

**Christopher Hermosilla**

*The Catcher in the Rye*  
**Unit Plan**

**Section I: Unit Plan Overview, Rationale, Goals, & Assessments**

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## **Section I:**

# **Unit Plan Overview, Rationale, Goals, and Assessments**

## Section I: Overview, Rationale, Goals, and Assessments

### 1. Introduction

**Unit Title:** Alone Together: J.D. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye*

**Grade & Subject Area:** 11<sup>th</sup> grade English

**Length of Unit:** 3 weeks

#### **Unit Plan Rationale:**

This unit is built around students discovering and exploring major themes, characteristics, and cultural meanings of J.D. Salinger’s seminal novel *The Catcher in the Rye*. More than 50 years after its publication, *Catcher* remains one of the most widely read, assigned, and referenced American novel in high schools across the country, due predominantly to Salinger’s treatment of Holden Caulfield, the book’s complex, jaded young protagonist. The book embodies and openly grapples with many of the same conflicted issues that 11<sup>th</sup>-grade students of all generations have likely faced themselves: feeling alone and disconnected from others, finding authenticity in a fake, “phony” society, and navigating—or avoiding—the painful transition from adolescence to the world of adulthood. Through the focused study of this dense, multilayered text, students will develop their own critical reading and writing skills while also applying their learning from this canonical classic to their modern lives.

Holden’s story is a rich character study, and discussion and comprehension of *Catcher* requires students to go beyond simple plot retellings into deeper analyses of character actions, thoughts, and motivations. Holden himself is notoriously conflicted and unreliable as a narrator, prone to hypocrisy, dishonesty, mood swings, and other mental inaccuracies, and his ambiguous nature as a storyteller means students need to interpret the novel’s actions and themes through multiple filters of truth and perception. A core tenet of this unit is problematizing Holden, exposing his character flaws along with his virtues, and using *Catcher* to have students engage in critical discussion of their opinions of a literary character, creating an argument for their beliefs with evidence from the text; the class will wrestle with the good and bad parts of Holden, just as Holden himself does throughout the novel.

Exploring the nature of Salinger’s writing style and tone also gives students the opportunity to apply critical reading skills to writing that’s positioned in a more informal, “un-academic” register, a style of written expression typically only encountered outside of the English classroom. In his informal, colloquial musings and ramblings, Holden expresses many universal truths about perceiving, rejecting, and trying to understand the obvious shortcomings in society at large. Throughout this unit, students will read, discuss, and respond to the novel both in traditional, standard written English and in a more casual, informal register of writing.

## Section I: Overview, Rationale, Goals, and Assessments

### 2. Unit Plan Goal:

The overarching goal of this unit is for students to gain experience reading, discussing, and interpreting the multiple themes of a novel, both in a group setting and through independent practice. By focusing three weeks of study on a single text, students will learn about literary criticism and analysis by continually practicing it, returning to recurring characters and themes in a growing feedback loop built to demonstrate that reading and analyzing a literary text is an ongoing process that takes place *during* reading, not just before it and after it.

On a more enduring, emotional level, I also want students to walk away from reading *Catcher* with the knowledge that it's okay to feel conflicted, confused, and uncertain about the same life questions that Holden faces as he struggles to find his place in a world that he can't fully understand. Students will ideally recognize at least some element of Holden's coming of age that appears relevant to their lives, and by comparing their own approach to Holden's and either agreeing or disagreeing with how he handles himself, they will gain more perspective on their own outlook on life and learn how to voice that outlook to themselves and to others.

Throughout the unit, students will examine Holden's unreliable nature and present a structured argument for whether or not they believe Holden should be held up as a heroic example of a lost, alienated teenager. Students will also explore how reading and dissecting his story helped them learn something about themselves, either for better or for worse. Regardless of their opinion on Holden, however, students will also be able to identify, analyze, and debate the presentation of three major themes within the novel, as follows:

#### **Theme: Questioning Authenticity**

Essential questions: What does it mean to be real, and what does it mean to be “phony”? How do we know what is genuine and what isn't? If a part of something or someone real is phony, does that make everything about it phony?

#### **Theme: Belonging and Isolation**

Essential questions: What does it mean to “belong” or “fit in” with a group? Do you define who you are because you belong to a group, or do you belong to a group because of who you are? What happens to you when you change groups or become removed from a group?

#### **Theme: Growing Up/Coming-of-Age**

Essential questions: What's the difference between being a child and being an adult? What kinds of experiences lead a person to grow up? Is growing up more physical, mental, or emotional? What does it mean to be “mature”?

### 3. Learning Objectives:

**Throughout this unit of study, students will have content-area knowledge of:**

- A theme-related analysis of a literary text
- The basics of literary theory and how different theoretical approaches influence critical reading
- Tone
- Symbolism
- Perspective
- The unreliable narrator as a literary device

**Students will understand:**

- Three major themes of *The Catcher in the Rye* (questioning authenticity, belonging & isolation, and growing up/coming of age)
- The controversy surrounding *Catcher* and its inclusion on high school reading lists
- The historical and social climate of 1950s New York City
- The interplay and crossover between literature and film in exploring related themes of study

**Students will be able to:**

- Read, discuss, and analyze a novel in large- and small-group settings
- Identify and understand major themes of *Catcher* and how the novel develops and complicates these themes
- Recognize and discuss how a writer's tone, vocabulary, and pacing of writing can influence meaning
- Self-check for understanding of key vocabulary terms, and seek out definitions of words as needed
- Compare two different literary/filmic works and analyze how they explore related themes or can be interpreted through related thematic lenses
- Use one or more themes from *Catcher* to analyze passages and characters from the text and present well-developed opinions and arguments
- Compare and relate character motivations and interactions in *Catcher* to motivations and interactions in their own daily lives
- Write an ongoing journal of their opinions of and reactions to a literary text
- Develop and support an opinion in writing, using analysis of evidence from the text to build their case
- Create a digital multimodal composition illustrating knowledge and understanding of events and themes from a literary text

#### 4. Content Standards:

##### Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts:

- **RL.11-12.1.** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- **RL.11-12.2.** Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **RL.11-12.3.** Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- **RL.11-12.5.** Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
- **RL.11-12.9.** Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
- **W.11-12.1.** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- **W.11-12.4.** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **W.11-12.6.** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
- **W.11-12.9.** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- **SL.11-12.1.** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **SL.11-12.4.** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
- **L.11-12.1.** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- **L.11-12.2.** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- **L.11-12.6.** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

## 5. Materials:

- ***The Catcher in the Rye***

J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* is the central literary text of this unit of study, chosen because of its thematic relevance to teenage students, levels of complexity and quality as a work of literature, prominence in the literary canon, and lasting cultural impacts in American history and modern society. The unit uses a thematic structure in teaching students to read, discuss, and interact with a novel, and in this regard *Catcher* is an exemplary central text to use, due to its layered use of multiple themes.

