in. These de facto learning experiences provide a safe vantage point to assess choices and consequences and measure the growth of made-up characters with the *real-life* dilemmas—and resulting decisions—that forge our character. The universal truths explored in the fiction we consume resonate so powerfully because they reflect the fabric of our culture and society. **🡨FICTION STATEMENT**

In their respective ways, The Outsiders and *Rebel Without a Cause* pioneered a new way to explore the American teenager through story. In groundbreaking fashion, they both featured teenagers as main characters and set about to honestly portray societal hardships and subjects that impacted teens, but were often ignored or swept under the rug.

**🡨 THEME STATEMENT**

Generations later, The Outsiders and *Rebel Without a Cause* are considered to be iconic works that continue to heavily influence the manner in which teens are depicted and developed in fiction. Ironically, much of the content considered taboo when the book and film were released continues to be increasingly relevant today—in certain cases even, glaring growing cultural concerns. ~~While pundits debate whether art reflects life or life reflects art, when one uses literature as a lens to learn about their culture and themselves,~~ 🡨 **TRANSITION TO C & C (OF LIT AND LIFE)**

Prior to the release of The Outsiders and *Rebel Without a Cause*, teenager characters in media were depicted in stereotypical terms, primarily to reflect the standards and expectations our society placed on them up until that time. While real teenagers facing the brink of adulthood were struggling with emotional turmoil and saddled with genuine concerns, their dilemmas depicted on screen and on the pages was typically lightly developed and easily solved. At some point either teen culture changed abruptly or our media took a more active stance in representing authentic issues facing teenagers. Has there been a moral decay in America’s youth? Or have the cracks and flaws always been there, but they’re now magnified by the changing role of media and our shifting societal norms?

Never before in young adult fiction has the critique of parents and adults been so scathing: the entire authority complex is examined from the perspective of kids…for kids. The Outsiders and *Rebel Without a Cause* broke the levee. Suddenly, everything was on the table and fair game. **🡨 DECLARE FOCUS** **(& THESIS STATEMENT)**

What I’ve done:

1. Fiction Statement
2. Theme Statement
3. Transitioned into Compare & Contrast of Literature and Life
4. Declare Focus (Critique of Parents & Adults)

What I need to do:

1. Identify examples from Outsiders & *Rebel* that will support my claim/stance
2. Gather quotes directly from primary source documents (book/film)
3. Discuss how my Focal Subject/Theme applies to our society today
4. Briefly provide a personal experience/connection/observation (optional)
5. Draft a conclusion that wraps it all up and leaves the reader thinking