



The Catcher in the Rye

by J.D. Salinger

Teacher's Guide

Written By Mary Ellen Snodgrass

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Synopsis

Holden Caulfield, son of a successful corporation lawyer, is an upper middle class sixteen-year-old high school junior who suffers emotional damage after the death of his brother, Allie, in 1946. Holden tells or dictates to an unnamed listener the episodes that comprise a forty-eight-hour period that precedes his confinement in a California psychiatric hospital. The stream-of-consciousness rambling reveals the nature of Holden's mental problems, particularly his loneliness, lack of self-confidence, and inability to make friends or please his parents and his older brother, D. B. By the end of his narrative, Holden anticipates enrollment at yet another boarding school, which he feels unready to face.

Chapter 1

As Holden explains, shortly before Christmas holidays the previous year, he is expelled from Pencey Prep, a boys' boarding school near Agerstown, Pennsylvania, for failure in all his courses except English. On Saturday afternoon, he climbs Thomsen Hill to observe Pencey's football team play Saxon Hall. As manager of the fencing team, he berates himself for misplacing team equipment that morning on the subway.

Chapter 2

Back on campus, he bids farewell to Mr. Spencer, an elderly history teacher, who scolds him for his bad academic record at both Whooten School and Elkton Hills. The old man, who is ill with flu, returns Holden's history exam, which contains insubstantial answers to a question about the ancient Egyptians. Holden, depressed and ill-at-ease, accepts full blame for his lack of preparation.

Chapter 3

He returns to his room, where he talks with Robert Ackley, an obnoxious, poorly groomed student who rooms next door.

Chapter 4

Because Holden is adept at writing, Ward Stradlater, his roommate, asks him to complete a composition assignment. A suave, attractive, but insensitive young man, Ward takes advantage of Holden by borrowing his checked sport coat, which he wears on a date with Holden's friend, Jane Gallagher.

Chapter 5

Holden and two companions, who have nothing better to do, go into town to see a movie, but play pinball and eat hamburgers instead. Back at the dormitory, he completes the essay around 10:30 P. M.

Chapter 6

He fights with Stradlater for showing disrespect to his date; Stradlater bloodies Holden's nose.

Chapter 7

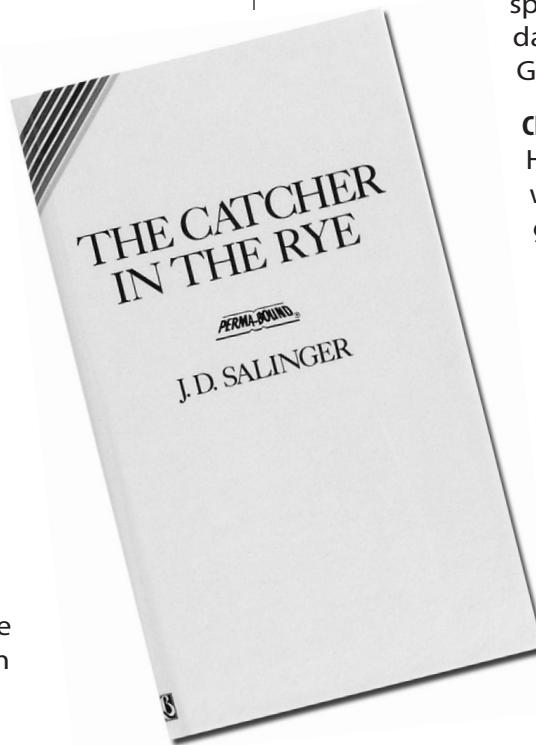
Lonely and depressed, Holden decides not to wait until Wednesday to leave and flees the building.

Chapter 8

He escapes by train. At Trenton, New Jersey, on the way to New York City, he encounters Ernest Morrow's mother and makes up extravagant lies. The woman departs at Newark and invites Holden to visit the family at Gloucester, Massachusetts.

Chapter 9

At Penn station in New York, Holden wants to telephone his nine-year-old sister Phoebe, but decides against it. He plans to intercept the headmaster's letter of expulsion before his parents learn that he has once again been booted from an expensive



private school. While staying at the Edmont Hotel, he consults his address book and calls Faith Cavendish, who rejects his offer of a date because of the late phone call.

Chapter 10

At the hotel's Lavender Room, he tries to impress three naive women from Seattle.

Chapter 11

He reminisces about his friend Jane Gallagher.

Chapter 12

From the Edmont, he takes a cab to Ernie's in Greenwich Village, but he fails to have a good time and blames the abortive evening on the phonies he meets at the nightclub.

Chapter 13

In despair, Holden walks 41 blocks back to the hotel. He has Maurice, the elevator operator, send a prostitute to his room. Sunny arrives and offers sex for five dollars, but he makes up an excuse about recovery from surgery to explain his lack of interest in her.

Chapter 14

After Sunny leaves, near dawn, Maurice demands an additional five dollars for the prostitute's services. He fights with Holden and extracts the money from his wallet.

Chapter 15

At 10:00 A. M., Holden makes a matinee date with Sally Hayes, an attractive, but shallow friend. He uses up the remainder of the morning eating breakfast and chatting with nuns from Chicago.

Chapter 16

After noon, Holden walks toward Broadway and buys a record for Phoebe. On the way to get theater tickets for *I Know My Love*, he sings "Comin' Thru the Rye." At the park, he looks for Phoebe, then heads for the Biltmore Theater.

Chapter 17

Holden meets Sally for the show at 2:10 P.M. Afterward, she proposes that they ice-skate at Radio City. Holden tries to explain his depression and his dislike of boys' schools. He proposes marriage to Sally, who becomes angry, and leaves.

Chapter 18

To stave off loneliness, Holden telephones Carl Luce, a self-important older friend from Whooten, to join him for a drink at the Wicker Bar. He thinks about his brother D. B., a veteran of World War II.

Chapter 19

At the Wicker Bar at the Seton Hotel, Holden waits for Carl, whose sneering remarks plunge Holden further into despair.

Chapter 20

Holden drinks too much, wets his head under the faucet in the men's room, then exits into the icy night air to roam Central Park and look for an answer to a bothersome question: Where do the ducks go in winter? At the park, he accidentally breaks Phoebe's record. He recalls being in the hospital after Allie died.

Chapter 21

Unable to find peace, he wanders on to his family's apartment and talks to Phoebe, his best pal, who is asleep when he arrives. She perceives that Holden has been kicked out of school. Holden plans to go west.

Chapter 22

Holden explains that he was unable to concentrate at school. He envisions himself rescuing children who wander too near a cliff. He calls Mr. Antolini, his favorite teacher at the Elkton Hills school.

Chapter 23

Holden dances with Phoebe. He hides when his mother appears. Before he leaves, Phoebe lends him her Christmas money—\$8.65—so that he can continue to conceal his early arrival from his parents. He starts to cry, then gives her his hunting hat.

Chapter 24

Holden goes to Mr. Antolini's flat and prepares to spend the rest of the night on the living room couch. Mr. Antolini gives him advice about being naive and noble. Late that night, Mr. Antolini awakens Holden by fondling his head. Holden fears that Mr. Antolini is making homosexual advances and hurriedly departs.

Chapter 25

Holden is at first dazed, then sleeps in Grand Central Station. He tries to eat doughnuts, but can't swallow. He walks Fifth Avenue in fear of disappearing and prays to Allie to save him. He runs to his former elementary school and leaves a message for Phoebe to meet him at the Museum of Art at 12:15 P.M. While visiting the museum, he faints. She arrives bearing a suitcase so that she can hitchhike west with him. Holden is fond of her quirky sense of humor and keen intelligence, but rejects her offer to go along. Instead, he accompanies her to the zoo and watches her ride the carousel. Inexplicably happy, he sits in the rain.

Chapter 26

Holden closes his narrative while recuperating from emotional collapse. Lonely and confused, he expects to attend another school the next fall.

