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When Was The Outsiders First Published

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When Was The Outsiders First Published? A Look at S.E. Hinton's Groundbreaking Novel

Few novels have captured the raw, unfiltered experience of teenage life quite like *The Outsiders*. Written by S.E. Hinton when she was just a teenager herself, this story of class conflict, loyalty, and identity has resonated with readers for generations. But for many fans, a simple yet important question often arises: **When was The Outsiders first published**? The answer is 1967, but the story behind that publication date is just as compelling as the novel itself.

Understanding the release of this iconic book means diving into a time when young adult literature was still in its infancy. When *The Outsiders* first hit shelves, it didn't just tell a story—it carved a space for a new genre. In this article, we'll explore the original publication date, the context of its release, and why this novel continues to hold such a strong place in literary history.

The Official Publication Date of The Outsiders

The Outsiders was first published on April 24, 1967, by Viking Press. When readers ask, "When was The Outsiders first published?" this is the definitive answer. However, the road to that publication date was anything but ordinary. S.E. Hinton, whose full name is Susan Eloise Hinton, began writing the novel at the age of 15 and completed it when she was 16. The book was released when she was just 17 years old, making her a literary prodigy at a time when young authors were rare.

The novel's initial print run was modest, as Viking Press didn't anticipate the massive impact it would have on young readers. But from the moment it appeared in bookstores, *The Outsiders* began to attract attention for its honest portrayal of teenage life, especially from the perspective of the "greasers"—a group of working-class kids from the wrong side of the tracks.

Why 1967 Was a Pivotal Year for Publishing

The late 1960s were a time of social upheaval, civil rights movements, and shifting cultural norms. When *The Outsiders* was first published in 1967, the literary world was dominated by adult fiction and academic works. Books written specifically for teenagers were often sanitized, focusing on safe topics like school crushes and summer adventures. Hinton's novel changed all of that.

By publishing a story that dealt with gang violence, economic inequality, and the death of young characters, *The Outsiders* pushed boundaries. It spoke directly to teenagers who felt invisible or misunderstood. So when readers today ask, "When was The Outsiders first published?" they are also asking about the beginning of a new era in young adult literature—an era that prioritized authenticity over protectionism.

The Publishing Journey: From Manuscript to Bestseller

To fully appreciate the answer to "When was The Outsiders first published?" it helps to understand how the manuscript made its way to Viking Press. Hinton's mother had encouraged her to write as a way to cope with the frustration she felt over the social divisions in her high school. After writing the initial draft, Hinton's mother showed the manuscript to a friend, who happened to have connections in publishing.

That connection led to an introduction with Viking Press, where editor Velma Varner recognized the power of the story. Varner was immediately struck by the authentic voice of the narrator, Ponyboy Curtis. She knew the book was special, even if she couldn't predict just how influential it would become. The deal was made, and **The Outsiders was first published in hardcover on April 24, 1967**.

Early Reception and Critical Response

When the novel debuted, it received a mix of praise and controversy. Many adults were uncomfortable with the gritty language, the violent scenes, and the moral ambiguity of the characters. However, young readers embraced it immediately. Teachers began adding it to classroom libraries, even when school boards hesitated. The question "When was The Outsiders first published" became a gateway for discussions about censorship, relevance, and the purpose of young adult fiction.

Within the first year, the book went through multiple printings. By 1968, it had already sold more than 100,000 copies, which was a remarkable number for a debut novel by a teenage author. The success of *The Outsiders* paved the way for Hinton's subsequent novels, including *That Was Then, This Is Now* (1971), *Rumble Fish* (1975), and *Tex* (1979).

The Cultural Impact of The Outsiders

Knowing when *The Outsiders*was first published is only part of the story. The cultural impact of this book extends far beyond its 1967 release date. The novel has sold over 15 million copies worldwide and continues to sell hundreds of thousands of copies each year. It is consistently taught in middle schools and high schools across the United States and in many other countries.