The novel is also widely cited and referenced by many people today, both in an educational context and outside of the classroom, and making students familiar with the novel and its themes will prepare students to engage further in any contexts in which *Catcher* is used as a frame of reference. Finally, this unit of study guides students in structuring a written opinion of a literary figure and text, and a rich history of very divisive, sometimes controversial opinions on *Catcher* demonstrates the novel's power in evoking strong criticism both for and against it.

- ***Rebel Without a Cause***

The 1955 film *Rebel Without a Cause*, directed by Nicholas Ray, is used as a secondary material in this unit to provide an additional perspective on the themes of *Catcher*, as well as the historical and social context in which both works were created and originally consumed. Students will become familiar with studying the same themes and central struggles across different forms of media, ultimately developing deeper understanding of both forms of media and their potential strengths and weaknesses as forms of artistic expression.

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### 6a. Assessment of students:

- **Reading journal**

The reading journal is an ongoing, low-stakes writing activity to encourage students to relate one of the broader themes of the novel to their own personal lives and experiences. Full credit will be given for completion of at least five entries (each entry has a minimum length of two paragraphs). The teacher will respond to each entry, and students will have an ongoing, personal dialogue with the teacher across the unit through their journal. The first entry is an in-class freewrite that asks students to write openly about any anxieties and worries about leaving high school once they graduate; from there, students freely choose one of the unit's three themes to focus on and write four more entries about their personal connections, opinions, and questions about their chosen theme of the text. (See Days 3, 5, 8, 11, & 15)

- **Reading quizzes**

Three reading quizzes will be administered, one at the end of each of the novel's three broad sections. Each quiz consists of 10 questions (worth 10 points each) relating to the novel's plot, characters, events, and motivations, and prompts students to respond with short answers of one or two sentences apiece. The quizzes are meant as small-scale summative assessments to check comprehension of the novel's plot and events and act as a device to keep students on track with assigned reading. (See Days 6, 11, & 15)

- **“Dictionary in the Rye” vocabulary exploration project**

This project tasks the class with collaboratively creating a dictionary of terms relevant to understanding *Catcher*. Sporadically during the unit, students each choose one word from the text that they decided should be added to the group dictionary, either because they didn't know the definition or felt knowledge of the word is crucial to understanding the novel. The class as a whole decides if the found definition is appropriate, and then each term is added to a corkboard “dictionary” in the classroom. This assignment is a student-centered exploration project meant to help students work together to create their own group “dictionary,” while also building vocabulary knowledge and research skills. (See Days 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 12, & 13)

- **Holden's Blog**

This digital multimodal composition assignment tasks students with taking on the persona of Holden Caulfield and retelling the events of one chapter of the novel through a modern social media outlet, such as a Facebook account, a Twitter microblog account, or a Flickr photo slideshow. The assignment will be assessed for its creativity, use of multimedia, inclusion of major plot events from the chapter, demonstration of Holden's perspective and voice, and illustration of Holden's struggle with two of the novel's major themes. The assignment is meant as a creative way for students to demonstrate knowledge of Holden's character and perspective, while also incorporating their own familiarity with modern digital storytelling. Includes scoring rubric. (See Days 10 & 14)

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- **Exit tickets**

Periodic exit tickets will be used as formative assessments to gauge student understanding of and reactions to that day's discussion or activity. By asking students to quickly sound off for comprehension in a quick, low-pressure, ungraded writing exercise, the teacher can evaluate how effective the educational practices employed that day were with the class as a whole, while also developing a sense of individual students' levels of comprehension and engagement.

- **Summative assessment: Letters to Holden**

This final, end-of-unit assignment asks students to construct a well-written, organized argument about whether they agree or disagree with the notion that Holden is an admirable, sympathetic figure that properly represents teenagers of today. The 4-5 page written assignment is framed as an informal letter to Holden that combines critical analysis of the novel's events and motivations with the student's own personal opinions and beliefs about Holden as a literary character and as a teenager. The assignment will be distributed on the final day of the unit, and a schedule of drafting, peer editing, and revising will be provided for students to engage in writing as a process. **(See Day 15)**

### **6b. Assessment of My Own Practice**

At the end of this unit, my plan for self-reflection and assessing my own practice will begin by taking stock of my students' major projects and seeing if students seemed engaged in discussing the themes of the novel and relating them to their own lives, even if they disliked Holden as a character or *The Catcher in the Rye* itself as a literary work. One of the driving principles in my teaching philosophy is highlighting the *relevance* of English content material to students' daily lives as an avenue to student motivation, and in that regard, I will first ask myself: Did my students seem to find *Catcher* relevant or meaningful to their lives? Did they draw connections between what Holden felt and what they felt, regardless of whether they agreed or disagreed? How successful was I in using the novel as a vehicle for having students discuss the lasting themes that I chose to highlight—questioning authenticity, belonging and isolation, and growing up—and did they appear to learn more about themselves as a result of this unit's course of study?

One of my major concerns for the unit is its pacing, and while I'd naturally keep stock in whether or not students are keeping up with the reading homework, I'd also reflect on the three-week unit and see if there were places where I spent too much or too little time on any given portion or aspect of the novel. Did the three major divisions I created in the novel make thematic and narrative sense, and if not, how else could I divide the novel so as to help structure discussion of the novel? Did I assign too much homework, and did the balance of in-class versus out-of-class reading work with my classes? Would expanding the unit to a longer timeframe benefit classroom discussion, or should I have given students more time to read and/or work on projects in class?

I'd also take a look at the major assessments in the unit, and examine which one appeared to be the strongest and most interesting for my students. Were they interested in having an open dialogue with me in their reading journals, and did the low-stakes, ungraded nature of the journals help that at all? Did the digital blog project seem to connect with how they naturally interact with technology outside of the classroom, or did it seem out-of-touch and forced in its presentation, directions, or grading rubric? How did students fare on the reading quizzes, and were any low grades the result of students not reading and/or studying, or the teacher not preparing the class or formatting questions correctly? And was I clear in my directions and overall goal for the final "Letters to Holden" assignment?

