“Teenage Wasteland” by Anne Tyler

1. What is the difference between Donny’s appearances from when he is young until now (the beginning of the story)?

2. How has he changed by the end of story?

3. What were the reactions of the following people based on changes that occurred in Donny:
   a. Daisy and Matt
   b. His sister
   c. Cal
   d. School

4. With whom did you empathize (the ability to identify with and understand somebody else’s feelings or difficulties) with more? Donny or his parents? Why?

5. What do you think is the “point” of this story? (i.e. Does it teach a lesson? Get an important message across? Something else?)

6. What is this short story saying about conformity and nonconformity? Give at least two examples of each from the text.

   **Conformity** (doing and thinking as others: behavior or thought that is socially acceptable or expected)
   1.
   2.

   **Nonconformity** (unconventionality: the practice of not conforming to an established pattern of behavior)
   1.
   2.
7. In *Walden*, Thoreau says, “If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.” How was Thoreau’s quote adapted on the bottom of pg. 1176 and the top of pg. 1177 (or line 97 in the packet)? Why does this quote “fit” into this short story? How might it not “fit”?

8. What do you think formal education has to say about conformity/nonconformity? Do they agree or disagree? Why?

9. Write a **personal response** to the story. It MUST be a minimum of 10 sentences. You may include (but are not limited to) what you liked/disliked about the short story. You may use a separate sheet of paper if you desire.