

Wednesday Catcher Reading Guide

Melissa

Vocabulary p.1-8

Ostracized- Exclude (someone) from a society or group

“The whole team ostracized me the whole way back on the train” (Salinger 3)

After Holden forgot his team’s fencing equipment in the subway, they all shunned him, which goes to show that he is not good at making friends.

Stooped- To bend your body forward

“I mean he was all stooped over, and he had very terrible posture...” (Salinger 6)

This shows how Mr. Spencer is old and weak and that he doesn’t have enough strength to hold himself up which creates a sad tone.

Dough- Money

“He’s got a lot of dough” (Salinger 1)

Instead of using the word “money” he choose to use “dough” which shows that his character uses a lot of slang words which shows he might not speak with high vocabulary.

Alex
Vocab:
pages 9-16

Crude-A rude or vulgar action.

"It was a very crude thing to do, in a chapel and all, but it was also quite amusing." (Salinger 17)

The use of this word sets the tone of the passage by describing a rude action that took place in a place of worship.

Qualms-Uneasiness or concern about something.

"Do you have any particular qualms about leaving Pencey?" (Salinger 14)

The use of this word advances character development by demonstrating Mr. Spencer's attempt to empathize with Holden.

Compulsory- Required by rule

"He didn't say anything then, but the next night he made us have a compulsory study hall in the academic building..." (Salinger 17)

Using this word shows that the character who issued the study hall had authority and power.

Emma
Vocab
17-26

qualm (n)- an uneasy feeling of doubt

“Do you have any particular *qualms* about leaving Pencey?” (Salinger 17)

The use of qualm, an unusual and somewhat pretentious word to use, shows the high status of the school and how the teachers are highly educated.

compulsory (adj)- required by rule

“...but the next night he made us have compulsory study hall in the academic building...”
(Salinger 20)

Because the study hall was compulsory, or mandatory, it showed the stringency of the rules at Pencey.

chiffonier (n)- a tall chest of drawers

“...picking up your personal stuff off your desk and chiffonier.” (Salinger 23)

The addition of the description chiffonier helps the reader visualize the setting of the dorm room.

Catcher thought questions

Tom - Thought Questions - Pages 1-8

What does this section reveal about Holden's character? Is there a certain tone being used to convey this? Explain.

What does Holden's use of words such as "goddam" and "crap" show about the maturity of Holden? Why is his maturity so important to this part of the story?

How does Holden relate to modern day teenagers like ourselves? Explain using similarities and differences.

Matt - Thought Questions pages 9-16

What does Holden becoming annoyed at old Spencer after he repeats some phrases multiple times show about his character? (Page 10 last paragraph)

Even though Holden and old Spencer seem to have a good relationship (Holden sprints to his house and Mrs Spencer greets him like a friend), why does Holden seem like he hates old Spencer during Holdens' final meeting with him, and then becomes emotional when he leaves? (Page 11- bottom of page 15)

How is balance of contradictions shown in this section? Holden acts sophisticated and kind when he talks to his professor, but is also very annoyed when Mr. Spencer calls him "boy" and wants to leave soon after his arrival.

Ariel - Thought Questions pages 17-26

How is a balance of contradictions shown between the narrator's school work and his love of reading? What does this contradiction show about the narrator? (Page 18, connecting back to page 10)

The narrator is not a great student. His teachers feel he doesn't apply himself and he is failing most of his classes, yet he loves to read. Reading is an activity typically enjoyed by sharp minded people who would not so adamantly hate school work and would not do so poorly in school. This balance of contradictions shows that the narrator's problem in school is not a lack of intelligence, but something else.

What is/are the of tone(s) of the narrator's comments to and about Robert Ackley? Do the tones of his different comments ever create a balance of contradictions? (23-24)

What is the tone with which Stradlater is speaking to the narrator? Is this tone strange considering the narrator will be leaving the school? Why or why not? (25-26)

Robert

The passage I choose was on page two and it is the last half of the page. It begins with “Anyway, it was Saturday”.

