

***The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger (Published by Little, Brown)**

Approved for use in Honors Communication Arts II and Communication Arts II

Summary

As retold to a psychoanalyst, *The Catcher in the Rye* recounts the experiences of a 17-year-old young man as he leaves his prep school (after being expelled) and spends the weekend before Christmas in New York, forestalling his arrival back home and facing his parents' disappointment.

Connection to the Curriculum

The Catcher in the Rye is a seemingly simple narrative of a young boy's journey at a crucial time in his life told with his own 17-year-old voice. Through this book students can identify the aspect of voice that is often lacking in their own writing and experience the manipulation of grammatical structure as a literary device. This book also allows occasion to explore literary techniques such as motif, symbol, and hyperbole. Students discuss the differences between a hero and an anti-hero, the structure of the story, and allusions to other works within the novel. Although his experiences are uniquely his own, his perceptions, successes, and failures are often universal to those his age. Holden Caulfield is able to identify hypocrisy, insensitivity, self-indulgence, and stupidity in others, yet seems incapable of applying those concepts to himself. In an effort to define the emerging adult in himself, he both correctly identifies and misinterprets the concept of 'coming of age'. Despite his own cursing, he tries to erase obscene words from areas where children might run across them, trying to protect their innocence. This protector of their youthful natures is what Holden aspires to be as a "Catcher in the Rye." Discussions on self-awareness, morality, empathy, and book censorship accompany instruction in tone, narrator reliability, and setting.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1-The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text. The student understands the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Writing: 3.1- The students use writing as a tool for learning throughout the curriculum.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.4.7- The student identifies characteristics of narrative texts.

1.4.9- The student uses prior knowledge, content, and text type features to make, revise, and confirm predictions.

1.4.10- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, evaluative, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading text.

1.4.17- The student analyzes and evaluates how an author's style and use of literary devices works together to achieve his or her purpose for writing text.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student identifies and describes different types of characters and analyzes the development of characters.

2.1.2- The student analyzes the historical, social, and cultural contextual aspects of the setting and its influence on characters and events in the story.

2.1.4- The student analyzes themes, tone, and the author's point of view using textual evidence and considering audience and purpose.

2.1.5- The student identifies, analyzes, and evaluates the use of literary devices in a text.

Writing:

3.1- The student writes effectively for a variety of audiences, purposes, and contexts.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

Holden's story contains situations including references to prostitution, alcohol consumption, and the use of profanity (including the occasional use of the "F" word). The irony in Holden's profanity use is that he later tries to shield younger children from it. This content highlights the emotional instability of the character and development of Holden as an anti-hero.

AP Connections

The novel provides a link to the canon of classics considered essential for college-bound readers. Although it may not be considered substantial enough to be used for AP writing per se, understanding allusions to Holden Caulfield and exposure to this type of narrative writing are important.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities