

The Catcher in the Rye

■ Final Essay Test

Topic

- Choose three vivid memories from Holden's life and explain their relevance. The events must occur in his past. Why did he choose to share these particular memories with his audience? What is their importance to his life?

Your Thesis Statement

- Writer's purpose: Your particular position
- Author Credentials:
 - Author
 - Genre of literary work
 - Title of literary work
- Subtopics: 3 supporting examples

- Your thesis statement **MUST** be arguable. It cannot be a stated or obvious fact.
- Ask yourself: Can someone take an opposing side to my main point?

Thesis Statement

- In J.D. Salinger's novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*, the protagonist Holden Caulfield chooses to reveal his self-inflicted injury due to his brother's death, his interactions with Jane, and his recollection of his classmate's suicide. Holden shares these particular memories with the audience because they represent Holden's vulnerability and his need to feel connected to someone despite his fears.

Analytical Paragraph Format

- 1. Topic Sentence
- 2. Introduction of Evidence
(plot context)
- 3. Evidence
- 4. Analysis
- 5. Closing Sentence

■ **Textual Evidence:** Choose quotes that expand upon your main points (topic sentence)

- **Pick quotes** you have something to say about
- **Pick quotes** you can dissect to prove your points
- **Avoid quotes** that simply repeat what has already been said
- **Avoid quotes** that have parts removed to make your point
- **Avoid quotes** that have nothing to do with the topic sentence.

■ **Quote:** "...the night he [Allie] died...I broke all the goddam windows with my fist, just for the hell of it...I hardly didn't even know I was doing it, and you didn't know Allie" (Salinger 39).

- **Analysis:** This is where your ideas should reveal itself. This part is where you show the reader how your quote proves your main point or topic sentence
 - **Clearly explain the connections that you see.**
 - Assume the reader has no idea what you are trying to prove.
 - **DO NOT:** restate the quote in your own words (that is plot summary)
 - **AVOID:** “this quote shows” and “this proves that”

- While Holden is resistant to reveal his deep emotional feeling of loss because of Allie's death, Holden does reveal to the audience that night Allie died, he punched out all the windows in the garage. Holden explains, "...the night he [Allie] died...I broke all the goddam windows with my fist, just for the hell of it...I hardly didn't even know I was doing it, and you didn't know Allie" (Salinger 39). Holden used violence to cope with the emotional loss of his brother. The fact that the violence was self-inflicted further demonstrates Holden's inability to deal with or articulate his feelings. By revealing that he used physical pain as way to cover the emotional pain that overwhelmed him shows that Holden was trying to inform the audience about the gravity of his emotional loss and how vulnerable he felt in that moment.

- Additionally, Holden's admission that he "didn't really even know" what he was doing when he broke the windows in the garage further indicates that Holden detaches from reality in an effort to distance himself from feeling the emotional pain. Furthermore, Holden also reveals that "my hand still hurts once in a while when it rains and all, and I can't make a real fist anymore" (39). Holden's recurring hand pain is also an indication that Holden is constantly reminded of the night his brother died. He chooses to inform the reader of his inability to make a complete fist to show that while he is not comfortable being vulnerable to discuss his emotional reaction to Allie's death, he is offering the admission of his physical pain instead. Holden's memory of Allie's death becomes a preserved physical memory which serves to mask Holden's emotional vulnerability.

■ The Weight of Memories

■ I. Introductory Paragraph

- Hook (*General statement related to the main topic in your paper*): **While specific memories preserve the details of events experienced, the memories also contain the emotions associated with events, Instead of using words to convey an emotion, certain memories are selected to replace the need to confront difficult emotions.**