The concept is:

Outcast/Fitting In

The narrator is acting as an outcast by standing alone over watching the football game from the top of Thomsen Hill. If he wanted to fit in with the others at Pencey he would have been down on the bleachers with “Practically the whole school” (Salinger 2) cheering along with them.

Reading Due – 26 to 52

Annemarie Horn

Vocab pg. 26-35

Exhibitionist (29): a person who behaves in an extravagant way in order to attract attention

“All I need’s an audience. I’m an exhibitionist” (Salinger 29).

Holden has a sarcastic sense of humor because he was joking about being a good tap-dancer, when, in reality, he is not.

Liberate (30): to set (someone) free from a situation

“Liberate yourself from my viselike grip” (Salinger 30).

Since Holden is weak and Stradlater is strong, Holden may have wanted to feel strong and powerful for just a few seconds.

Conceited (34): excessively proud of oneself

“You couldn’t rile him too easily. He was too conceited” (Salinger 34).

Due to Stradlater’s arrogance, it is difficult to make him irritated. Stradlater rarely listens to insults because of his excessive pride.

Rey

45-52

Page (46): “I’m not too tough. I’m a **pacifist**, if you want to know the truth” (Salinger 46).
(A person who believes in Pacifism or is opposed to war or to violence of any kind).
A person who hates to fight or doesn’t like violence of any kind.

Page (47): “Listen I said do you feel like playing a little **Canasta**” (Salinger 47).
(A variety of cards in which the main object is to meld sets of seven or more cards).
A card game for two to six players who seek to a mass point’s by declaring sets of cards.

Witty (48): “Ackley said what a **Witty** guy. How about turning off the light” (Salinger 48).
(Clever in speech and writing; amusingly clever in perception and expression).
An Intelligent and clever writer. As good as his own writing.

Sherman/ Thought Questions Page 26-35:

Thought Questions Page 26-35(Chapter 4)

1)How does Holden's interaction with the people around him show about his character's unique personality?

(Page 27-28)

Tom – Holden is definitely unique – one minute he is nice to Ackley inviting him to the movies – thinking inside – Ackley is a greasy dirty bad kid – he always says others are phonies – never lets his true feelings be known to the people he is talking to

Matt – exact same thing happened when he was talking to Mr. Spencer – in his head – just wanted to leave when he got there

Robert – being nice to his teacher – not calling him names – or cursing him out – but maybe he could show his feelings to his peers...

Jordan – since he is getting kicked out wouldn't care what he says his teacher...I'm not getting kicked out

2)Why is Holden so worried about Stradlater going on a date with Jane? And what makes Jane an important character? (page 31-34)

Caroline – needs to be an instigator for a problem – in The Odyssey – Athena was the instigator – here it is Jane

3)Holden's hunting hat have been mentioned twice in chapter 4, What makes Holden's hunting hat so special to bring up? (Page 29 and Page 34)

Ally

Thought Questions 36-44

Do you think Holden's declining behavior in school was because of Allie's death? What is the tone when Holden is describing his brother and his death?

Ally – partially that – does not have anyone to lean on – feels like his parents gave up on him and sent him to different schools – no brother to lean on – traumatic experience

Emma – one thing – Holden has a low opinion of himself – does not think he is anything great – looks at Allie – this amazing person in his eyes died in a terrible way – makes him wonder what will happen to himself – didn't have a good ending – why should I?

Do you think Holden was upset that Stradler didn't like his paper on Allie's baseball mitt because the mitt was important to him or because he was ungrateful? When Holden ripped the paper up, what did that show about his character?

Tom – Holden acts like he is tough and everyone is terrible – he is not an angry character – he is a confused teenager – does not know what to do – does not feel that this is where he should be – does not feel at home

Why do you think Holden was so worked up about Jane and how Stradler treated her/ what he did with her?

Caroline
Thought Questions 45-52

Do you think the previous events of the night affected the way Holden immaturity acted with Stradlater? Why? Or why not? (pg 45)

How does the way Holden handles his feelings for Jane show how his past has affected him?