Timeline

1935	Holden Caulfield is born.
1941	Phoebe Caulfield is born.
July 18, 1946	Allie Caulfield dies of leukemia. Holden is hospitalized with self-inflicted wounds to his hand.
1949-51	Holden flunks out of Whooten and Elkton Hills.
1951	Veteran's Day Parents visit Pencey Prep in Agerstown, Pennsylvania.
Nov. 4-Dec. 2	Mr. Spencer lectures Holden's history class on the Egyptians.
After exams	Holden is expelled.
Friday	Dr. Thurmer lectures him for two hours because of failing four courses.
Saturday	Holden loses the fencing team's equipment on the subway and buys a hunting hat at a sports store.
10:30 P. M.	Holden leaves the dorm.
later daybreak	Holden takes the train to New York. Maurice extorts \$5 from Holden and hits him.
10:00 A. M.	
Sunday	Holden makes a date with Sally Hayes.
noon	He buys a record for Phoebe, then purchases theater tickets. He walks along the mall looking for Phoebe.

	From the Museum of Natural History, he takes a cab to the Biltmore.
2:10 P. M.	Sally is late. After the show, they go to Radio City to ice skate. Holden proposes. Sally leaves in anger.
late afternoon	Holden attends the Radio City Music Hall Christmas show. He invites Carl Luce to have a drink at the Wicker Bar. Alone again, Holden gets drunk.
1:00 A. M.	
Monday	Holden stops at his family's flat. After taking money from Phoebe, he visits Mr. Antolini.
early morning	Holden takes the subway to Grand Central Station to sleep.
around 9:00 A. M.	Holden walks Fifth Avenue and hallucinates. He visits Phoebe's elementary school.
12:15 P. M.	Phoebe joins him at the Museum of Art. They walk to the park.
after Christmas	Holden finishes his narrative at a rest home near Hollywood, California.

Author Sketch

The son of a Jewish father and Christian mother, Jerome David "Sonny" Salinger, a native of New York City, was born January 1, 1919. The second child of a foods wholesaler and importer, Solomon S.



Salinger, and Marie Jillich Salinger, who changed her name to Miriam to accommodate her Jewish in-laws, Salinger grew up on Riverside Drive near Central Park in upper Manhattan. His sister Doris is eight years his senior.

Salinger received upper middle class privileges, including attendance at two private schools. At Manhattan's McBurney School, he enjoyed dramatics and journalism and managed the fencing team, but flunked out of academics. He enrolled as a cadet at Valley Forge Military Academy in Wayne, Pennsylvania, outside Philadelphia, where he began writing stories. He graduated in 1936.

A loner like Holden, Salinger, who drew on autobiographical experiences in his thirty-five stories, novel, and four novellas, attended New York University for a month in 1936. He quit school at his father's request that he go to Austria and Poland to learn the meat and cheese business. The venture failed. In 1938, he entered Ursinus College, a small liberal arts school in Collegeville, Pennsylvania. He quit to study short fiction in Whit Burnett's evening class at Columbia University before publishing "The Young Folks" in *Story* magazine in spring, 1940. During this period, he dated Oona, daughter of Eugene O'Neill.

Drafted in 1942, Salinger served with the Counterintelligence Corps and saw action at Utah Beach, France, on D-Day and at the Battle of the Bulge. He achieved the rank of staff sergeant and earned five battle stars. During his military career, he used spare moments for writing. Before his return in 1946, he married and divorced a French doctor.

Back in the United States, he lived with his parents on Park Avenue, but associated with bohemians in Greenwich Village. By the 1950s, he moved to a bucolic town, Cornish, New Hampshire, married a British citizen, Claire Alison Douglas, on February 17, 1955, fathered a son and daughter, Matthew and Margaret Ann, and evolved his reclusive lifestyle. He sold stories, including "The Inverted Forest," "For Esmé—With Love and Squalor," "I'm Crazy," and "A Perfect Day for Bananafish," to *Collier's*, *Story*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Mademoiselle*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Esquire*, *Cosmopolitan*, and later almost exclusively to *The New Yorker*. He remained a minor literary figure until the publication of *The Catcher in the Rye* in 1951. The body of his subsequent works—*Nine Stories* (1953), *Franny and Zooey* (1961), and *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters and Seymour: An Introduction* (1963)—draw on a fictional family of geniuses, including Buddy, Seymour, and Zooey Glass.

By 1965, Salinger, deeply involved in Zen mysticism, withdrew even further from outside influence and built a six-foot fence about his property. He no longer communicated with outsiders and successfully halted publication of Ian Hamilton's unauthorized biography, *J. D. Salinger: A Writing Life*. Critics note that during the latter portion of his career he marred his style with affectation and vagary. In 1967, he stopped publishing and obtained a

divorce from his wife. In the late 1980s, he married Colleen O'Neill. Because of his negative attitude toward media interviews and his eagerness to press lawsuits against trespassers, he has gained a reputation for alienation, hypersensitivity, and hostility.

Critic's Corner

Salinger admired Sherwood Anderson, William Saroyan, Ring Lardner, and F. Scott Fitzgerald and set about making himself into a writer in his childhood. He submitted a short version of *Catcher in the Rye* for publication in 1946, withdrew it, and polished it into one of the most successful young adult novels to date. The work quickly achieved fame by appealing to teen-age readers and made Salinger one of the most popular writers of the late 20th century. His elusiveness and devotion to solitude and intense rewriting have denied fans access to his private thoughts and habits. Whatever his method of creating sensitive, poignant recollections of the innocence and insecurity of adolescence, his writing has not flagged in its ability to hold an audience.

Some critics have been chary with praise, as have psychologists, who trace real mental aberration in Holden's first-person narrative. Analysts credit the post World War II generation's disaffection with authority figures as an explanation of Salinger's success. Holden, who represents a modern tendency toward alienation and neurosis in the young, embodies their search for tangible security, sincerity, and lasting values. Some biographers identify Holden directly with Salinger, although such assertions are difficult to prove.

Other Works by J.D. Salinger

Nine Stories (1953)

Franny and Zooey (1961)

Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters (1963)

Seymour: An Introduction (1963)

Related Reading

Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Avi, *The True Confession of Charlotte Doyle*

Isak Dinesen, *Out of Africa*

Michael Dorris, *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*
 F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
 Ketti Frings, *Look Homeward, Angel* (play)
 Robin Graham, *Dove*
 Thomas Hardy, *Return of the Native*
 S. E. Hinton, *Tex* and *That Was Then, This Is Now*
 Carson McCullers, *Member of the Wedding*
 Cynthia Rylant, *Missing May*
 William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*
 Irving Shulman, *West Side Story*
 Betty Smith, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*
 John van Druten, *I Remember Mama*
 James Vance Walker, *Walkabout*
 Yoko Kawashima Watkins, *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*
 Ruth White, *Belle Prater's Boy*
 David Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade*
 Richard Wright, *Black Boy*
 Paul Zindel, *My Darling, My Hamburger* and *The Pigman*

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 "J. D. Salinger," <http://www.levity.com/corduroy/salinger.htm>.
 "The J. D. Salinger Archives," <http://www.sunflower.org/~toenail>.
 "J. D. Salinger Biography," <http://www.anova.org/salinger.html>.
 "The J. D. Salinger Page," <http://cityhonorsbuffalo.k12.ny.us/cityreference/English/auth/sal.htm>.
 Kaplan, Robert B. *The Catcher in the Rye Notes*. Lincoln, Neb.: Cliffs Notes, 1965.

Kleban, Barbara. "A Young Writer Brings the World a Message from J. D. Salinger: 'Go Away,'" *People Weekly*, Feb. 25, 1980, pp. 43-45.
 Lomazoff, Eric, "Praises and Criticisms of J. D. Salinger's 'Catcher in the Rye,'" <http://www.levity.com/corduroy/salinger/htm>.
 Lundquist, James. *J. D. Salinger*. New York: Ungar, 1978.
 Rosenblum, Ron, "The Haunted Life of J. D. Salinger," <http://mmnewsstand.com/static/products/160/salinger.html>.
 "Say More—An Introduction," *Harper's Magazine*, June 1988, p. 27.
 Shapiro, Laura, "With Love and Squalor," *Newsweek*, Aug. 17, 1998, p. 62.
 Teachout, Terry. "Salinger Then and Now," *Commentary*, September 1987, pp. 61-64.

General Objectives

1. To analyze young adult characters in a novel intended for teen readers
2. To discuss the outlook and expectations of a failure
3. To define loyalty
4. To evaluate rebellion and exhibitionism in adolescence
5. To examine sibling relationships
6. To evaluate belonging and acceptance as bases of emotional stability
7. To discuss vulnerability
8. To account for hallucination, fainting, and emotional collapse
9. To enumerate minor conflicts that echo the major conflict of the story
10. To characterize first person point of view
11. To enumerate date and settings and passage of time
12. To predict whether relationships will remain stable

Specific Objectives

1. To explain Holden's failure at three schools
2. To discuss his dependence on Phoebe
3. To comprehend the stages of his return home
4. To contrast signs of maladjustment with moments of contentment
5. To express interaction between teens and school authorities

6. To delineate stages in Holden's emotional decline
7. To comment on grief for Allie
8. To name characters who misunderstand Holden's needs
9. To account for Holden's tears at the gift of \$8.65
10. To account for Phoebe's intent to run away
11. To explain the title
12. To analyze the symbolism of the hunting hat, carousel, and ice skating

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of J. D. Salinger's fiction, present the following terms and applications:

Episode: a coherent event, digression, or incident in a narrative that stands out on its own merit, for example, Holden's discussion with the nuns and his conversations with Mr. Antolini, Ernest Morrow's mother, Ackley, Ward Stradlater, and Mr. Spencer. Each minor incident in the 48 hours of Holden's return from Pencey Prep offers additional evidence of maladjustment, emotional need, and despair. Holden's recitation of events, such as counting the squares on the bathroom floor, making up false identities, and spying on people through the hotel window, indicate that he has little insight into his own psychological state.

First-Person Point of View: narrative spoken by a character indicating personal motivation and events. By having Holden speak his own story, Salinger cleverly inserts quirks and weaknesses, particularly two recitations of the date of Allie's death, fondness for Phoebe, and concepts that mystify or trouble Holden, particularly situations relating to sex and endangerment of vulnerable creatures, such as the ducks in Central Park and children like Phoebe. The slangy texture and diction of Holden's language is another clue to his immaturity.

Symbol: a concrete object that stands for a complex or abstract idea or relationship and implies more than the literal meaning of the word or words, for example, the carousel, which combines the wonder and joy of childhood with Holden's inability to break a habit. Like Phoebe going round on the carousel, Holden repeats destructive behav-

iors at three schools and seems no more hopeful of success by the time he readies to enter a fourth. Significant to his happiness while sitting in the rain watching Phoebe is the blue of her coat. Blue typically symbolizes loyalty, which is a quality in Phoebe that he admires and counts on when despair threatens his hold on reality.

The Importance of Setting

The school and urban settings of *The Catcher in the Rye* frame the needs and impulses of a troubled teen. Street-smart and obviously well endowed with money, Holden seems resolved to return home and while away five days until he must face his parents on Wednesday. He has little tie to Pencey Prep after the expulsion. Repeated attempts to pal around with his peers are doomed by despair and a fear that other people are phony, cruel, or manipulative. Memories such as double dating with his roommate, John Castle's suicide, a secret fraternity, and ostracism by the fencing team exacerbate Holden's fractured mental state. With self-esteem in tatters, he grabs for the few absolutes he can count on, notably Phoebe's love.

In the pre-Christmas rush, Holden takes the train to New York and wanders about the city in the late-night hours while avoiding facing his third expulsion from private school. His familiarity with subways, cabs, city hotels, Central Park, ice skating, the theater, Radio City, and bars and night clubs suggests a sophisticated upbringing, yet his grandparents' money and his father's prestige offer no dependable handholds in a world that keeps crashing down. Reaching out to Mr. Antolini and returning to his former elementary school give no relief from mental torment. On the last walk down Fifth Avenue, Holden's fear of disappearing suggests that his emotional instability is much more life-threatening than a case of the blues over failing grades.



Cross-Curricular Sources

For more information about character, grief, Manhattan, J. D. Salinger, Holden Caulfield, and other subjects and issues deriving from the novel, consult these sources:

Acting on Your Values, Rosen Publishing Group
The Catcher in the Rye, Twayne Publishers
Characters in Crisis, Center for Humanities
Literary Maps for Young Adult Literature, Libraries Unlimited
Readings in the Catcher in the Rye, Greenwood Press

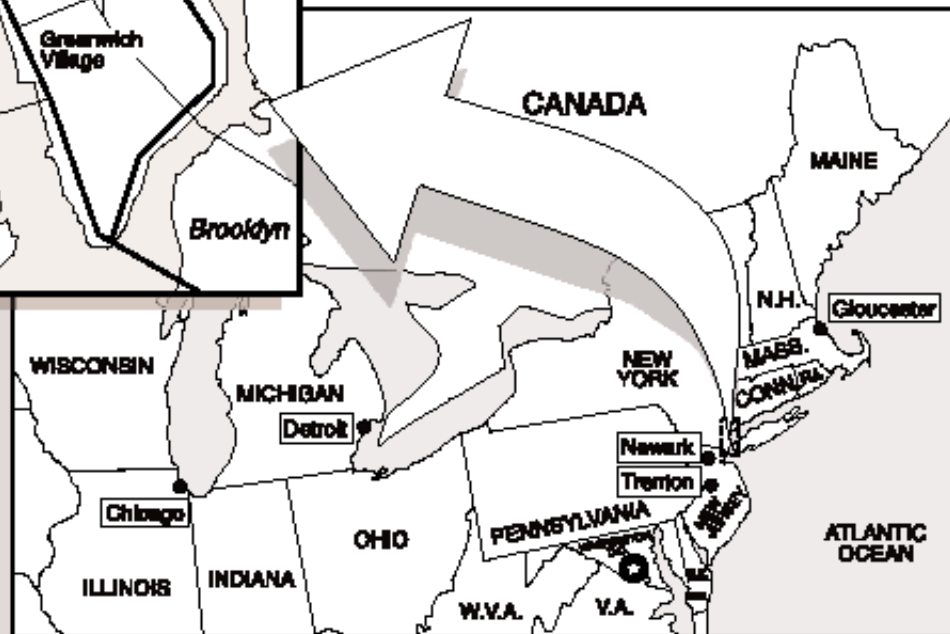
Also, consult these web sites:

Crisis, Grief, and Healing

<http://www.webhealing.com>.

New York City Parks, Zoos, Aquariums, and Botanical Gardens

<http://www.allny.com/parks.html>.



Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* should include these aspects:

Themes

- immaturity
- failure
- responsibility
- values
- escapism
- depression
- compassion
- grief
- loyalty

Motifs

- recovering from the death of a brother
- deceiving self about lying, broken friendships, and failing grades
- coping with parental and school authority
- comprehending consequences of frivolous actions
- defending the vulnerable
- accepting help for emotional illness

Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain each. Chapter and page numbers reveal the context from which the item is taken.

1. Now he's out in Hollywood, D. B., being a prostitute. (Chap. 1, p. 2)

(Holden, burdened with youthful idealism, is easily disillusioned by shallow, phony, or materialistic people. When friends and family members he loves or admires give in to worldly temptations, he complains of their fall from the pedestal on which he prefers to view them. D. B., his brother who "used to be just a regular writer, when he was home," has succumbed to fame and wealth since publishing "this terrific book of short stories, The Secret Goldfish." He drives a Jaguar and dates "this English babe that's in this new picture he's writing" who is "pretty affected, but very good-looking." Again, in Chapter 11, Holden refers to D. B. as a frequenter of Ernie's night club until he "went out to Hollywood and prostituted himself." Because D. B. has lost his boyish innocence and adopted the airs of an accomplished writer, Holden accuses him of selling out to materialism.)

2. I live in New York, and I was thinking about the lagoon in Central Park, down near Central Park South. I was wondering if it would be frozen over when I got home, and if it was, where did the ducks go. (Chap. 2, p. 13)

(One of Holden's most endearing traits is his reverence for vulnerability. He expends much worry over the ducks, which have migrated south from New York for the winter. Other examples of his concern for innocent creatures appear at odd moments during his trek, such as the child's singing "If a body catch a body coming through the rye" and his search for "Little Shirley Beans," a favorite record of his sister Phoebe, whose innocence and love he treasures. When he visits her school to leave a message, he is particularly annoyed that young children will see dirty graffiti, which he tries to erase from the school walls.)

3. It was this red hunting hat, with one of those very, very long peaks. (Chap. 3, p. 17)

(Symbolic of Holden's odyssey is his red hunting hat, which denotes his search for values in a city filled with cheaters, liars, deceivers—in short, the types of people who dismay an impressionable adolescent. The search theme continues in the next paragraph with a glimpse of Holden's taste in literature. He enjoys Isak Dinesen's Out of Africa, her memoirs of life on a coffee farm in the wilds of early twentieth-century Kenya. Likewise, he likes The Return of the Native, Thomas Hardy's novel about the search for love.

Actually, Holden himself is searching for friendship and warmth, whether in literature or real life. As he describes a good book, "when you're all done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it." Throughout the novel, Holden seeks out a friendly voice on the telephone, even from people he doesn't particularly like or admire. The search ends with Phoebe, the one person who understands and sympathizes with him.)

4. All I need's an audience. I'm an exhibitionist. (Chap. 4, p. 29)

(One of the chief inconsistencies in Holden is his distaste for actors and pretense as contrasted with his own talent for showing off and fantasizing. Many episodes in the novel feature his ability to lie and to assume ridiculous personae and false names. In some instances, he carries the acting into extended fantasies that bear little resemblance to his real nature.

For example, after he fights with Maurice, Holden pretends to suffer a "bullet in my guts." He lapses into gangster slang and pictures himself "coming out of the goddam bathroom, dressed and all, with my automatic in my pocket, and staggering around a little bit." Hollywood style, his fantasy leads him down the stairs to Maurice, who cringes in fear. Holden, refraining from a second confrontation with his attacker, calls Jane to "come over and bandage my guts.")

5. The snow was very good for packing. I didn't throw it at anything, though. (Chap. 5, p. 36)

(In keeping with Holden's respect for vulnerability is his love of purity, as symbolized by the snowball. He considers doing the normal thing and tossing it at a car and a hydrant, then changes his mind because they look "too nice and white." With seeming reverence, he carries the snowball to his room and continues "packing it harder."

By the time he, Brossard, and Ackley leave for Agerstown, Holden is still treasuring his snowball. To his disgust, the bus driver forces him to throw it away. As with many other people that Holden comes in contact with, the driver does not believe that Holden would do the unexpected and preserve the snowball rather than throw it. Holden concludes with one of his frequent generalizations, "People never believe you.")

6. So what I did, I wrote about my brother Allie's baseball mitt. (Chap. 5, p. 38)

(Even though Holden realizes that Ward Stradlater is manipulating him into writing his composition, Holden, still wearing his hunting hat, settles down to complete the assignment by writing a descriptive essay. As is typical of his ingenuous nature, he bares a sensitive side in describing the baseball mitt of his brother, Allie, who died in 1946 of leukemia. Holden reveals his response to emotional turmoil when he broke the windows in the garage and had to be hospitalized.

This violent urge resurfaces when Ward Stradlater returns from his date with Jane Gallagher. Stradlater, an insensitive, womanizing boor, not only rejects the descriptive essay about the baseball mitt, but also assaults Holden's sensibilities concerning his date with Jane, whom Holden idolizes. Without actually describing his evening, Stradlater irritates Holden by refusing to tell how much physical intimacy he shared with Jane. Holden admits that he loses control and attacks his roommate.)

7. I was sort of crying. I don't know why. (Chap. 7, p. 52)
(On his way out of Ossenburger Hall, Holden takes stock of his resources. He has a generous donation of money from his grandmother plus twenty dollars he gets from Frederick woodruff, who agrees to buy his typewriter. With money enough for the trip, Holden prepares to depart Pencey for good. Carrying his impressive Gladstone bags and decked out in his red hunting hat, which has become a kind of talisman, he weeps and shouts down the empty hall, "Sleep tight, ya morons!")

The fact that Holden has no friends to bid farewell suggests that loneliness is a major cause of his emotional distress. Obviously, he lacks a firm grasp on his feelings, which make him cry for no understandable reason. To cover the slip in his usual wise-cracking insouciance, he makes a sardonic remark about the hazard of peanut shells, which an unnamed student threw on the stairs. The shells serve as an emblem of his own state as a prep school castaway.)

8. "It isn't very serious. I have this tiny little tumor on the brain." (Chap. 8, p. 58)
(In addition to fantasy, violence, and sarcasm, Holden resorts to lying as a coping mechanism. As he chats with Mrs. Morrow on the train to New York, he carries on an abortive conversation filled with lies that avoid revealing too much about his circumstances. His first lie conceals his identity under the name of the school janitor, Rudolf Schmidt. Holden intends the next lie to be a good deed: He tells Mrs. Morrow that her son Ernie "really knows how to adapt himself."

More dishonesty follows with Holden's fib about getting hit in the nose with a snowball and a broadening of the charade about Ernie's popularity at Pencey. When the conversation returns to Holden and the reason that he is returning home four days early, he makes up an outrageous story about having a brain tumor. He realizes that his mendacity is out of control and admits that he must read a timetable to halt the lies. He concludes, "Once I get started, I can go on for hours if I feel like it.")

9. I loved that damn museum. (Chap. 16, p. 120)
(Few moments in Holden's odyssey give him the genuine pleasure he receives from his visit to the Museum of Natural History, which brings back memories of his own childhood and his strolls through the exhibits with a partner, Gertrude Levine. Holden recalls a beloved teacher, Miss Aigletinger, who "never got sore" when he dropped marbles on the floor.

As a child, he reveled in the Indian war canoe and other examples of a lifestyle that no longer exists. Like a true romantic, Holden loves the fact "that everything always stayed right where it was. Nobody'd move. You could go there a hundred thousand times, and that Eskimo would still be just finished catching those two fish, the birds would still be on their way south, the deers would still be drinking out of that water hole, with their pretty antlers and their pretty, skinny legs, and that squaw with the naked bosom would still be weaving that same blanket." He concludes that, whereas history remains static, "the only thing that would be different would be you.")

10. I went with them a couple of times, but I cut it out. In the first place, I certainly don't enjoy seeing him in that crazy cemetery. (Chap. 20, p. 155)
(As Holden's mental and physical condition deteriorate, he fantasizes that he is dying of pneumonia and that his family will attend his funeral, just as they did for Allie, who died five years before the story opens. Holden visualizes his mother trying to manage his personal effects and refusing to let Phoebe attend the funeral. Then he turns to the realistic side of death by remembering that Allie is buried in a cemetery, "surrounded by dead guys and tombstones and all."

Rebelling against the finality of Allie's going, Holden is scandalized by the idea of rain falling on this brother's grave, "on the grass on his stomach." The idea that visitors can run to their cars to avoid the rain emphasizes the fact that Allie is unable to escape the elements. Holden, sunk into despair and grief, remarks, "I couldn't stand it. I know it's only his body and all that's in the cemetery, and his soul's in Heaven and all that crap, but I couldn't stand it anyway. I just wish he wasn't there.")

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers with quotations from the novel.

Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. Describe the settings.

(The novel is an odyssey which starts at Pencey Prep near Route 204 in Agerstown, Pennsylvania. The school, which advertises itself as a mold of “boys into splendid, clear-thinking young men,” appears to be an average boarding academy. Holden rooms in Ossenburger Hall, named for an alumnus.)

The novel opens on a snowy Saturday before Christmas. Holden, freshly expelled, stands on Thomsen Hill near a Revolutionary War cannon and surveys a crucial afternoon football game. After a brief visit to Mr. Spencer, his history teacher, he returns to his room, which he shares with Ward Stradlater. In the evening, Holden, Mal Blossard, and Robert Ackley take the bus into Agerstown. Late that night, Holden can no longer tolerate his surroundings and takes a night train to New York City.

Much of Holden’s journey covers identifiable buildings and areas. From Penn Station he takes a cab to the Edmont Hotel. He visits the hotel bar, the Lavender Room, and goes to Ernie’s, a Greenwich Village nightclub that his brother D. B. once frequented.

