

THE CATCHER IN THE RYE

Note: The following reading assignments can be found in your copy of J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. As you read, consult your Study Guide for *The Catcher in the Rye*; it raises important issues and will prove helpful in preparing for reading quizzes and class discussions. Be sure to mark passages that you find to be interesting, troubling, surprising, or "typical Holden" - this, along with the questions that accompany each reading assignment, will help you in our class discussion and will direct your writing on the novel as well.

1. **Read Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-26).** Respond to the character of Holden Caulfield. In what ways does Holden seem to be a "loser" and is there anything about him that you find admirable?
2. **Read Chapters 4-6 (pp. 26-46).** Holden writes a composition about his brother's baseball mitt; he gives as much information about his brother as he gives about the object. Why is this important? What does this section tell you about Holden himself? Does this change any of the reactions that you had to his character in the opening section?
3. **Read Chapters 7-10 (pp. 46-76).** At this point in the novel, Holden has introduced a variety of adult figures (from Old Spencer to the "perverts" in the Edmont Hotel). Who are some of the adults he encounters and what messages do they offer to young people? Are there any positive messages? Which message disturbs you most? Why? Do you sympathize with or disagree with Holden's perspective on adults and adulthood?
4. **Read Chapters 11-14 (pp. 76-104).** At this point in the novel, how is Holden feeling? How do you know? What makes him feel this way? (Please give specific examples from the text and explore, in your writing, *why* these things affect him the way that they do.)
5. **Read Chapters 15-17 (pp. 105-134).** Although Holden criticizes many aspects of his culture and the individuals in it, there are some things that make him genuinely happy. What are these things? What is it about them that makes Holden feel good? Please cite at least one example from the text and attempt to come to some understanding of its importance.
6. **Read Chapters 18-20 (pp. 135-157).** In his interaction with Sally Hayes, Holden expresses his view of his future. Describe Holden's view of his future and the possibilities of adult life. What does he worry that he will become? Why do you think he feels this way? Relate this to your own view of the future.
7. **Read Chapters 21-23 (pp. 157-180).** React to the character of Phoebe. Why is she so important to Holden? What does she offer that no one else does? What might she represent? How does his interaction with her differ from his interactions with other people?
8. **Read Chapters 24-26 (pp. 180-214).** Why is Holden "...so damn happy" (213) now? Has anything changed? Has Holden changed? If so, how? What realization does Holden come to in this last section?
9. **TEST: *The Catcher in the Rye*.** Date _____

Your paper assignment for *The Catcher in the Rye* will be announced at least two weeks before it is due.