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### Assessments:

#### Day 15: Summative Assessment: “Letters to Holden” Instructions

You have just finished reading and discussing Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye*, and undoubtedly you have some opinions on Holden Caulfield: Whether you like him as a person, whether you can relate to his stresses and worries, and whether you think he has some valid points about his problems with the world around him—and with himself. Some people consider Holden a conflicted, but sympathetic anti-hero; others think he’s a mopey, antisocial jerk who needs to get over himself.

Now, *you’ll* get the chance to respond to Holden by writing a letter to him. You are speaking directly to Holden: What do you think about him, and what advice do you have for him to better cope with his life? He is a complex, flawed character, but do his flaws outweigh any valid points he has about the world around him? Ultimately, do you like him or not, and why?

In a written paper of 4-5 pages, I want you to write a letter to Holden that presents an argument for whether you **agree or disagree with the belief that he is an admirable, sympathetic figure that properly represents teenagers today**. Either he understands the way the world is with amazing clarity, or he’s dealing with his problems poorly and needs to snap out of it. Combine evidence from the novel with your own personal opinion to build an integrated case for whether or not Holden should be held up as a hero.

Choose your own adventure:

<p><b>If you agree that Holden is admirable:</b></p> <p>What is it that you like about him? What shines through in his personality or actions that make him worth putting him with his crummy behavior? What advice do you have for him to stay strong to his beliefs in a world that he can’t seem to understand?</p> <p>Develop your argument with <b>at least 3 specific events</b> that happened from the novel, Holden’s reactions, and how his reactions are justified, make sense, and redeem any negative aspects of his personality.</p>	<p><b>If you disagree that Holden is admirable:</b></p> <p>What should Holden do differently? If he seems to be sabotaging himself, what would you tell him to help him adjust to the adult world? Don’t just tell him to “grow up”—explain what that means, and how he might do things differently.</p> <p>Develop your argument with <b>at least 3 specific events</b> that happened from the novel, Holden’s reactions, and how his reactions are unhealthy, abnormal, and self-defeating.</p>
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#### “Letters to Holden” Schedule:

**Day 15 (Friday):** Final assignment handed out.

**Day 20 (Friday):** Rough draft of your Letter to Holden due, for in-class peer review.

**Day 21 (Monday):** Final draft of your Letter to Holden due.

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### **Reading Journal Instructions:**

Throughout our unit on *Catcher*, one of your class participation tasks will be to keep a journal while we read the novel together. This is *your* space to talk about how what Holden is going through does (or doesn't) remind you of your own life. I'm not grading these for grammar or spelling—as long as you complete all of the entries (each entry must be at least two paragraphs long), you'll get full credit for this assignment.

For your journal, I'd like you to pick mainly one of our three main themes to write about. Based on your freewrite and our class discussion, which one of these seems the most interesting to you? Check one:

- Theme: Questioning Authenticity**  
What does it mean to be real, and what does it mean to be “phony”? How do we know what is genuine and what isn't? If a part of something or someone real is phony, does that make everything about it phony?
- Theme: Belonging and Isolation**  
What does it mean to “belong” or “fit in” with a group? Do you define who you are because you belong to a group, or do you belong to a group because of who you are? What happens when you change groups or become removed from a group?
- Theme: Growing Up/Coming-of-Age**  
What's the difference between being a child and being an adult? What kinds of experiences lead a person to grow up? Is growing up more physical, mental, or emotional? What does it mean to be “mature”?

I'd recommend starting each entry with either a quote or some kind of event that happened from one of the related chapters, but from there, I want to hear from you about what *you* think, feel, or know about your chosen theme. Be honest! I will be the only one reading and responding to your journals, and my hope is that I am able to learn more about what you know (or are in the process of learning) about these themes. During our unit on *Catcher*, you will make five journal entries, one at a time; you'll write an entry and hand in your journal, and then I'll write a response and hand it back to you.

### **Reading Journal Schedule:**

- **Entry 1 (Day 1):** Introductory freewrite on a theme (hey, you've already done this one!)
- **Entry 2 (Due Day 5):** Chapters 1-7
- **Entry 3 (Due Day 8):** Chapters 8-14
- **Entry 4 (Due Day 11):** Chapters 15-19
- **Entry 5 (Due Day 15):** Chapters 20-26

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### Day 6: Reading Quiz:

**Directions:** Answer each question in the space provided below. If a question has two parts, be sure to answer both parts to receive full credit (partial credit is available).

#### Part 1: Pencey Prep

1. What does Holden Caulfield most often criticize people for? (He's got a certain word for it.)
2. Why is this specific criticism that Holden uses against other people ironic?
3. On the day Holden begins telling his story, why did he end up returning to school early from his event in New York City?
4. What piece of clothing did Holden purchase while he was in New York?
5. Why is Holden being kicked out of school?
6. What teacher does he talk to before he leaves?
7. What advice does this teacher give Holden about life? What does Holden think of that advice?
8. What specific game does Holden remember playing with Jane Gallagher? What tactic did Jane always resort to while playing?
9. Why was Holden nervous that Stradlater was going on a date with Jane?
10. Who is Allie? What possession of his did Holden write a descriptive essay about?

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### Day 11: Reading Quiz:

**Directions:** Answer each question in the space provided below. If a question has two parts, be sure to answer both parts to receive full credit (partial credit is available).

#### Part 2: Bright Lights, Big City

1. Who is the first person Holden calls when he gets to New York City? What is this person's occupation?
2. What is the name of Holden's sister?
3. What's wrong with the people who are staying in Holden's hotel?
4. What are the three girls who Holden meets in the hotel lobby bar obsessed with looking for?
5. After leaving the bar and sitting in the lobby, who does Holden start thinking about? What event in particular does he think of?
6. What question does Holden end up asking several NYC cab drivers?
7. What does Holden think of Ernie's piano playing? Why doesn't he end up having a good time at his club?
8. Who are Sunny and Maurice? Why do Maurice and Holden end up fighting?
9. Why does Holden have such fond memories of the Museum of Natural History? What's the "best thing" about visiting the museum?
10. What does Holden ask Sally Hayes to do at the end of their date?

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### Day 15: Reading Quiz:

**Directions:** Answer each question in the space provided below. If a question has two parts, be sure to answer both parts to receive full credit (partial credit is available).