The next day Holden checks out of the Edmont and takes a cab to Grand Central Station because he has no idea where he really wants to go. At noon he walks toward Broadway in search of a record shop. As he kills the rest of the time before two, when he plans to meet Sally, he strolls near the Mall and the Museum of Natural History in hopes of spotting his sister Phoebe, who might be skating with friends. Instead of entering the museum, he takes a cab to the Biltmore Theater and waits in the lobby near the clock. After he meets Sally at 2:10, they sit through Act One, then chat with people in the lobby during intermission.

Following the play, Sally suggests ice-skating at Radio City. Their date ends in an argument. Holden wanders away and calls Carl Luce, who agrees to meet him at ten o’clock at the Wicker Bar, a swanky gathering place in the Seton Hotel. To use up the remainder of the afternoon, Holden attends a Christmas show and movie at Radio City.

By one o’clock Monday morning, Holden is quite drunk. He walks to Madison Avenue to wait for a bus, then moves on to the little lake in Central Park South. Holden wanders toward his inevitable destination—his home, which is in easy walking distance.

Holden gains entrance to the floor he lives on by lying to the doorman. He quarrels with Phoebe and hides from his parents, who return while he and Phoebe discuss his situation. He grows uneasy and phones Mr. Antolini, his English teacher at Elkton Hills. Antolini invites him to his lavish apartment at Sutton Place, where Holden beds down on the couch for the rest of the night.

After Mr. Antolini fondles his head, Holden bolts out and takes the subway to Grand Central Station, where he sleeps on a bench in the waiting room until nine o’clock. He wakes up feeling worse than ever and goes for a walk.

He walks on toward Fifth Avenue and observes evidence of Christmas in bell ringers, Santa Clauses, and Christmas shoppers. The distance across streets begins to terrify him. He contemplates running away so that he can avoid attending another boarding school. To steady himself, he walks to his old elementary school. From there, he walks to the Museum of Art to meet Phoebe at 12:15. She arrives with his old suitcase and announces that she is running away with him. He refuses to take her and makes her cry. He walks toward the zoo. Phoebe, refusing to talk to him, follows him on the other side of the street. From the zoo, they cross under the street to the park, where Phoebe rides the carousel. Holden, happy with her innocent pleasure, sits in the rain on a bench and watches her.)

2. Explain Holden’s difficulties in growing up. *(Holden’s personal battlefield is internal. Like many youths, he is tall, but his lanky body belies an immature personality inside. He suffers the normal difficulties in growing up and accepting adult responsibilities. His laugh is loud and unpleasant, his mannerisms clumsy, and his attempts at making friends less than effective. He contemplates adult subjects, particularly death, career, religion, and marriage. He admits that he knows little about sex; often he tries to satisfy his sexual curiosity, but goes about it in inappropriate ways.)*

Academically, Holden is capable of learning, as is evident by his comments about literature. He enjoys poetry and novels and some nonfiction. To Phoebe he admits halfheartedly that he might someday be a lawyer like his father. On the other hand, failure at three schools indicates that Holden rejects learning, probably because the turmoil that he has faced since his brother’s death interferes with his ability to concentrate. Still grieving for Allie, the gentle red-head who loved poetry, Holden must work through his loss before he can think of peripheral things like class, study, and exams about how the ancient Egyptians mummified their dead.

Beyond Holden’s normal family and school difficulties lie heavier burdens. His insecurities and inferiority complex merge with

deeper maladjustments. His symptoms—headaches, misdirected anger, moodiness, diarrhea, fainting spells—expand to more serious indicators, particularly his fear that he may disappear. Hospitalization enables him to reflect on his problems of loneliness and low self-esteem, but it does not remove the fear that he will soon face a new boarding school, where the whole process may engulf him again.)

3. What characters cause Holden pain?

(Certain people vex Holden, revealing much about his neuroses. He detests conceited people, particularly his manipulative, womanizing roommate, Ward Stradlater, who admires himself in the mirror and flaunts his good grooming. Holden is particularly peeved that Ward has shared intimacies with Jane Gallagher, a girl whom Holden admires. A duplicate of Stradlater is the stranger who enters the men's room at the Wicker Bar and combs his wavy hair, an affectation that sickens Holden. Such behavior drives him to sarcasm and violence.

In verbalizing his distaste for Pencey, Holden gives another clue to the people who cause him pain. Because of its regimentation, he lasts only a short time as a Boy Scout. He also hates secrecy, locked doors, and exclusion. When parents visit the school, he loathes Headmaster Thurmer's habit of talking only to attractive, self-confident couples. Holden identifies with misfits and outcasts, such as Robert Ackley, who is ostracized for his nastiness, and Selma Thurmer, a nice girl with a big nose and close-bitten nails.

Another type that grates on Holden are phonies, who plague Holden's world, are found in bars and theater lobbies and give themselves away by being too self-assured, too at ease with the world. One example is Carl Luce, who gives a false impression of savoir faire, but who masks his own insecurities with what Holden describes as phony behavior. One of Holden's most worrisome thoughts is that D. B. is beginning to wear the mask of the Hollywood phony by driving a Jaguar, dating a trophy girlfriend, and prostituting his writing talent.)

4. What minor incidents pertain to the theme of vulnerability?

(Several minor incidents in the story reflect the major theme of vulnerability. Holden, the most precarious character in the story, worries about how the ducks in Central Park survive the winter, reflects on the suicide of former classmate James Castle, and, out of respect for a religious calling, patronizes two nuns he meets in a coffee shop. He concerns himself with innocence, particularly children like Phoebe, the child with loose skates, the child at the museum entrance, and the boy singing "If a body catch a body coming through the rye." His dream of rescuing children who wander beyond the ryefield to a dangerous cliff symbolizes his need to play rescuer, a role that gives him stature.

At the Museum of Natural History, Holden feels drawn to a display of Indians paddling a canoe and going about mundane activities. The mannequins, which represent a fragile lifestyle now defunct in American history, are locked into simple activities such as fishing and weaving a blanket. They remind him that museum displays are static. It is Holden himself who is changing and must continue to change in order to become a man.

Other images of vulnerability offset by cruelty fill the episodic tapestry. Holden is unable to defend his friend Jane, who guards her kings in games of checkers by keeping them in the back row, but in real life contends with a menacing stepfather. Travail, symbolized by rain, falls not only on Allie's grave but also on Holden. Beginning with the clash between Pencey and Saxon Hall, which Holden views from the vantage point of a Revolutionary War cannon, and ending chronologically with safe harbor in a rest home in California, the novel depicts Holden moving perpetually from harm to haven, never locating a truly danger-free environment, even when he perches on the park bench to watch Phoebe ride the carousel.)

5. What is Allie's role in the novel?

(Allie, the sweet-natured younger brother whom Holden idolizes, represents the unattainable. Phoebe recognizes Holden's doomed quest when she asks him to name things he likes. His reference to Allie indicates that he clings to a relationship that can no longer succor his fear-ridden emotions. His memories of Allie's death from leukemia recall a time when emotional turmoil grew beyond Holden's ability to cope. Inexplicably, he broke the windows in the garage, injuring himself so severely that he could not attend Allie's funeral.

Unable to quell his longing for a more comfortable time in the past, Holden mourns for Allie and turns his frustrations against the living visitors to the cemetery, who are able to duck the rain by running to their cars. To Holden, the unfairness of their escape intensifies his sorrow that Allie could not elude death. The fall of rain on an unprotected body seems like heresy for so gentle a creature as Holden's brother. As mental instability weakens Holden, he prays to Allie to keep him from disappearing—his euphemism for death.)

Questions 6-8 (Interpretive Level)

6. Contrast Phoebe and Holden.

(Phoebe, who is eight years younger than Holden, is in many ways an immature child. It is significant that Holden comes to her for comfort and acceptance. In her room, he relaxes with her belongings and fondly thinks over her interest in Hazle Weatherfield, girl detective and orphan. He likes to dance with Phoebe and admires her for lying to protect him from his mother's anger about the cigarette smoke in her room. He rewards her loyalty with a significant gift—his red hunting hat.

In contrast to Holden's adolescent neuroses, Phoebe outstrips him in maturity. She cuts through his poses and rationalizations by reminding him repeatedly that his father will be extremely angry that Holden has again flunked out of school. Because Holden treasures his relationship with Phoebe, he pulls away from her harsh criticism and finds another place to spend Sunday night. Before he leaves, he enjoys dancing with his sister, who maneuvers well, just as she deals well with life.

