

# Lockport Township High School District 205

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Dear AP English Literature and Composition Student,

As part of the preparation for next year's Advanced Placement English Literature class, you are expected to read the following two books this summer:

Foster, *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*  
Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*

You may obtain these books from local bookstores.

- As you read Foster's text, mark passages that you find interesting, make relevant connections to other literature that you have read and write any questions you have in the margins.
- As you read *The Catcher in the Rye*, mark passages that you find interesting and write your reactions as well as your questions in the margins. Pay close attention to passages that speak to Foster's observations and ponder the issues raised by the attached study guide for the novel.
- Be prepared to turn in both of these annotated books as the first major homework grade of the quarter.
- Finally, explore in writing the validity of any three of Foster's chapters using analysis of and evidence from Salinger's novel. This document, the first significant writing grade of the year, should be *no more than four* pages typed. Additionally, your English teacher may have you submit your work to [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com) to check its originality. Therefore, be sure to save an electronic copy of your work.

We will begin our class next year with an examination of these works. Consequently, your careful reading of these books not only will get you off to a good start in the fall, but also will help you prepare for passing next year's AP English Literature exam.

We encourage you to read the summer assignment in manageable sections that will afford you time to think and reflect, and we look forward to reading your reactions in August.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Bedore".

Matthew Bedore

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas O'Brien".

Thomas O'Brien

N.B.: This letter will be posted on the school's web site.

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# *The Catcher in the Rye*

## STUDY GUIDE

### About the Author

SALINGER, J. D. (1919-2010). Although he is one of the most widely read authors in the English language, J. D. Salinger successfully kept himself out of the public eye for most of his career. His preference for seclusion made his life a matter of speculation among fans and his literary output a subject of controversy among critics.

Jerome David Salinger was born in New York City on Jan. 1, 1919. After studying at Columbia and New York universities, he turned to writing. His first short story appeared in *Story* magazine in 1940. After service in World War II, his stories appeared regularly in *The New Yorker* magazine. Major recognition and a large following came with his novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*, published in 1951. This touching and humorous story about a rebellious teenager became a cult book among university students. It was followed by *Nine Stories* (1953), *Franny and Zooey* (1961), *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters*; and *Seymour: an Introduction* (1963). The last three are mostly stories about the Glass family.

Altogether Salinger produced 13 short stories and one novel. Some of the stories made use of his wartime experiences, as in "For Esme-With Love and Squalor" (1950). "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" (1948) concerns the suicide of veteran Seymour Glass. Salinger seemed at his best in dramatizing the lives of children. Much of his work concerns the lost innocence of childhood.

### About the Book

*Catcher in the Rye* is a 1951 novel by J.D. Salinger. Originally published for adults, it has since become popular with adolescent readers for its themes of teenage confusion, angst, sexuality, alienation, and rebellion. It has been translated into almost all of the world's major languages. Around 250,000 copies are sold each year, with total sales of more than sixty-five million. The novel's protagonist and antihero, Holden Caulfield, has become an icon for teenage rebellion.

The novel was included on a 2005 *Time Magazine* list of the 100 best English-language novels written since 1923, and it was named by Modern Library and its readers as one of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century.

Please use the questions below to help focus your reading of the novel and measure your understanding of the book.

#### Chapters 1-4

1. Who is Holden Caulfield?
2. Where is Holden as he narrates the story?
3. Why wasn't Holden at the big football game?
4. Why wouldn't Holden be back to Pencey after Christmas vacation?
5. What "dirty trick" did Mr. Spencer pull on Holden?
6. Who was Robert Ackley?
7. Who was Stradlater?
8. Identify Jane Gallagher.
9. Why doesn't Holden go down to see Jane?

#### Chapters 5-9

1. About what did Holden write Stradlater's composition?
2. Why did Holden tear up the composition he had written for Stradlater?

3. Why did Stradlater hit Holden?
4. Where did Holden decide to go?
5. Who did Holden meet on his train ride? Why did Holden lie to her about Ernie?

#### Chapters 10-13

1. Who is Phoebe?
2. Identify Bernice, Marty and Laverne.
3. Describe Holden's relationship with Jane Gallagher.
4. Why did Holden have to leave Ernie's?
5. What do we learn about Holden from his diversion about his gloves being stolen at Pencey?
6. What was the "big mess" Holden got into when he got back to the hotel after being at Ernie's?

