



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

THE CATCHER IN THE RYE

BY J . D . S A L I N G E R



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Edited by Paul Moliken

Name: _____

Date: _____

Introduction

Theme

Objective: Recognizing emerging themes

Activity

Holden Caulfield, the main character and narrator of *The Catcher in the Rye*, has been described as “yet another quizzical adolescent, scornful of what he does see and quite sure there is even more to unearth and condemn....He serves the author’s purpose: to scrutinize the banalities and cruelties that the rest of us, grown up and so sure of our right to preach to children, often make a point of ignoring or justifying.” Divide the class into small groups. Each group should select a different topic from the list that follows.

In small groups, discuss your chosen topic from the list below. After taking a close look, make a list of all the “banalities and cruelties” that you associate with the topic. Include specific examples for each point on your list.

Topics to Examine:

- The way parents react to the failure of their children
- The attitude of teachers toward students who fail
- The attitude of handsome, athletic males towards females
- The methods school administrators use in dealing with failing students
- The attitudes of social misfits towards others
- The attitude of wealthy private school students and faculty
- The way students who are failing react to their failure
- The differences between private and public schools

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 1 - 7**Style**

Objective: Understanding the concept of style and recognizing the elements that characterize it

Activity I

In your small groups, complete the following Style Chart and make a presentation to the class. Use the chart on the next page to analyze the voice and the style of *The Catcher in the Rye*—the way Holden presents the story. Provide specific examples from the text to illustrate each aspect of Salinger's style.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 3 - 5**Symbolism, Inference, and Theme**

Objectives: Understanding symbolism
Inferring the possible thematic significance of symbols

Activity

Holden gives the reader extensive details about Allie's glove and about his own red hunting hat. Complete the following pages about these symbols. Then, write two paragraphs: one about the symbolism of Allie's glove and one about the symbolism of Holden's red hunting hat.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 8 - 14**Point of View and Inference (cont.)**

Objectives: Interpreting a sequence of events from different points of view
Inferring meaning from what characters say and do

Activity II

Individually, select the exchange that is most interesting to you. Re-write the scene from the point of view of the person or one of the people with whom Holden interacts. Your re-write of the scene should be two-three paragraphs long. If that person could tell the story of what happened, including his or her thoughts, what would he or she say?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 15 - 20**Inference and Theme**

Objectives: Understanding thematic ideas
Inferring meaning from a character's thoughts

Activity

- In these chapters, Holden is critical of his life and discusses what upsets him. On the following page, give an example of each and how it relates to the theme that life is full of sadness.
- Next, at the bottom of the page, explain your opinion of Holden's beliefs.
- Finally, write a two-paragraph essay on what makes Holden feel that life is sad and why you agree or disagree with him.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 16 - 17**Theme (cont.)**

Objectives: Understanding themes
Inferring meaning from what a character says and does
Relating literature to life

Activity III

Write a two-three paragraph description of a “phony” that you know, have seen, or have read about. Use Holden’s description of Sally and her friend as a model. Include an incident that shows how the person looks, acts around others, or speaks. Describe the person’s mannerisms.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 15 - End**Allusion I (cont.)**

Objective: Recognizing allusions

Activity II

Using details and ideas in *The Catcher in the Rye*, write a six-line definition poem that begins with the following line:

Innocence is...

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 15 - End**Allusion II**

Objectives: Interpreting a character's internal conflict from his or her actions and statements
Relating literature to life

Activity I

Divide the class into small groups. Holden realizes that he is depressed or that he is at least suffering from some type of emotional instability.

- Complete the Signs of Holden's Emotional Instability chart on the next page to prepare your explanation of how Holden's actions and statements support the idea that he is unstable. Refer to the text and include quotations.
- Each group should present its explanation of Holden's mental state to the class.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Relating A Novel to Real Life

Objective: Relating literature to life

Activity I

At the beginning of the novel, Holden discusses the books he is reading. He makes this comment:

What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're all done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it. That doesn't happen much, though.

Would you like to call J.D. Salinger? If you would, write a paragraph on what you would want to talk to him about and what you would say to or ask him. If not, write a paragraph about the reasons you would not want to talk to him.