#### Part 3: If a Body Catch a Body

1. What does Holden think about the movies?
2. What happens to Holden in Central Park after leaving the Wicker Bar?
3. Why did James Castle from the Elkton Hills school commit suicide?
4. What is the “the Catcher in the Rye”? Why does Holden want to be that person?
5. What piece of advice does Mr. Antolini write down and give to Holden? (You can put this in your own words.)
6. What is Mr. Antolini talking about when he speaks of “a beautiful reciprocal arrangement?”
7. Why does Holden leave Mr. Antolini’s apartment early?
8. When Holden imagines living in a cabin near the woods, what rule does he have for his visitors?
9. How does Holden recognize Phoebe from a far distance while waiting for her at her school?
10. While watching Phoebe, what does Holden think to himself about kids riding on the carousel?

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### Day 10: Holden's Blog Instructions:

#### Holden's Blog (Due date: Thursday, Day 14)

The way Holden tells his story throughout *The Catcher in the Rye* is very much like a journal; he recounts the events that happened to him, and he's also not shy about giving you his personal opinion of the way things are. But 1951 was a long, long time ago—how would 17-year-old Holden, with the modern voice of a 2011 teenager, tell his story today?

#### Directions:

Your assignment is to **use an online social media outlet of your choosing** to creatively reimagine how Holden might recount the events of **one chapter** of *The Catcher in the Rye*. You can choose from one of the following chapters:

- **Chapter 4:** Holden talks with Stradlater, agrees to write his essay, and reminisces about Jane Gallagher.
- **Chapter 7:** Holden talks with Ackley, thinks about Jane and Stradlater, and decides to leave Pencey Prep.
- **Chapter 10:** Holden thinks about Phoebe, explores the hotel lobby bar, and dances with a few girls.
- **Chapter 16:** Holden buys a record, goes walking on Broadway, and reminisces about the museum.
- **Chapter 17:** Holden goes on a date with Sally, has a miserable time at the theater, and completely blows up at the ice skating rink

I'm asking you to step into Holden's shoes, so be as creative—and honest—as possible in how you, as Holden, would share your story with someone that you trust. You can choose from one of four broad categories of social media:

- **Traditional Blog** (e.g., Wordpress, Tumblr): Write one long post or a series of shorter posts (at least 700 words in total) in Holden's modern, slangy voice, but be sure to include at least 2 photos and 5 links, fitting background and header images, other page categories (these can be blank), and anything else you'd want your blog to have. Visual design is key; feel free to use and adapt templates, but choose them based on what Holden would want.
- **Wall Sharing** (e.g., Facebook, Google+): If you create a fake "Facebook account" for Holden, you should have not only a series of multimedia posts (at least 6 posts), but also an appropriate profile picture, list of Friends, basic profile information (name, location, relationship status, interests, etc.). You can either create one online or use our "Farcebook" template from class (see attached).

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- **Microblog** (e.g., Twitter): Pretend you're liveblogging an event (such as your terrible date with Sally), and mix it up with Tweets, Twitpics, and check-ins at various places in New York City. Since each of your posts is so small, you'll need at least 20 posts (between 100 and 140 characters each), along with other details such as an appropriate profile picture, handle (be more creative than @holdencaulfield), and biographical information.
- **Photos** (e.g., Flickr): If you want to create a photo slideshow, be sure to include at least 10 photos, along with detailed photo captions of what Holden shot and why. You can use either your own photographs or photos pulled from online (just be sure to credit where you found your photos). And don't use just 10 mugshots of people facing the camera—mix up people, places, objects, etc.

Regardless of your choices, the assignment will be assessed on the following criteria:

- **Creativity:** In particular, I want to see you use the strengths of whatever social media you choose.
- **Use of multimedia:** Incorporate a strong blend of written words, photographs, audio, video, and graphic elements (such as color choice, background images, etc.).
- **Inclusion of major plot events:** Be sure that you mention the most important plot events—and some of the minor ones, too. My brief chapter descriptions above are *not* exhaustive, so include everything that you think is important from the chapter.
- **Use of Holden's perspective and voice:** Holden has particular speech patterns and certain behaviors and subjects that he focuses on—I want to see that you spent time thinking about how things like being “phony” and “crummy” would be said by someone your age, for crying out loud.
- **Illustration of Holden's struggle with two major themes:** We've talked about “questioning authenticity,” “belonging and identity,” and “growing up” as three major themes of the book—be sure that you address how Holden feels about at least two of them, if not all three.

For more details, see the attached rubric. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask me. Most important: Have fun! Remember, **this project is due on Thursday, Day 14.**

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Sample “Farcebook” template:

**“FARCE” book.us\***      home search browse invite help logout

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**'s Profile**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Networks: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_

Hometown: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Interested in: \_\_\_\_\_

Looking For: \_\_\_\_\_

Political Views: \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Views: \_\_\_\_\_

▼ Mini-Feed See All

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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▼ Information

Contact Info

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Info

Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Music: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Books: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Quotations: \_\_\_\_\_

About Me: \_\_\_\_\_

▼ Education and Work

Education Info

College: \_\_\_\_\_

High School: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Info

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Period: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

▼

 \_\_\_\_\_ wrote on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

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Show Older Posts

▼ Status

\_\_\_\_\_ update(s) See All

(Date: \_\_\_\_\_ )

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▼ Friends

\_\_\_\_\_ friends See All

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## Section I: Overview, Rationale, Goals, and Assessments

### “Dictionary in the Rye” Project Instructions:

Since Stradlater’s teacher thinks Holden is “a hot-shot in English,” our novel’s protagonist seems to have a good mastery of the English language. He also uses a lot of slang words, terms that are fairly obscure, and words that were common in the 1950s but seem ancient and old in 2011.

To help us understand Holden better, we’re going to work together to develop a “**Dictionary in the Rye**,” a crowdsourced list of vocabulary and other important words chosen and defined entirely by you, the students. When it’s your turn, your task is to choose **one word** from the novel’s recent chapters that you think should be added to the dictionary—either you don’t know its definition (such as “chafe” or “grippe”), or you know the word but still think it’s an important word for readers to know in the context of this novel (such as “phony” or “hunting hat”).