Ben – I think that since Allie has died – showed that he was unable to talk to people about it – just smashed windows with anger – talked about his feelings usually helps people – attacked Stradlater...anger all the time because of that

How does Holden running away from Pencey relate to comfort versus adventure? What does Holden fleeing show about how he reacts under pressure? How is the way Holden act different from the way Odysseus would have acted?

Robert – Keeps saying “I really am” – he is telling the story – so people might not believe him – same thing with O. Negating that.

Ariel – how does the fact that Stradlater all boys boarding school affects the way he feels about girls?

Sherman – comfort vs adventure – he feels comfort when he leaves – his adventure to leave –

Ariel – Sleep tight you morons – trying to show I don’t care about you guys

Caroline – might have also said that for closure

Tom
Pages 1-8

What does Holden’s use of words such as “goddam” and “crap” show about the maturity of Holden? Why is his maturity so important to this part of the story?

Holden is 16 yet very immature. He appears to have no regard for his future or anybody or anything around him. This is shown when Holden says, "I wasn't supposed to come back after Christmas vacation, on account of I was flunking four subjects and not applying myself and all." Holden explains his expulsion very relaxed as though he is not bothered that he has been kicked out of school. This shows that he is unable to grasp the severity of his consequences and is not mature enough to look after himself and make good decisions.

Matt

How is balance of contradictions shown in this section? Holden acts sophisticated and kind when he talks to his professor, but is also very annoyed when Mr. Spencer calls him "boy" and wants to leave soon after his arrival.

Holden shows a contradiction of being both sophisticated and immature during this section of the reading. During Holden's conversation with Mr. Spencer, he is kind and polite when he answers Mr. Spencer's questions, despite being very irritated with Mr. Spencer, especially when he calls Holden "boy" and talks about Holden's essay about the Egyptians. Even though he thinks childish in his head during his conversation, Holden responds to Mr. Spencer's questions with logical, polite answers. In other words, Holden was able to keep his composure despite desperately wanting to perhaps yell at Mr. Spencer for calling him "boy" and storming out of his house. In this way, Holden shows that he can be both immature and sophisticated.

Ariel

How is a balance of contradictions shown between the narrator's school work and his love of reading? What does this contradiction show about the narrator? (Page 18, connecting back to page 10)

The narrator is not a great student. His teachers feel he doesn't apply himself and he is failing most of his classes, yet he loves to read. Reading is an activity typically enjoyed by sharp minded people who would not so adamantly hate school work and would not do so poorly in school. This balance of contradictions shows that the narrator's problem in school is not a lack of intelligence, but something else.

Sherman

2) Why is Holden so worried about Stradlater going on a date with Jane? And what makes Jane an important character? (page 31-34)

Holden known Jane before and he shows care for her when he is asking Stradlater all those questions. Holden also likes Jane and he does not want Stradlater to get in between them. Jane feels like an important character later on, because it may cause tensions between Holden and Stradlater.

Ally

Why do you think Holden was so worked up about Jane and how Stradlater treated her/ what he did with her?

I think Holden was so worked up about how Stradlater treated Jane and what he did with her because he cared about Jane. Maybe he felt as though the only person from home he truly liked and had a mutual respect with was Jane. He may have felt that his parents sort of gave up on him and that is why they kept sending him to schools and Jane was the only other person he had who never acted like she gave up on him. Because his brother died and could have felt that his parents gave up on him, Jane was the only other person who didn't lose hope in him, even if it was when they were younger. Because of that, he got worked up because he didn't want to see or hear about her getting hurt or played by Stradlater, which made him angry.

Caroline

How does Holden running away from Pencey relate to comfort versus adventure? What does Holden fleeing show about how he reacts under pressure? How is the way Holden act different from the way Odysseus would have acted?

Holden acts as though he needs to protect Jane from the evilness of the world. His brother, Allie, died to a disease to which was not curable in that case; therefore, Holden could not save him. Holden feels as if he needs to save Jane. Holden says he "is going mad" about the idea of Jane and Stradlater together.