Reunited the next day, Holden exults that Phoebe has the spunk to pack a suitcase, don his hunting hat, and join him at the museum so that they can hitchhike west together. Confronted by a dilemma, he must decline her offer. On one hand, she is his buddy, his trusted pal. On the other, she is an innocent, one of the children he fantasizes about protecting. He cannot expose her to the dangers of a world he has already labeled seamy, deceptive, and dangerous. His compromise is appropriate—he sits on the park bench admiring her blue coat as she rides the carousel.)

7. What details point to inconsistencies in Holden's thinking?

(Various details suggest that Holden is inconsistent in his thinking. He detests actors and phoniness, yet he whiles away spare time by attending the Christmas show at Radio City, which includes a romantic movie. While talking to Mrs. Morrow, Holden adopts a false name and makes up outrageous lies to hide the real reason that he is leaving school before the holidays. In his room, he fantasizes about a manly, heroic act that mimics gangster movies. He admires masculinity, yet identifies strongly with sensitive male roles, as symbolized by his tightening of the child's skates. These examples suggest that Holden dislikes artificiality, but finds it necessary to compromise.

Another inconsistency in his thinking involves human relationships. Holden champions good manners, particularly in children. At the Spencer house and later with Mr. Antolini, he cleans up his language and wears the mask that adults like to see on young people. When he accidentally exhales smoke on two nuns, he apologizes for his crude behavior. With Sunny, he is almost courtly to a woman who sells sex for a living.

In contrast to these examples of courtesy, at other times he deliberately misbehaves, such as his rude treatment of Sally Hayes and his provocation of Ward Stradlater. On his departure from Pencey Prep, he yells a rude epithet at the sleeping students in the building. The paradox of Holden's unpredictable behavior suggests the emotional battle that rages within him. Even he cannot account for the "madman stuff.")

8. Discuss Holden's perceptions.
(One critical stance toward this novel is the possibility that

Holden does not present an honest picture of the world. Perhaps the transvestite and the couple squirting water on each other are bizarre happenstance. Perhaps there are quantities of normal human acts for him to comment on, but he chooses to see only the exotic.

Another possibility that critics have suggested is that Holden brings on himself the antisocial treatment he experiences at boarding school. If he were capable of forming casual relationships with young people his age, he might not need to lie or create extravagant mental scenarios to compensate for his disillusion. Certainly he is not guiltless of creating the miserable social milieu that exists in Ossenburger Hall.

In contrast to these possibilities are the judgments of the majority of critics, who credit Holden with accurate perceptions. Some analysts fall back on biography and point to Salinger's background, which parallels much of the testimony given by Holden to the callousness of his world. Whether the shallow, artificial, and threatening environment is Salinger's own world or a fictional creation, it seems likely that it represents an honest evaluation of society.)

Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. How does language typify Holden?

(One of Salinger's stronger points as an author is his ability to capture nuances of speech. He convinces his readers that Holden is indeed a seventeen-year-old New Yorker. His sarcasm, slang, and vulgarisms typify both the age and the locale. His ability to slip into and out of teen patois when he is talking with respectable people, such as the nuns, Mr. Antolini, and Mr. Spencer, suggests that Holden is not only manipulative, but also intelligent, even though he doesn't apply his intellect to study.

Against the melange of insecurity and complaint that funnels through his thinking, the words and behaviors of other people prove that he is in part right about the world that he inhabits. There are people making vulgar and phony remarks at the theater, on the street, at Pencey Prep, and on the walls at Phoebe's elementary school. The crux of the novel is not their existence, but his response to them. Whereas normal people cope with crass and ignoble behavior, Holden, dedicated to impossibly high ideals, can only rail at the members of society who violate his mental utopia.)

10. Why do young readers identify with Holden Caulfield?

(Young readers have championed Holden for nearly a half century. Their approval of the picaresque hero attests that Salinger created an honest portrait of youthful disillusion and despair. The character of Holden contains not only the idiocies, mendacity, and silliness of adolescence, but also glimpses of nobility and

gentleness, both of which youthful readers admire. This belief in Holden as spokesman for how it is in the real world speaks well of the novel and its message. Because so many readers return to the book for a careful rereading, they communicate their hope that somewhere on the pages lies proof that Holden will not only recover from his mental breakdown, but that he will prevail.)

Questions 11-14 (Creative Level)

11. Explain in a short speech why Holden’s maladjustment is more serious than a mere figment of growing up.
12. Discuss more mature ways that Holden could have handled the following awkward moments:
 - a. Mrs. Morrow’s question about why Holden is leaving school early;
 - b. Sally’s inability to understand Holden’s proposal of marriage;
 - c. Phoebe’s anger that Holden has been expelled from another school;
 - d. Mr. Spencer’s reading of Holden’s exam paper;
 - e. The fencing team’s anger at the loss of their equipment;
 - f. Ward Stradlater’s request that Holden write an assignment for him;
 - g. Lillian Simmons’ questions about D. B.’s career;
 - h. The waiter at the hotel bar questioning whether Holden is old enough to drink;
 - i. The secret society’s exclusion of Robert Ackley;
 - j. The Seattle tourists’ search for famous people.
13. Compose a telegram to Holden at the rest home and brighten his spirits.
14. Lead a panel discussion of Holden’s lies and aliases. Explain why he makes up a brain tumor and bad leg and why he names himself Jim Steel.

Across the Curriculum

Art

1. Using desk-top publishing or other artistic media, design a brochure naming activities and holidays at Pencey Prep or hours at the skating rink, advertisements for hunting hats or Gladstones, a list of regulations for fencing or for maintaining grades at Pencey Prep, instructions for buying theater tickets or using the subway, a schematic drawing of Grand Central Station or the zoo, first aid for fainting, laws concerning skipping school and running away from home, a business card for a headmaster or psychiatrist, a headstone for Allie, a combat medal for D. B., a bus schedule to Agerstown, a bill of sale for a typewriter or record, or a newspaper headline about D. B.’s wartime heroism.
2. Draw a story board for a movie version of *The Catcher in the Rye*. Show how the action unfolds over a 48-hour odyssey to New York City.
3. Draw a character web representing the interconnectedness of school friends, dates, teachers, parents, cab drivers, hospital staff, nuns, and brother and sister.

Science and Health

1. Compose a chalkboard lecture on the causes of emotional distress. List reasons for Holden’s tears, lies, excuses, hallucinations, and fears about sex and death.
2. Write an extended discussion of teen alcohol consumption and its effects on emotions and self-esteem.
3. Suggest improvements to Holden’s life, particularly an end to indulgence in beer and cigarettes as well as to lying.

Journalism

1. List questions a reporter might ask an ambulance driver, doctor, or police investigator about John Castle’s suicide and Holden’s self-inflicted injuries.

Cinema and Drama

1. View several realistic films and television series on troubled teens, for example, *That Was Then, This Is Now* and *West Side Story*. Discuss with a small group the lasting effects of low self-esteem, disappointing teachers and parents, running away, suicidal thoughts, and dependence on alcohol.
2. Write several conversations that are only implied, such as Dr. Thurmer's lecture about low grades and Holden's friendship with Jane Gallagher.

Geography

1. Compose a first person account of a bus, train, or subway trip to Manhattan. Give directions to Grand Central Station, the zoo, Museum of Natural History, Radio City, Fifth Avenue, and Broadway.

Economics

1. Describe in a short speech how and why Holden's grandparents spoil him.
2. Write a theme in which you explain the difficulties that privileged children face when they place no value on money.

Social Studies and Law

1. Lead a debate about the types of punishment a court should levy on Holden for numerous infractions of the law, particularly acquiring alcohol under age, fighting, and inviting a prostitute to his hotel room.
2. Amplify the social and legal elements of the story, particularly delinquency, poor school attendance, lying, and underage consumption of alcohol and cigarettes.

Psychology

1. Compose chalkboard definitions of nervous collapse, fantasy, suicidal intent, depression, and hallucinations. Apply each as it elucidates the novel.
2. Explain to a small group what survival techniques, hobbies, and interests might help Holden cope with grief for Allie's death.