The book also inspired a 1983 film adaptation directed by Francis Ford Coppola, which featured a young cast that included Tom Cruise, Patrick Swayze, Rob Lowe, Emilio Estevez, Matt Dillon, and Ralph Macchio. The film introduced the story to a new generation, and it remains a cult classic. When people ask, "When was The Outsiders first published?" they often also want to know about this later adaptation, but the foundation of everything lies in that 1967 publication.

Why The Outsiders Still Matters Today

The themes in *The Outsiders*are timeless. The struggle between social classes, the search for identity, the pain of losing loved ones, and the desire to be seen and heard are experiences that transcend generations. Ponyboy's famous line, "Stay gold, Ponyboy," has become a cultural touchstone, symbolizing the importance of holding onto innocence and hope in a harsh world.

Even though the novel is set in the 1960s, its concerns feel remarkably current. The rise of social media has created new forms of social division, but the underlying human emotions remain unchanged. This is why, more than 50 years after the question "When was The Outsiders first published?" was first asked, readers are still discovering and loving this book.

Common Questions About the Publication of The Outsiders

Over the years, readers have asked many specific questions related to the novel's release. Below are some of the most frequently searched queries, along with clear answers.

What year was The Outsiders first published?

As mentioned, **The Outsiders was first published in 1967**. The exact date was April 24, 1967. This is the

simplest and most direct answer to the question "When was The Outsiders first published?"

Who published The Outsiders?

The original publisher was Viking Press in New York City. Later editions have been released by Penguin Books and other imprints, but Viking Press holds the distinction of being the first to bring Ponyboy's story to the world.

How old was S.E. Hinton when The Outsiders was published?

S.E. Hinton was 17 years old when the book was published in 1967. She had started writing it at 15 and finished it at 16. Her age adds a remarkable layer to the question "When was The Outsiders first published?" because it reminds us that the author was essentially writing about her own peer group from within that group.

Was The Outsiders an instant success?

Not immediately, but it gained momentum quickly. Early sales were driven by word of mouth among teenagers. By the early 1970s, it had become a staple in school curricula. The question "When was The Outsiders first published?" is often followed by "How did it become so popular?" The answer is simple: it spoke the truth about teenage life, and young readers recognized that truth.

The Legacy of the 1967 Publication

The publication of *The Outsiders* in 1967 marked a turning point in young adult literature. Before 1967, few books existed that treated teenagers as complex individuals capable of handling serious themes. After 1967, the floodgates opened. Authors like Judy Blume, Robert Cormier, and Lois Lowry all cite Hinton as an influence. The answer to "When was The Outsiders first published?" is therefore also an answer to "When did young adult literature truly begin?"

In 1988, the American Library Association recognized the book's lasting importance, and it has been included on numerous "best of" lists over the decades. It has also been challenged and banned in some schools for its language and violence, but those challenges have only increased its visibility and relevance. When people ask, "When was The Outsiders first published?" they are often engaging in a larger conversation about what literature should be allowed to say to young people.

Anniversary Editions and Continued Relevance

To mark the 40th anniversary in 2007, Viking published a special edition of *The Outsiders* that included new material and interviews with the author. The 50th anniversary in 2017 saw even more celebrations, including a documentary and renewed interest in Hinton's work. These milestones remind us that the question "When was The Outsiders first published?" is not just a piece of trivia—it is a celebration of a book that has lasted for generations.

Today, *The Outsiders* remains one of the best-selling young adult novels of all time. It is available in numerous languages and continues to be adapted for stage and screen. The musical adaptation, *The Outsiders: A New Musical*, premiered in 2023 and has brought the story to yet another audience.

Conclusion: A Publication Date That Changed Literature

So, when was *The Outsiders* first published? It was first published on April 24, 1967. But that date represents so much more than a simple answer to a factual question. It marks the birth of modern young adult literature. It marks the moment when a teenage girl from Oklahoma proved that young people not only could write powerful stories but also deserved to read stories that reflected their own lives back to them.

The Outsiders has never gone out of print. It has never stopped being relevant. And it has never stopped being a source of comfort and inspiration for readers who feel like outsiders themselves. The next time someone asks

you, "When was The Outsiders first published?" you can give them the date, but you can also explain why that date matters. It matters because it gave the world a story that stays gold.

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