Reading Due 53-80

Sophie

Vocab p. 53-65

Conscientious- Take care in what you do. Do things with purpose opposed to just getting it done. Do a good job.

“Some of the faculty are pretty conscientious” (Salinger 55).

It shows how much pressure is being put on Holden at school. If the teachers were more laid back, he might not have been failing 4 of his 5 classes and still be in Pencey.

Crumby- Disgusting

“It’s really too bad that so much crumby stuff is a lot of fun sometimes” (Salinger 62).

To say something is crumby is nicer than saying it’s disgusting. It shows that although he uses a lot of slang and curses a lot, he’s still innocent. Even when talking about things such as sex, like in this scene, Holden still tries to act as innocent as possible which is contradictory to the way he normally speaks and acts.

Peculiar- Strange, uncommon

“This is certainly a peculiar time to call a person up, though” (Salinger 65).

It shows that Holden doesn’t care much about others. If he wants to go out for a drink in the middle of the night, he will find someone to go with him. It shows he has determination.

Merritt Shelton

Group 3 vocab pgs. 66-72

Putrid (adj) - Very unpleasant, repulsive

“The band was putrid.” (Salinger 69).

The use of this word shows how Holden felt about how badly they were playing.

Suave (adj) – charming, confident, and elegant

“I didn’t ask them crudely or anything. Very suave, in fact.” (Salinger 70).

Using suave really emphasized that the character tried to act confident while

asking the girls to dance.

Immaterial (adj) – unimportant under the circumstances; irrelevant

“It’s immaterial to me,” she said.” (Salinger 72).

Because the girl thought it was immaterial of her to dance with him, it shows that

she thinks she is better than him.

Zach

Witty: amusing (p. 75)

“The other ugly one, Laverne, thought she was a very witty type,” (Salinger 75).

The use of this word shows that he is closely judging the people he is talking to. He seems like he does not like Laverne and Marty because they are not as good at dancing as Bernice.

Immensely: to a great extent

“I improved her game immensely,” (Salinger 77).

He was describing how much he helped her. He is saying this to show that he was good friends with Jane.

muckle-mouthed: wide or crooked mouth

“She was sort of muckle-mouthed,” (Slinger 77).

He was describing Jane Gallagher and he is trying to create a picture of what she looks like.

Sydney:

Thought Questions pages 53-65:

When Holden boards the train after he leaves Pencey, he meets Mrs. Morrow. Why would the writer choose to make Holden answer this woman’s questions? Does it give the reader any insight into the character’s decisions? How is this tantalizing for Holden? (pages 54-55)

How is not being able to decide who to call on the phone similar to the rambling on the first page? What does this show about Holden? (page 59)

Why does Holden remember the ducks on the Central Park pond at this time? What could these ducks represent? (pages 13- first mentioned and 60)

Leora

Concept: Loneliness vs. Accompaniment

Within the first ten pages (from 53-80) you can see how lonely Holden is. He is standing in Penn Station in the phone booth and can't think of anyone to call for "support". Then Mrs. Morrow didn't want to spend anymore time with him and his driver didn't want to get drinks with him. Yet he didn't want to stay at any hotel on the upper east side because he was afraid that he would see someone that he knew. Holden not only realizes his loneliness, but he points out other people's loneliness, "I saw one guy, a gray-haired.../ He was all alone, too" (Salinger 60). And finally when he decided to call someone it was a friend of a friend and she couldn't go out with him. If you think about a rich, prep school guy you might assume that he has lots of company and being at a boarding school Holden still finds ways to be lonely.

Sydney

How is not being able to decide who to call on the phone similar to the rambling on the first page? What does this show about Holden? (page 59)

It is similar because in both instances Holden wants to do something, whether it was calling a friend or family member, or deciding how to start a story. Holden is not an extremely committed person because he decides to do something, but then backs out after he started. He does not have the will to accomplish a task, shown both with the phone and with his school subjects. He has done this multiple times throughout the book, including when he explained the entire backstory behind the baseball glove.