On a sheet of paper, either handwritten neatly or typed, write down your word, provide a definition, and list what dictionary or other source you used to find it (note: “Wikipedia” and “Urbandictionary.com” are *not* acceptable sources for this project). The word you choose is entirely up to you. As you read each chapter, jot notes in the margins of words that you might want to look up the definition for, words you don’t know, or terms you think are really important. For example, if you don’t know what “crowdsourced” in the previous paragraph means—go look it up! At the start of each class, we’ll quickly share our found definitions, discuss whether we think it’s a good definition, and then add it to our Dictionary in the Rye, which will be a large poster in the back of the room.

### “DITR” Schedule:

**Day 4:** Group 1’s entries due

**Day 10:** Group 4’s entries due

**Day 7:** Group 2’s entries due

**Day 12:** Group 5’s entries due

**Day 9:** Group 3’s entries due

**Day 13:** Group 6’s entries due

### **For teacher reference only:**

Examples of words that students might choose to use:

- **Chapters 1-5:** autobiography, dough, ostracize, grippe, ironical, moron, phony, parlor, rostrum, chiffonier, falsetto, hound’s-tooth, psychoanalyze, halitosis, annex
- **Chapters 6-10:** linoleum, hospitality, pacifist, fiend, corridor, Canasta, conscientious, lagoon, incognito, brassiere, burlesque, brassy, intoxicating, verification, jitterbug
- **Chapters 11-15:** snub, necking, newsreel, rile, galoshes, nonchalant, rake, frock, atheist, chisel, banister, rubberneck, gory, matinée, bourgeois, convent, suave
- **Chapters 16-20:** screech, bosom, raspy, beret, clinch, blase, conceited, enlightening, sacrilegious, booze, slobber, sophisticated, louse, flitty, boisterous, stagger, puke, chafe
- **Chapters 21-26:** racket, betray, snotty, expel, spontaneous, flunk, digression, pedagogical, provocative, stenographer, appeal, stimulate, scholarly, cockeyed, recess,

*(adapted from vocabulary list written by Esther Lombardi, About.com guide:*

*[http://classiclitt.about.com/od/catcherintherye/a/aa\\_catchervocab.htm](http://classiclitt.about.com/od/catcherintherye/a/aa_catchervocab.htm))*

# **Section II:**

# **Unit Calendar**

Section II: Unit Calendar

Day	Section	Chptr	Book Notes	Major Activities	Materials	Home-work	Reading Journal	Dictionary in the Rye
1	Intro			Introducing themes of the unit through anticipation guide; students freewrite to begin their reading journals <b>[see lesson plan]</b>	Anticipation guide; notebooks		Collect 1 <sup>st</sup> entry (freewrite)	
2	Part I: Pencey Prep ( <b>Theme for the week: Questioning Authenticity</b> )	1	Intro	Read Mark David Chapman biography blurb, address controversy of the novel; introduce students to Holden; read Ch. 1 (6 pg) as a class; hand out “Dictionary in the Rye” instructions, explain project <b>[see lesson plan]</b>	Novels; key reading points for Ch. 1; “Dictionary in the Rye” instructions	Ch. 2 (10pg)		Give prompt
3		2	Mr. Spencer	Hand back journals, give journal instructions; show theme poster, introduce and discuss major themes of novel; discuss Holden’s obsession with “phonies” <b>[see lesson plan]</b>	Reading journal instructions; theme poster	Ch. 3-4 (19pg)	Hand back, give prompt	
4		3-4	Pencey, Ackley; Stradlater, meet Jane	“Dictionary in the Rye” entries; discussion of hats, identity, and symbolism; student groups search Ch. 3-4 for Holden’s red hunting hat using handout; exit ticket <b>[see lesson plan]</b>	Red hunting hat; many other hats; Hunting hat handout	Ch. 5-6 (11 pg)		1 <sup>st</sup> group of students
5		5-7	Essay, Allie; fight w/ Stradlater; leaving Pencey	Memory do-now; introduce & discuss concept of unreliable narrator; discuss Ch. 6; read Ch. 7 (7 pg) independently; discuss quiz on Monday; collect reading journals <b>[see lesson plan]</b>	Key reading points for Ch. 6	Study for quiz, read Ch. 8 (6 pg)	2 <sup>nd</sup> entry due	

Section II: Unit Calendar

6	Part II: Bright Lights, Big City ( <b>Theme for the week: Belonging &amp; Isolation</b> )	8-9	Train ride; NYC hotel	Part 1 quiz; watch clip from <i>Rebel Without a Cause</i> ; discuss article on film's social background, and how it might relate to our themes for <i>Catcher</i> , particularly "belonging & isolation," which is a larger focus for this week	Part 1 quiz; copy of <i>Rebel Without a Cause</i> ; <i>Rebel</i> background handout	Ch. 9-10 (17 pg)	Hand back	
7		10-11	Hotel lobby bar, dancing w/ 3 girls; Jane and checkers	"Dictionary in the Rye"; talk more about NYC as the setting of the rest of the book, show video clips of NYC; read Ch. 11 (5 pg) as a class	Video clips of '50s era NYC; key reading points for Ch. 11	Ch. 12-13 (17 pg)		2 <sup>nd</sup> group of students
8		12-14	Cab ride, Ernie's club; Sunny; Sunny & Maurice	Do-now freewrite, followed by discussion; Holden, sex, and controversy; read Ch. 14 (7 pg) as a class; journal due	Do-now freewrite prompt; key reading points for Ch. 13-14	Ch. 15-16 (18 pg)	3 <sup>rd</sup> entry due	
9		15-16	call Sally, the nuns; buying the LP, actors & teachers, the museum	"Dictionary in the Rye"; have students discuss Holden's relationship with Sally in Ch. 15, why is he even calling her if he can't stand her? Also, Holden likes the nuns, & museum in Ch. 16—why? "The best thing...everything always stayed where it was."		Ch. 17-18 (18 pg)	Hand back	3 <sup>rd</sup> group of students
10		17-18	date w/ Sally; the movies	"Dictionary in the Rye"; Discussion: Why did Holden's date with Sally implode? Clash of "being phony" and "being isolated/alone." Why does Holden want to run away w/ Sally? "I swear to God I'm a madman"—Holden losing grips? Hand out "Holden's Blog" assignment handed out	"Holden's Blog" assignment instructions	Study for quiz, read Ch. 19 (8 pg)		4 <sup>th</sup> group of students