#### Chapters 14-17

1. Why did Maurice hit Holden?
2. Holden said he felt like committing suicide. Why didn't he?
3. Identify Sally Hayes.
4. Why did Holden check out of the hotel, and where did he go?
5. Who did Holden meet at the "little sandwich bar" after he locked his bags at the station? What did they talk about?
6. What record did Holden get for Phoebe? Why?
7. What made Holden "not so depressed anymore" on his way to the record store?
8. Why didn't Holden like actors?
9. Why did Holden like the museum so much?
10. What did Holden think of "George something--"?
11. How did Holden's feelings for Sally change from the beginning of the date to the end?

#### Chapters 18-21

1. What did Holden think of the show at Radio City?
2. Why did Holden call Carl Luce even though he didn't like him much?
3. What did Holden and Luce discuss?
4. Why did Holden go home so early (before Wednesday)?
5. What was Phoebe's reaction when she first saw Holden? What was her reaction when she found out that he had been expelled?

#### Chapters 22-26

1. What was Holden's reply when Phoebe asked him why he "got the ax again"?
2. Identify James Castle.
3. Why did Holden go to Mr. Antolini's house?
4. Why did Holden leave Mr. Antolini's home before morning?
5. What advice did Mr. Antolini give Holden?
6. How did Phoebe surprise Holden? What was Holden's reaction?
7. Why did Holden sit on the bench in the rain even though it was coming down in buckets?
8. How did Holden explain his catcher in the rye daydream?

#### Interpretation Questions

1. Explain how J.D. Salinger's using Holden as the narrator affects our understanding of the events in *The Catcher in the Rye*.
2. If you were to rewrite *The Catcher in the Rye* as a play, where would you start and end each chapter? Explain why.
3. What are the conflicts in the story? Are they resolved by the end of the story? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. What is the setting of the story? How does the setting contribute to ideas presented in the story?
5. Who are the people Holden likes in the story? Why does he like them?

6. Describe Holden's relationship with Phoebe.
7. Are Holden's actions believably motivated? Explain why or why not.
8. What is the problem with Holden's life?
9. Characterize J.D. Salinger's style of writing. How does it contribute to the value of the novel?
10. Holden often says he is going to call someone, but he doesn't do it because he isn't in the mood. What could these uncompleted calls symbolize?
11. Why can Holden honestly communicate with Phoebe when he cannot with anyone else?
12. What does Holden have against the movies?
13. Explain how the title relates to the events of the novel and the themes of *The Catcher in the Rye*.
14. Compare and contrast Jane Gallagher and Sally Hayes.
15. Compare and contrast Holden's real world with his fantasy world.
16. Are the characters in *The Catcher in the Rye* stereotypes? If so, explain why J.D. Salinger used stereotypes. If not, explain how the characters merit individuality.
17. Why does Holden keep thinking about Jane Gallagher?
18. Why does Holden want to know about the ducks in Central Park?
19. Why did Holden start to cry when Phoebe gave him her Christmas money?
20. What effect did Allie's death have on Holden?
21. Psychoanalyze Holden. What is at the root of his problems?
22. Why can't anyone help Holden?
23. For what was Holden looking during his four-day "vacation"?
24. What kinds of books did Holden like? Why?
25. Discuss the importance and the role of these characters in *The Catcher in the Rye*: Mr. Spencer, Stradlater, Jane Gallagher, Allie, Ernie's mother, Lillian Simmons, Sunny, Sally Hayes, Maurice, the nuns, Carl Luce, James Castle, and Mr. Antolini.
26. Explain the symbolic importance of the broken record, the ducks, Grand Central Station, and the hunting hat.
27. Is Holden a phony?
28. In Chapter 22, Holden asks, "How would you know you weren't being a phony?" Why would Holden think this would be a problem for someone?
29. Was Holden a coward?
30. Do you think the sibling relationship between Holden and Phoebe is realistic? Explain why or why not.
31. Holden thinks most people are a pain in the neck. Is Holden a pain in the neck, too?
32. Is Holden a sympathetic character? (Do we sympathize with him?)
33. Why do you suppose Phoebe decided to go with Holden and not return to school?
34. Is Holden "normal"? Do you think other students at Pencey felt the same way he did?
35. Did you enjoy reading *The Catcher in the Rye*? Why or why not?
36. If Holden had written a poem about his life, what would it have been? Write the poem as you think Holden would have written it.
37. If Holden were a student at your school, would you be his friend? Why or why not?