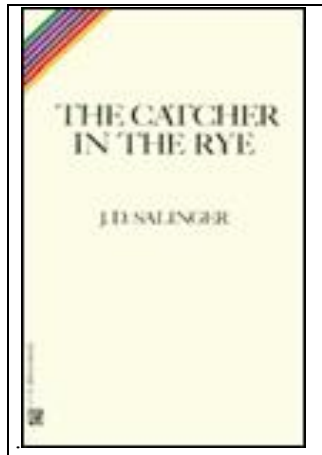


The Catcher in the Rye

J.D. Salinger

“Don't ever tell anybody anything. If you do, you start missing everybody.”



Author - J.D. Salinger
Title- Catcher in the Rye
Pages- 214
Publisher- Little, Brown and Company

About the Book – Many important themes are raised in this novel. They stem around the the life of the main character, Holden, and his battle to balance the past, present and future. The novel is his journey through two days of life changing events. The novel raises social, political, and psychological issues that are as controversial back then as the are now.

The journey of the main character relates to most readers in their youth. The thing that captivates and scares the readers the most is the similarities with Holden. This novel works in the themes of personal identity, a changing world, the effect of tradeegy, and the perfect balance between them all.

About the Author – J.D. Salinger was born in New York City on January 1, 1919. He was bron to a Jewish father and a Christian mother, which caused conflict in his family and conflict in himself because of the differing views of the religions. He started writing at a young age, but was enlisted to the service during WWII. When he returned from the war he continued to write for the New Yorker magazine. A lot of his short stories in the magazine dealt with war, relationships, and suicide. Catcher in the Rye was his most popular novel. His later life remains vague because of his reclusive nature. He also had many short term relationships with younger women; which lead to his seclusiveness for he feared that reputaion would ruin his image.

Chapter Excerpt – "I'm the most terrific liar you ever saw in your life. It's awful. If I'm in my way to the store to buy a magazine, even, and somebody asks me where I'm going, I'm liable to say I'm going to the opera. It's terrible. So when I told old Spencer I had to go to the gym to get my equipment and stuff, that was a sheer lie. I don't even keep my goddam equipment in the gym."

"You ought to go to a boys' school sometime," I said. "It's full of phonies, and all you do is study so that you can learn enough to be smart enough to be able to buy a goddam Cadillac someday, and you have to keep making believe you give a damn if the football team loses, and all you do is talk about girls and liquor and sex all day, and everybody sticks together in these goddam cliques. The guys that are on the basketball team stick together, the Catholics stick together, the goddam intellectuals stick together, the guys that play bridge stick together. Even the guys that belong to the goddam Book-of-the-Month Club stick together."

- Discussion Questions** –
1. Why do we see Holden as a "real person"?
 2. How have you ever felt like Holden?
 3. Have you ever had one experience that has controlled your life?
 4. How can you overcome difficult experiences?
 5. What lesson can you learn from this novel?
 6. How is the language effective?
 7. Does the style relate to older or younger generations? Why?
 8. How are the breaking up of chapters effective in telling the story?
 9. Do you feel it's easier or harder to write in this style?
 10. What would have made the writing more effective?
 11. What makes our world phony?
 12. How does this novel stereotype?
 13. Should this novel have been banned considering the time period it was released?
 14. How does it raise controversial topics today?
 15. Do you think Holden had psychological issues?

Critics Commentary – 1. Little, Brown & Company. From the publisher: "Ever since it was first published in 1951, this novel has been the coming-of-age story against which all others are judged. Read and cherished by generations, the story of Holden Caulfield is truly one of America's literary treasures."

2. Turning against what Holden calls the "David Copperfield crap," Salinger made his book antiliterary in a new way, filling it with babbling and "impressions that are overtaken by afterthoughts, comic contradictions, half-recognitions, and canceled insights,"

3. The familiar subject of lonely youth is conveyed with "a managed incoherence, an attractive breakdown of logic that appeals to the confused adolescent in all of us. Sweeping denunciations are followed by abject apologies--only to be followed by other ridiculous pronouncements."

RHS Student Commentary – "Catcher in the Rye, for me, was the first time I was able to truly connect with a text.

Salinger was able to capture teenage angst, and the feeling of searching that plagues your life during that period. A truly brilliant account of the tumultuous journey through adolescence."

Nick G

"Salinger wrote in a style I had never come across before. It was a refreshing and honest tale of adolescence and growing up. Definitely in my top five books of my high school career." Ryan K

"I really liked the book and could appreciate the direction it went. It made me think about life and how I live it." Josh B

Voice of the Author - Salinger refuses to give interviews or to deal with the press. Personal information about Salinger is therefore limited but in great demand. Here are some questions/comments on *Catcher in the Rye* from readers: "I would like to thank you for the

exceptional intelligence, humanity, warmth, and humor of your works. Alas, these elements far too seldom go together in artistic expression. I believe that the comedic aspects of your work, especially, have been too often overlooked in deference to its perceived difficulties and "eccentricities." "It is a primary story about the mortality that all good authors must confront in their lives and should confront in their works" "While other books for teenagers are all about popularity and sex, you are the one author who understands feeling depressed, lonely, a failure, and angry. Thank you for epitomizing the TRUE feelings of youth"

Other Books by the Author -

“A Perfect Day for Bananafish” (1949)

Franny and Zooey (1961)

Raise High the Roof Beam (1963)

Carpenter (1963)

Seymour: An Introduction (1963)

Nine Stories (1953)

If You Liked This Novel You Might Also Like ...

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

Crime and Punishment by Feodor Dostoevsky

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison

Other Tie-Ins - New York City

“Ghost World” A movie about a girl who thinks everyone is phony.

Recommended Web Sites - owleyes.org/tph.php?url_code=catcher
www3.cerritos.edu/fquaas/resources/English102/catcherintheye.htm
www.bellmore-merrick.k12.ny.us/catcher..

Created By – Kelly Manning and Sarajane Stofac