**Prompt: Compare and contrast the key messages in these excerpts from The Outsiders and Bored Broke and Armed.**

Needs topic intro paragraph:

These texts are similar in that they both speak to the same subject - gang rivalries and the regret that comes with gang life. Even though one takes place decades back and the other in present times, the members share so much in common. In both, there are two rival gangs that share the same core conflicts, both externally and internally. Externally, they blame each other and gang life for the problems they face with losing friends. They share an interest where they long to live a normal life instead, but neither know how to get there. The two texts connect in that we also see the human side behind both sets of gang members. We learn how they don’t want to be involved in this life and how they defy caricature. Caricature means to simplify in an exaggerated way, which is easy to do when thinking about tough gang members. Instead, these texts both illuminate the same theme that gang members have vulnerable feelings, share interests and do everyday activities like hanging around with friends or working in department stores. Yet they face heart wrenching challenges on a daily basis, still. The purpose of the texts is to raise awareness in readers that these people are stuck and not in this life by choice, maybe to provoke empathy and even action in readers on their behalf. Why is it that after over 60 years, we continue to have the same problems we had so many decades ago?

Though the texts share much in common, they also differ in important ways as well. Even though the subject matter is nearly the same - gang violence - they both take place in different time periods, with this important difference serving as a key way to highlight how enduring this problem is over time. The texts ‘disagree’ in that in one, The NY Times article, the violence seems more present day, real and widely spread. More people were involved in the Chicago gangs and the violence seemed to happen daily, with greater repercussions than in the Outsiders. Another difference is that one is told as a story, while one is facts reported, with little stories just embedded all through. As a result, the Outsiders story seems to evoke more feeling from the reader while the facts just create a sense of outrage and less empathy than a story would. While both work together to help the reader get a full picture of gang violence, the differences are important ways to build this broader understanding.

Reading these two texts together enables one to understand the overall idea of gang rivalry and violence more deeply, and appreciate its complexity. The story comes alive in present day when we see how the same feelings Ponyboy experiences are also shared by Ron, the present day gang member. If they were to converse today, black gang members today would be appalled at how the rich socs picked on the lower income greasers because at least the rival gangs today come from the same socio-economic standing. It seems somehow morally wrong to attack someone who is already in a weaker position in society than oneself.

Quotes that connect:

Similarities run all through the texts. For example, Ponyboy, seeing Randy, ruminates, “It was their fault Bob was dead; their fault Johnny was dying; their fault Soda and I might get put in a boys’ home.” In the same way, Ron, from the Gangster Gang, echoes this thought as he reflects on “the relentless cycle of violence” and how he “already lost friends.” Both groups fight and both groups share the terrible feelings, internally, that come from these fights. Difference between the texts are seen when Ponyboy describes how “Randy was supposed to be too cool to feel anything, and yet there was pain in his eyes.” In this way, the reader experiences a change inside while thinking about Randy through Ponyboy’s shifting view of him as he sees this expression of regret appear on his ‘rival’s’ face. On the other hand, the article gives more of a bird’s eye view and less personal when it explains how just before this most recent incident of gang violence, “It had been exactly 90 days since some of these same men had sat across from one another in an airy church” trying to work out their problems.