3. Make an oral report on the importance of intergenerational friendship. Discuss why Holden expects Mr. Antolini to help him cope with despair.
4. Using Holden as a model, comment on normal rebellion and exhibitionism in the teen years.

Mathematics and Computers

1. Generate graphs or create a bulletin board illustrating current census figures concerning juvenile delinquency in New York and the rest of the Northeast. Include figures on the number of teens who attend boarding school.

Language and Speech

1. Compose individual posters explaining these terms: Gladstone, psychoanalyst, Benedict Arnold, highball, rostrum, half nelson, muckle-mouthed, D-Day, and cliques.
2. Compose a short speech in which you account for Holden's taste in literature. Include overviews of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Thomas Hardy's *Return of the Native*, and Isak Dinesen's *Out of Africa*.

Literature

1. Note how a minor character's words and actions reflect on Holden's confusion about sex, friendship, loneliness, loyalty, and the future, particularly the cab driver, Ackley, Mr. and Mrs. Antolini, Carl Luce, the nuns from Chicago, the three women from Seattle, Maurice, Sunny, and Faith Cavendish.
2. Compose a short segment of dialogue in which you become a peripheral character in the novel. Consider taking the role of a teacher, police officer, onlooker, carousel operator, zoo keeper, subway conductor, store or restaurant owner, rest home attendant, skater, theater-goer, or fencing team member.

Education

1. Brainstorm ways that classroom teachers can assist distressed students in coping with personal, school, and family frustrations, particularly composing personal reflections, discussing problems with peers, speaking with a counselor, and writing first-person poetry.

Student Involvement Activities

1. Compose a theme in which you compare Holden to other young misfits, particularly Rayona in *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*, Eugene in the play *Look Homeward, Angel*, Robin in *Dove*, Huck in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Finny in *A Separate Peace*, Henry in *Red Badge of Courage*, Adam Farmer in *I Am the Cheese*, and Frankie Addams in *Member of the Wedding*.
2. Rewrite passages of conversation from the novel, replacing slang with standard English. Make a list of grammatical changes and slang words which mark Holden's style. Note places where he deliberately switches his level of language, especially with adults that he wants to impress, such as his former teachers, Ernest Morrow's mother, and the nuns.
3. Citing specific examples of loyalty, compassion, and conflict, compare the relationship of Holden and Phoebe to siblings in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Little Women*, *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*, *Black Boy*, *Look Homeward; Angel*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.
4. Refer to tourist maps and create a schematic drawing of Greenwich Village and the Upper Manhattan area where Holden lives. Label the streets, elementary school, museums, park, carousel, train station, ice rink, theater, hotel, and any other pertinent landmarks.
5. Create a list of props and costumes you would need for a stage version of *The Catcher in the Rye*.
6. Add a chapter to the end of the book written from the point of view of Dr. Thurmer, D. B., Phoebe, Holden's parents, Mr. Antolini, Mr. Spencer, Mark Stradlater, Robert Ackley, Carl Luce, or Jane Gallagher. Comment on the reasons for Holden's breakdown and the prospects for his recovery. Keep your remarks in character with the voice that is speaking.
7. Write an extended definition of Holden's concept of phoniness. Express why artificiality violates his values. Explain why innocence and children bring him happiness and peace.

8. Draw a time line of events extending from the football game at Pencey to Phoebe's ride on the carousel in the park. Insert exact times and places where possible.
9. Lead a panel discussion of Holden and Phoebe's response to Allie's death. Suggest ways that family members can cope with a terminal illness like leukemia.
10. Write an extended explanation of the title. Explain the relationship to the theme of vulnerability.

Alternate Assessment

1. List examples of low self-esteem, grief, dishonesty, hospitality, suspicion, phoniness, and immaturity in the story.
2. Compile a list of scenes that demonstrate Holden's unwholesome attitudes and behaviors.
3. Compose a scene in which Holden's parents learn the extent of their son's emotional distress over Allie's death.
4. Make a character list and explain the character flaws of each, including Carl Luce's superiority, Ward Stradlater's conceit, Robert Ackley's uncleanness, Sally's shallowness, Maurice's cruelty, and Holden's falsehoods.
5. Account for Holden's concern for the ducks, children, and the child singing "If a body catch a body coming thru the rye."

Vocabulary

A. Sentence Completion

In the sentences below, circle the word that means the opposite of the other four choices.

1. He had one of these very (mellifluous, raspy, fluent, harmonious, suave) voices, and he never stopped talking, practically.
2. She was pretty (artless, natural, candid, unassuming, affected), but very good-looking.
3. I just got very cool and (agitated, high-strung, nonchalant, disquieted, flustered).
4. I was a little (impeded, dilatory, detained, premature, arrested) in my calculations.
5. They were the height of (flagrancy, modesty, brazenness, exhibitionism, forwardness) in the morning.
6. Even my fountain pen was (decorous, tasteful, understated, bourgeois, unobtrusive).
7. Not that he was (impartial, evenhanded, prejudiced, equitable, unobtrusive) or anything, but he just wanted to know.
8. He was with some gorgeous blonde, and the two of them were trying to be very (unaccomplished, callow, blase, inept, amateurish) and all, like as if he didn't even know people were looking at him.
9. Sally said I was a (devout, unctuous, sacrilegious, pious, reverent) atheist.
10. Apparently before he phoned me he'd just had a long, rather (complaisant, harrowing, gratifying, blissful, cordial) letter from your latest headmaster, to the effect that you were making absolutely no effort at all.

B. Identification

Mark the following pairs of words either S for synonym, A for antonym, or X if neither description applies.

- _____ 1. complaisant/cordial
- _____ 2. unaccomplished/devout
- _____ 3. mellifluous/raspy
- _____ 4. dilatory/impartial
- _____ 5. candid/affected
- _____ 6. objective/impartial
- _____ 7. flagrancy/brazenness
- _____ 8. disquieted/agitated
- _____ 9. bourgeois/unobtrusive
- _____ 10. callow/equitable

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Identification (30 points)

Identify the characters described below. Choose from the names on the list that follows. You may use some answers more than once:

Allie	Faith Cavendish	Jane Gallagher	Mr. Caulfield	Robert Ackley
Carl Luce	Gertrude	Lillian	Mr. Spencer	Rudolf Schmidt
D. B.	Hazle Weatherfield		Mal Brossard	Mrs. Antolini
Dr. Thurmer	Holden	Maurice	Mrs. Caulfield	Sunny
Ed Banky	Horwitz	Miss Aigletinger	Mrs. Morrow	Ward Stradlater
Ernie	James Castle	Mr. Antolini	Phoebe	Sally

- _____ 1. a tall, round-shouldered guy who does not respect other people's privacy and who has lots of pimples
- _____ 2. a girl detective and orphan
- _____ 3. likes ice-skating because of the short costume
- _____ 4. tall with gray hair on one side
- _____ 5. successful at corporate law
- _____ 6. Holden's favorite teacher at Elkton Hills
- _____ 7. seventy-year-old history teacher who wears a Navajo blanket
- _____ 8. a burlesque stripper who dated Eddie Birdsell at a dance at Princeton
- _____ 9. fearful of disappearing
- _____ 10. decked in hunting hat and carries a suitcase to an appointment with Holden
- _____ 11. a secret slob who thinks he's handsome
- _____ 12. a neighbor and owner of a Doberman pinscher
- _____ 13. terrorizer who takes five dollars from Holden's wallet
- _____ 14. a former senior counselor who talked with younger boys about sex
- _____ 15. a show-off at the piano

Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false. Rewrite false statements to make them true.

- _____ 1. Holden's mother gives him a wad of cash to spend for Christmas presents.
- _____ 2. Holden was unable to attend Allie's funeral because he hurt himself breaking windows in the garage.
- _____ 3. Mr. Spencer failed Holden in history, even though he wrote a good essay on Egyptian embalming methods.
- _____ 4. The fencing team ostracized Holden for losing their equipment on the subway.
- _____ 5. Holden likes the Indian display at the museum because it never changes.
- _____ 6. Dirty words on the school walls bother Holden, who tries to erase them.

