

Catcher In the Rye topics for study.

Each question relates specifically to a chapter: :

1. do both:
 - a. Describe the narration that Holden uses...kinds of words...feelings...things that stand out...and compare this style to any other book you've read in a meaningful way.
 - b. Explain Holden's family relationships, are they good or bad, what do you notice about them, can they be compared to any other family in any other book you've read?
2. What kind of relationships with Teachers does Holden have? Is this something that appears to be normal? Is this something that you recognize in your own life?
3. It is often said that "clothes make the man." Is this true? What does Holden's clothing choice say about who he is? Explain what your clothing might say about you? (this post is about the red hunting hat, btw)
4. Popular and good looking people often get away with things that the rest of us don't (or are successful in ways the rest of us aren't)...How is this idea reflected in Catcher in the Rye? Is there a way to create fairness that is not based on looks or popularity in our current lives?
5. It has been said that people who show emotion are weaker than those who can keep it together under pressure. Is this true? How does Holden show that he is mixed up about reacting to his stress? What about your thoughts on the subject? How should sensitivity be viewed in our culture?
6. Some people, usually the same people, like to fight...what does this say about them? What are we, as a society, supposed to do with these belligerent people?
7. Date rape is on the rise. Is what occurs in this chapter an example of date rape? How can you tell? What should be done? What about dating? Appropriate dating? What about sex? Appropriate sex?
8. Teens lie to grownups...as Judge Judy says, "Do you know how I can tell if a kid is lying?...Their lips are moving." How many lies does Holden tell? Why does he tell them?
9. What does Holden ask about the ducks? What is the response? Why should he care? Does he care about anything else that seems to be "out there"?
10. Holden has so many issues with girls...describe a few (especially in this chapter) what do you think creates these issues? what could solve these issues?
11. Does Holden have true love with Jane? Is Holden simply obsessed with Jane? Is Holden infatuated with Jane? Look up the difference in using these words. Define. Choose one and prove it...Refute the others.
12. Who does Holden admire in this chapter? Why do people admire those slightly older than themselves? What do they have that we don't?
13. Holden's experience with Sunny is a frustrating one...what is wrong? What is he looking for? Why doesn't he get it? What are his other options? Why don't they work?
14. At the end of the chapter, Holden is imagining himself shot in stomach...is he suicidal (is this death ideation?) does he have a wild imagination? is this a cry for help? choose one

and refute the others. find a pattern.

15. How has Holden spent his money in this book? How has this really hurt him? Does this show responsibility? What other ideas about money are shown in this book? How do you show responsibility with money?
16. The source of the title of this novel is somewhat explained in this chapter. Catcher in the Rye somehow is about Holden's desire to protect. What does he want to protect? How has he been showing these feelings over the course of the
17. Holden says that he loves someone, and that they should run away...Explain. Is his outlook realistic? What kinds of issues are there that he should think about? Outline his expectations, and explain what might make them impossible.
18. choose:
 - a. Holden remarks critically about the woman who cries in the movies. Why do people need to see movies that make them express emotions? Is there any value in this act?
 - b. Holden has a lot to say about being in the military here. Does he like the idea? Does he dislike it? Why? Elaborate on this topic as much as you can!
19. Does education make us change, and if it does, does it then make us phony and forget the way we were? Do we somehow become more false through our personal changes and development? Explain in terms of Holden's ideas first, then defend or criticize him.
20. Holden, being obsessed with death (somewhat), imagines funerals...what does he say or think about how funerals should be? His own?
21. Holden has absentee parents but caring siblings...when have his parents been absent when he's needed them? Conversely, when has he rejected his parents and pushed them away?
22. Who is phony? When are they phony? If everyone is phony...is anyone phony?
23. Read the poem Comin thro' the Rye

http://allpoetry.com/poem/8439179-Comin_Thro_The_Rye-by-Robert_Burns

What is a significant difference between Burns' version and Holden's? What is the main idea of each and support/explain your view.

24. What actually happened with Mr. Antolini? Was there anything weird going on here? Is Holden's reaction appropriate or not? What kind of relationships is a student supposed to have with a teacher? Is that the same kind of relationship they should have with an adult? A coach?
25. Why is Holden so depressed about seeing graffiti in the stairwell? How does this connect to his great concern from the entire novel?
26. Read the post "Why we should read Catcher" again...do you agree? Is this book a waste of time, and what other book should we read in its place?

<http://www.today.com/id/35310305/site/todayshow/ns/today-books/t/catcher-rye-still-relevant-teen/#.ULYI4EIk6Ok>

After the book is already done!!!!

27. Make a list of comparable books about teenagers growing up...use your experience, or use lists from amazon.com, or any internet search you can think of.

28. A movie is being made, inspired by this book, and you are on the planning committee. which current actors do you think would be best in each part...look up a list of characters, start placing names, and defend why you think each choice would be a good one.
29. one of the great criticisms of this book is that it is a book by a caucasian written about caucasians for the consumption of caucasians...is this true? Explain. Think of another book, perhaps one that more racially diverse, and make an argument for or against that book being taught instead of Catcher.
30. This book is hopelessly lost in the 1940's....If you could modernize this book, how would you do it? pick 10 specific examples that you could change to make this book more modern, and explain how you would replace those details.
31. Who is JD Salinger, and why is this writer such an interesting person? Give a presentation on the author, with complete and thorough details.
32. Look up book reviews on Amazon.com for Catcher in the Rye...look up the 5 star all the way to the 1 star reviews...what are people saying about Catcher? Quote and comment, sharing your opinions.
33. There's a whole mess of amazing landmarks/locations in Catcher...find a map on the internet, and give me some explanation of some of these places...explain about them in a presentation.
34. Does holden really hate people? Which characteristics does he hate in specific characters? Which characteristics does he really admire about certain characters? The overall result?
35. Perform an internet search on signs of teens in trouble...what do the sites say are symptoms/signs of students in trouble? Is there a difference between signs in young women and young men? Cite the websites, quote and explain.
36. This book takes place in the late 1940s...this is Post World War II America...What was happening in America at that time? Politics? Sports? Entertainment? Movies? Culture? Styles? Research and explain.
37. This story is described by some as a great unfulfilled romance...a young man's love for a woman that goes without fulfillment...Explain this point of view. What other stories exist where there is unfulfilled love, crushes, and such...explain three such stories, and why those relationships never work out. Find something in common and analyze.