

English 2, Level 4 (W210234)

The Catcher in the Rye, J.D. Salinger

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“Since his debut in 1951 as *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield has been synonymous with the "cynical adolescent." Holden narrates the story of a couple of days in his sixteen-year-old life, just after he's been expelled from prep school, in a slang that sounds edgy even today and keeps this novel on banned book lists.

His constant wry observations about what he encounters, from teachers to phonies (the two of course are not mutually exclusive) capture the essence of the eternal teenage experience of alienation.” (Amazon)

The Catcher in the Rye is available at the New Trier Bookstore and area bookstores. The publisher is Back Bay Books. Soon after school begins, you will be given an assessment on the novel that will gauge your critical reading and thinking skills. Your study of the novel will serve as a foundation for later instruction.

Directions:

As you read the novel, identify the scenes you think are most significant to the novel's development. Record your thoughts by annotating those, and then cataloguing these scenes on the inside cover of your book (something like, “Holden's argument with Stradlater; pages 43 and 44”). Make sure to write out the reasons why you selected each scene to remind yourself of the conclusions you reached while reading. There are no “right” answers here -- but use what you have learned freshman year to guide your focus. This might include:

- noting how characters' personalities and changes are revealed through actions, statements, and descriptions;
- focusing on dramatic high points in the story's action;
- tracking confusions that might occur for you, and recording questions;
- watching for patterns, or motifs, that emerge and judging their significance;
- reading openings and closing of chapters and the novel carefully;
- identifying and puzzling over images or symbols that emerge;
- looking for parallel scenes, characters, or images, and they deciding if they compare or contrast.