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

- _____ 7. Horwitz advises Holden to dry his hair before going out of the men’s room into the cold night air.
- _____ 8. Holden was the first person to find James Castle’s body after he fell to his death.
- _____ 9. Holden gives the nuns a ten-dollar donation and apologizes for blowing smoke on them.
- _____ 10. As Holden grows sicker, he is unable to eat a cheese sandwich or drink his malted milk.

Part III: Completion (20 points)

Fill in each blank with a word from the list that follows. You will have words left over.

- | | | | | |
|-----------|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Americans | country club | lunch counter | Ossenburger | Saxon Hall |
| Biltmore | Detroit | McBurney | Pencey Prep | Thomsen Hill |
| Broadway | Edmont | monastery | Penn Station | Trenton |
| canoe | Elkton Hills | morons | Radio City | Whooten |
| carousel | Holland Tunnel | Newark | Rockettes | Wicker Club |
| Chicago | Hollywood | | | |

1. Listen. What’s the routine on joining a _____?
2. So what I did, I told the driver to take me to Grand Central Station. It was right near the _____ where I was meeting Sally later.
3. Another reason I know he’s quite well off, he’s always investing money in shows on _____.
4. Anyway, it was the Saturday of the football game with _____.
5. It was named after this boy _____ that went to Pencey.
6. I had quite a bit of time to kill till ten o’clock, so what I did, I went to the movies at _____.
7. “A Christmas Pageant for _____.” It stinks, but I’m Benedict Arnold.
8. He’s in _____. That isn’t too far from this crumby place, and he comes over and visits me practically every weekend.
9. _____ is this school that’s in Agerstown, Pennsylvania.
10. The first thing I did when I got off at _____, I went into this phone booth.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain Holden’s attitudes toward charity, religion, and death.
2. Discuss the effect of flashbacks as a method of telling about Holden’s departure from Pencey.
3. Discuss the theme of innocence as it applies to the title.
4. Account for Holden’s taste in literature.
5. Piece together Holden’s home life when he isn’t away at school.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Short Answer (30 points)

Supply an answer to each of the following questions.

1. Who breaks the recording of "Little Shirley Beans"? What is done about it?

2. Where does Holden sleep on Sunday night after he leaves the Antolinis' apartment? Is this safe?

3. For whom does Holden offer to buy a drink on the train to New York? Why?

4. For what team is Holden the manager? What happens?

5. What does Holden sell just before he leaves Pencey? Why?

6. With whom does Holden like to perform dips, jitterbug, and the tango? What feeling does he have for her?

7. How old is Holden at the time of the story? From where is he telling?

8. Who admits smoking in Phoebe's room? Why?

9. To what friend does Holden show Allie's mitt? What is the outcome of this show of trust?

10. What does the bus driver make Holden throw away? Why wouldn't he believe Holden?

11. Who demonstrates conceit by combing his hair and arranging his toilet articles? Is this just the narrator's perspective?

12. Who killed himself by jumping out a window? Why is it mentioned?

13. In what town do Mal Brossard, Robert Ackley, and Holden spend Saturday night? What are their activities?

14. Who explains to a child how Egyptians buried their dead? For what purpose?

15. Who lends Holden \$8.65? Why does this affect him?

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part II: Description (30 points)

Place an X by every statement that is true of Holden.

- _____ 1. considers himself a Catholic.
- _____ 2. has visited Allie's grave on rainy days.
- _____ 3. hates Stradlater for dating Jane Gallagher.
- _____ 4. admires Ossenburger for donating a hall to Pencey.
- _____ 5. meets Phoebe in the park and tightens her skates.
- _____ 6. likes *The Return of the Native*.
- _____ 7. is deliberately rude to two nuns from Chicago.
- _____ 8. walks in the winter air with wet hair.
- _____ 9. hates words like "grand" and "angels."
- _____ 10. asks Jane to marry him and move to Vermont.
- _____ 11. anticipates being sent to another private school.
- _____ 12. receives visits from Phoebe at the rest home in California.
- _____ 13. dreams of rescuing children from falling over a cliff.
- _____ 14. fails four out of five subjects at Pencey.
- _____ 15. takes pride in displaying Gladstones on the luggage rack.

Part III: Matching (20 points)

Match the following beginnings of sentences with their conclusions.

- _____ 1. The whole arrangement's designed for
- _____ 2. Then again, you may pick up just enough education to hate people
- _____ 3. I don't want to scare you
- _____ 4. The mark of the immature man is that
- _____ 5. Once you have a fair idea where you want to go,
- _____ 6. Among other things, you'll find that
- _____ 7. But I do say that educated and scholarly men ... tend to leave infinitely more valuable records behind them than
- _____ 8. They tend to express themselves more clearly, and
- _____ 9. If you go along with [an academic education] any considerable distance,
- _____ 10. After a while, you'll have an idea

- A. who say, "It's a secret between he and I."
- B. men do who are merely brilliant and creative.
- C. you're not the first person who was ever confused and frightened and even sickened by human behavior.
- D. he wants to die nobly for a cause ...
- E. they usually have a passion for following their thoughts through to the end.
- F. what kind of thoughts your particular size mind should be wearing.
- G. men who, at some time or other in their lives, were looking for something their own environment couldn't supply them with.
- H. your first move will be to apply yourself in school.
- I. it'll begin to give you an idea what size mind you have.
- J. but I can very clearly see you dying nobly, one way or another, for some highly unworthy cause.

Part IV: Essay (20 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

- 1. Characterize Holden's relationship with Phoebe.
- 2. Describe how D. B. and Mr. Antolini disappoint Holden.
- 3. Explain the emotional turmoil that leads to Holden's collapse.
- 4. Summarize Holden's choices of entertainment.
- 5. Discuss how failure affects Holden.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY

Part A: Sentence Completion

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. raspy | 6. bourgeois |
| 2. affected | 7. prejudiced |
| 3. nonchalant | 8. blase |
| 4. premature | 9. sacrilegious |
| 5. modesty | 10. harrowing |

Part B: Identification

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. S | 6. S |
| 2. X | 7. S |
| 3. A | 8. S |
| 4. X | 9. A |
| 5. A | 10. X |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Identification (30 points)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Robert Ackley | 9. Holden |
| 2. Hazle Weatherfield | 10. Phoebe |
| 3. Sally Hayes | 11. Ward Stradlater |
| 4. Holden | 12. Jane Gallagher |
| 5. Mr. Caulfield | 13. Sunny |
| 6. Mr. Antolini | 14. Carl Luce |
| 7. Mr. Spencer | 15. Ernie |
| 8. Faith Cavendish | |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T |
| 2. T | 7. F |
| 3. F | 8. F |
| 4. T | 9. T |
| 5. T | 10. F |

Part III: Completion (20 points)

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. monastery | 6. Radio City |
| 2. Biltmore | 7. Americans |
| 3. Broadway | 8. Hollywood |
| 4. Saxon Hall | 9. Pencey Prep |
| 5. Ossenburger | 10. Penn Station |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Short Answer (30 points)

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Holden | 9. Jane |
| 2. train station | 10. snowball |
| 3. Mrs. Morrow | 11. Ward Stradlater |
| 4. fencing | 12. James Castle |
| 5. typewriter | 13. Agerstown |
| 6. Phoebe | 14. Holden |
| 7. seventeen | 15. Phoebe |
| 8. Phoebe | |

Part II: Completion (30 points)

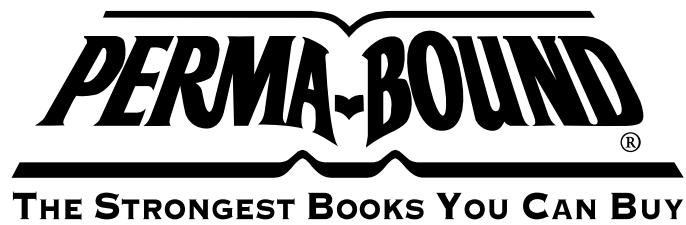
- | | | |
|------|------|-------|
| 1. | 6. X | 11. X |
| 2. X | 7. | 12. |
| 3. X | 8. X | 13. X |
| 4. | 9. X | 14. X |
| 5. | 10. | 15. |

Part III: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. G | 6. C |
| 2. A | 7. B |
| 3. J | 8. E |
| 4. D | 9. I |
| 5. H | 10. F |

Part IV: Essay (20 points)

Answers will vary.



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