Section II: Unit Calendar

11	Part III: If a Body Catch a Body ( <b>Theme for the week: Growing Up/ Coming of Age</b> )	19-20	Carl Luce; calling Sally, drunk in Central Park	Part 2 quiz; have students work in groups to brainstorm on blog assignment, conference w/ teacher to pitch their ideas, begin sketching out ideas on paper; collect reading journals	Part 2 quiz (Assessments)	Ch. 20-21 (17 pg), work on blog	4 <sup>th</sup> entry due	
12		21-22	Home with Phoebe; the Catcher in the Rye	“Dictionary in the Rye”; Read Ch. 22 (8 pg) as a class; introduce the third theme: Growing up/coming of age; small group discussion on the significance of Holden’s desire to be the Catcher in the Rye	Key reading points for Ch. 22; small group discussion prompt	Ch. 23 (6 pg), work on blog		5 <sup>th</sup> group of students
13		23-24	Mom’s home; Mr. Antolini	Dictionary in the Rye; Read Ch. 24 (14pg) as a class; less discussion, more pure reading of the Mr. Antolini conversation, his advice to Holden’s “great fall,” “a beautiful, reciprocal arrangement,” and what happens in the middle of the night. Discuss: Did Mr. Antolini make a pass at Holden, or was it an attempt to be kind to a confused teen that Holden blew out of proportion?	Key reading points for Ch. 24	Ch. 25 up to p. 205 (11 pg), finish blog	Hand back	6 <sup>th</sup> group of students
14		25-26	The Catcher lets go	Do-now discussion; reread the final moments of the novel (starting on p. 205, 9 pg total); have students hand in their do-nows, thenh tear off their advice and hang strips of paper up on the walls on Day 15; collect blog projects (paper or online)	Do-now freewrite; key reading points for Ch. 25-26	Study for quiz		
15	Wrap-up			Part 3 quiz; collect reading journals; hand out “Letters to Holden” final assignment, read through instructions, answer questions, and give students time to discuss their initial “agree or disagree” gut reactions in pairs based on similar viewpoints (students who agree can talk together, etc.).	Part 3 quiz; “Letters to Holden” instructions		5 <sup>th</sup> entry due (Hand back on Day 16)	

# **Section III:**

# **Unit Materials**

Section III: Unit Materials & Handouts

**Day 1: Anticipation Guide**

Read the following statements. In the spaces provided, respond with your opinion of whether you **AGREE** or **DISAGREE** with the statement.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. People should always be themselves, no matter where they are or what they do.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. It's easy to tell when someone is being real to me and when someone is being fake.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Sometimes the world we live in makes kids "grow up" too fast.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. I act and speak differently at times, depending on who I'm with and where I am, but I still always feel like myself.

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. I think a lot of adults don't have a clue what kinds of pressure teenagers are facing today.

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. I have a pretty good idea about what I want to do with my life after I finish high school.

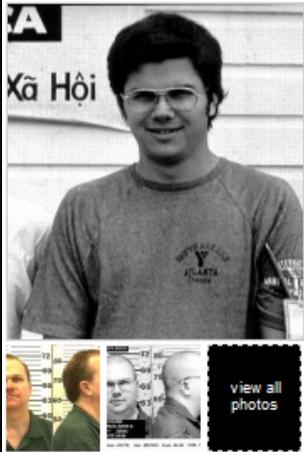
\_\_\_\_\_ 7. It's always better to have someone tell you what they really think and feel, even if it's painful—no matter what.

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. I'll definitely know when I'm "grown up."

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. My friends know everything about me.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. My friends only know the things about me that I want them to know about.

**Day 2: Bio of Mark David Chapman**



## Mark David Chapman Biography

Assassin / Convict

Mark David Chapman shot and killed musician [John Lennon](#) December 8, 1980, outside the Dakota Apartments in New York City. Mark David Chapman was a former security guard from Hawaii who came to New York specifically to attack the famous ex-Beatle. He waited outside the Dakota, then shot Lennon as he was returning with his wife, [Yoko Ono](#), from a late-night recording session. Though Chapman's lawyer initially entered a plea of insanity, Chapman later changed the plea to guilty. He was sentenced to 20 years to life in prison, a sentence which he is serving in New York's Attica prison. Mark David Chapman became eligible for parole in 2000, but has been denied parole in hearings every two years since then, most recently in August of 2010.

**Extra credit:** Mark David Chapman was carrying a copy of the [J.D. Salinger](#) book *The Catcher In the Rye* when he killed Lennon... Chapman married the former Gloria Hiroko in 1979 in Hawaii. They remain married, and Gloria Chapman lives in Hawaii.

**The Spot Where John Lennon Died Is Now the Shampoo Aisle**

**Mark David Chapman Denied Parole Again**

Mark David Chapman is 56 years old

**Born:** 10 May 1955

**Birthplace:** Fort Worth, Texas

**Best known as:**  
The man who killed John Lennon

[Tweet](#) 0 [Like](#) 1

—taken from <http://www.who2.com/bio/mark-david-chapman>

### Section III: Unit Materials & Handouts

#### **Day 2: Key reading points and general discussion questions:**

##### Ch. 1:

- The entire first paragraph: characterization through tone, writing style, and sentence structure. Ask students: Who is Holden? Begin developing who he is, his personality, his likes and dislikes.
- “Pencey Prep”: preparatory schools, do the students know about preppies and prep school imagery?
- “scrawny and faggy,” “you can see a few girls once in a while”—how much of his personality is sexist, and how much is based on the fact this was written in 1951? Open dialogue about the novel’s controversial elements.
- Mr. Thurman “a phony slob”—point out “phony,” a recurring trend that Holden will obsess over during the novel, and a reference to some of the questions in the anticipation guide that refers to people being “real” and being “fake.”
- “That’s how I practically got t.b. and came out here for all these goddamn checkups and stuff.” Reference back to page 1, “this madman stuff that happened to me around last Christmas just before I got pretty run-down and had to come out here and take it easy.” What is “this crumby place”? A mental hospital—did Holden have a breakdown? How might this affect how you read this novel?
- “They didn’t have a maid or anything, and they always opened the door themselves. They didn’t have too much dough.” Going back to prep schools, Holden seems to come from a lot of money—does that affect his personality, or your opinion of him?

Day 3: *Catcher* Theme Poster (on large posterboard to hang in room)

# *The Catcher in the Rye:* Themes & Essential Questions

- What does it mean to be real, and what does it mean to be “phony”?
- How do we know what is genuine and what isn’t?
- If a part of something or someone is phony, does that make everything about it phony?

Questioning  
Authenticity



Growing Up/  
Coming-of-Age

Belonging  
& Isolation



- What’s the difference between being a child and being an adult?
- What kinds of experiences lead a person to grow up?
- Is growing up more physical, mental, or emotional?
- What does it mean to be “mature”?

- What does it mean to “belong” or “fit in” with a group?
- Do you define who you are because you belong to a group, or do you belong to a group because of who you are?
- What happens to you when you change groups or become removed from a group?

Section III: Unit Materials & Handouts

Day 4: “Woman & Hats” picture



**One woman, nine hats:** How is each hat a symbol of her identity?

**Day 5: Key reading points and general discussion questions:**

Review elements of Chapter 6:

- Talk about sections where Holden mentions his memories, and ask students whether they think it's actually due to a bad memory or not:
  - “Some things are hard to remember. I’m thinking now of when Stradlater got back from his date with Jane. I mean I can’t remember exactly what I was doing when I heard his goddamn stupid footsteps coming down the corridor. I probably was still looking out the window, but I swear I can’t remember. I was so damn worried, that’s why.”
  - “I don’t even remember where I was sitting when he came in—at the window, or in my chair or his. I swear I can’t remember.”
  - “This next part I don’t remember so hot. ... I got up from the bed and tried to sock him. The next thing I knew, I was on the goddam floor.”
- Recall back to Chapter 1—Holden’s in some kind of mental hospital, and this clearly compromises what we read. But on the other hand, our exercise with recalling hats shows that sometimes our memories can’t be trusted. Does that mean you’re all crazy, too? Or just teenagers with a lot on their minds?
- How does this tie into our first major theme: Questioning authenticity? How do we know what’s real and what’s fake? Is being “phony” purpose different from being “phony” by accident?

**Day 6: *Rebel Without a Cause* background info**

(taken and adapted from [http://www.wadsworth.com/history\\_d/special\\_features/at\\_the\\_movies/Rebel/background.html](http://www.wadsworth.com/history_d/special_features/at_the_movies/Rebel/background.html))

Although the postwar baby boom generation had not yet reached its teenage years by the mid-1950s, middle-class adults had become fixated on maladjusted adolescents. (Two contemporary films—*The Wild One* [1953] and *Blackboard Jungle* [1955]—also attracted wide attention.) As the media spotlighted juvenile delinquency, director Nicholas Ray unveiled *Rebel Without a Cause* to explain what was troubling well-to-do youth in this decade of prosperity. His answers revealed the era's propensity to see social problems as “psychological”—part of the so-called “age of anxiety.” Instead of demanding social change, individuals needed to adjust to “reality.”

Underlying these concerns was the realization that the middle-class family was experiencing fundamental changes. During World War II, the nation's marriage and birth rates began to climb. Nine months after the war ended, an unprecedented baby boom started, lasting until about 1957. Popular advice and media messages encouraged women to become wives, mothers, and homemakers, leaving men to be the family breadwinners.

By 1950, however, women were returning to the work force in rising numbers. ... Middle-class women who remained homemakers in the 1950s often expressed unhappiness at the insignificance of their lives. Some returned to school. Others turned to alcohol or newly available tranquilizing pills. Still others visited mental health professionals. Widespread dissatisfaction among middle-class homemakers eventually provided the data for Betty Friedan's best selling book of 1963, *The Feminine Mystique*, which critiqued the myth of “the happy housewife.”

While more middle-class women were experiencing new social roles, changes in the economy were altering the nature of men's work. As technology increased the productivity of the manufacturing sector, more jobs opened in the service or management parts of the economy. Instead of working with their hands, more men were working with their brains. According to the U.S. Census, 1955 was the first year in which there were more jobs in the service sector than in manufacturing.

Numerous popular books (David Reisman's *The Lonely Crowd* (1950); William Whyte's *The Organization Man* (1957) and movies like *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1956) lamented the loss of male independence in the corporate world and the rise of social conformity. Advertisers responded to these concerns by introducing successful icons of old-fashioned male virility, such as the “Marlboro Man.” These questions of male identity are central to the family crisis in *Rebel Without a Cause*.

### Section III: Unit Materials & Handouts

During the 1950s, changes in the family also shifted their locale from cities to suburbs. In traditional Hollywood movies (e.g., *Knock on Any Door* [1949]), juvenile delinquents were urban creatures, the result of impoverished living conditions. “We will find them,” remarked Senator Estes Kefauver, who headed a subcommittee on juvenile delinquency, in 1953, “in the slums, where the kids don’t have a place to play.”

*Rebel Without a Cause* suggests that troubled adolescents exist in affluent families as well. As postwar policies promoted residential development of the suburbs, critics complained about the homogenization of dwellings and the middle-class people who inhabited them. Instead of encouraging personal independence, affluent lifestyles seemed to demand conformity.

### Section III: Unit Materials & Handouts

#### **Day 7: Streaming video links of New York in the 1950s**

- **Footage of NYC:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MSp8kfuuFo>
- **New York, 1950s:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKjugTl9tks&feature=related>
- **Broadway 1950s NYC at night:**  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWrDiw5KXmk&feature=related>
- **Spectacular New York, 1956** (a guided video tour of NYC):  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qa7WpL9d\\_B4&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qa7WpL9d_B4&feature=related)
- **This is New York, 1950:**  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQJQRGAo3KY&feature=relmfu>

## Section III: Unit Materials & Handouts

### Day 7: Key reading points and general discussion questions:

#### Ch. 11

- “that afternoon Jane and I got close to necking”—talk about the distinction between what Holden sees and what the reader can infer happened here between Jane and her mother’s boyfriend. Holden can’t seem to admit there’s any wrongdoing here—why? Why does he seem attracted to Jane?
- If Holden likes Jane so much, why does he keep thinking about calling her, but never actually calls? (Hinting at not wanting to reach back into the past to change anything.)
- What else does Holden seem to want to protect?
- How does Holden’s memories of Jane compare to how he treated the 3 girls in the club from Chapter 10?
- “I don’t even like to talk about it, if you want to know the truth.” Why can’t Holden shut up, then? The irony of him not seeing his own faults. What other faults does he have that he can’t see? Is he a hypocrite, or just misguided?

### Section III: Unit Materials & Handouts

#### Day 8: Do-now freewrite prompt

##### 2011:

“These days, insecure in our relationships and anxious about intimacy, we look to technology for ways to be in relationships and protect ourselves from them at the same time. ... Digital connections ... may offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship. Our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other.”

—Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (pp. xii, 1)

##### 1951:

“I’m always saying ‘Glad to’ve met you’ to somebody I’m not at *all* glad I met. If you want to stay alive, you have to say that stuff, though.” —Holden, Chapter 12 (p. 87)

Compare the above quotes, separated by 60 years. Do you agree or disagree with them? How are they related? Have you ever friended someone on Facebook who’s not *really* your friend? What does being a “friend” really mean today, in an age where everyone is online and connected?

### Section III: Unit Materials & Handouts

#### **Day 8: Key reading points and general discussion questions:**

##### Ch. 14:

- From the do-now, lead discussion of relationships and isolation into what happened between Holden and Sunny in Chapter 13. Why did he get “depressed” when she took her dress off? Why did he call her in the first place? Why does Holden talk so much about sex in his mind, but seems to change when it comes time to actually do it?
- How does Sunny’s age, mannerisms, and appearance affect Holden? Does Holden see her as an adult, or as a child?
- Begin reading Ch. 14: “talking out loud to Allie, when I get depressed.” Holden retreating into childhood memories when faced with a sexual encounter.
- The shakedown with Sunny and Maurice the pimp. Holden is terrified, begins crying, but still manages to speak up for himself—gets punched. Then he begins pretending he’s in the movies—“The goddamn movies. They can ruin you. I’m not kidding.” If Holden hates the movies so much, why did he just pretend he was shot in the stomach? More avoidance into escapism?

**Day 12: Key reading points and general discussion questions:**

Ch. 22:

- Begin by asking students to describe Holden’s relationship with Phoebe from Ch. 21. Why is he so comfortable around her?
- Draw students’ attention to the third theme of our unit: Growing up/coming-of-age. How many times has Holden been told to “grow up” by other people? Is he an adult, or a child? With Holden and Phoebe, who’s the adult, and who’s the child here? Why is she so mad at him for getting kicked out of school again?
- Start reading Ch. 22 together. Notice Holden loves talking to Phoebe—he hates talking to everyone else. His tone is also much more natural, as if he’s talking to you (the reader), versus when he talks to any other single character in the novel. Is he himself?
- “I couldn’t concentrate too hot. Sometimes it’s hard to concentrate.” The unreliable, mentally unstable narrator comes out again. Why does he have trouble “concentrating” when Phoebe asks him what he actually likes? Why wouldn’t he want to think about this? Avoiding something painful?
- The incident with James Castle, the boy who commits suicide at Elkton Hills—why does Holden relate to a boy who killed himself rather than “take back something he said”? Principals, standing to beliefs. Note that James fell to his death.
- Holden also relates to Allie—another child character who’s dead.
- Stop when you get to the title passage: “I’d be the catcher in the rye and all.” Tell students the number one rule of reading a novel: When you get to the section that talks about the title of the novel, stop and think. Read the passage aloud again.
- Put down the books. Pass out small group discussion handout (with picture of a rye field) and put streaming video of “Wheat and Wind” (a windswept rye/wheat field; online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ed4gmlj0Cds>), preferably with Jami Seiber’s “Tell It By Heart playing in the background (listen online: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOxWLxbiC5I>) on the overhead projector/computer screen. The rye fields are empty fields of nothingness, and you can’t see what you’re running into when you’re in the rye. Have students think quietly for a few minutes, then pair up and talk about what they think the significance of the novel’s title is.

**Day 12: Small group discussion prompt**



“Anyway, I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids, and nobody’s around—nobody big, I mean—except me. And I’m standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff—I mean if they’re running and they don’t look where they’re going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them. That’s all I do all day. **I’d just be the catcher in the rye and all.** I know it’s crazy, but that’s the only thing I’d really like to be.”

What is Holden talking about in this passage? Why do you think Salinger chose this as the title of the novel? What’s the significance of being the Catcher in the Rye, and why is this the only thing that Holden wants to be?

Section III: Unit Materials & Handouts

**Day 14: Do-now freewrite**

“The mark of the immature man  
is that he wants to die nobly for a cause,  
while the mark of the mature man  
is that he wants to live humbly for one.”

—*Wilhelm Stekel*

Mr. Antolini gives Holden this piece of advice on a sheet of paper. What do you think it means? What is Mr. Antolini trying to tell Holden? Which of our themes do you think it relates to most? Then put this piece of advice into your own words and write it on the bottom of this handout.

**Day 14: Key reading points and general discussion questions:**

Ch. 25 (p. 205)

- How has Holden responded to what happened with Mr. Antolini? Spiraling down into depression/a breakdown, seems more detached and alone than ever before. The “great fall” Mr. Antolini predicted? And why does he start talking to Allie, and telling him to not let Holden “fall”?
- Pick up reading with Holden spotting Phoebe wearing his hunting hat. Ask students to pull out their Hunting Hat Handouts—have they kept up? Take notes now, it’ll be an important symbol in the final moments of the novel.
- Notice how Holden has his mind made up, right until the moment Phoebe says she is going with him. Then his mind begins to black out and unfocus again—he can’t concentrate so hot—“I got sort of dizzy and I thought I was going to pass out.” Why is it like he’s fighting his mind here, now more than ever?
- How does Phoebe’s interaction cause him to react? Why does he want to hit her, then say “I’m not going away anywhere. I changed my mind. So stop crying and shut up.” Is he protecting her?
- “That’s one nice thing about carousels, they always play the same songs.” Remind students about Holden’s response to museums, how everything should stay the same forever.
- Pay special attention to when Phoebe gets on the carousel. “I was sort of afraid she’d fall off the goddam horse, but I didn’t say anything or do anything. The thing with kids is, if they want to grab for the gold ring, you have to let them do it, and not say anything. If they fall off, they fall off, but it’s bad if you say anything to them.” How is this a huge change for the Catcher in the Rye? Between Mr. Antolini and Holden, what does “fall” mean?
- When Phoebe gives Holden his hat back, why does he start crying? “My hunting hat really gave me quite a lot of protection, in a way.” When has anyone been kind to Holden throughout the novel? Who *hasn’t* used him in one way or another?
- Close with Chapter 26’s ambiguous ending. Hints that he’s changed, and hints that he still doesn’t fully understand what’s going on. “Don’t ever tell anybody anything. If you do, you start missing everybody.” What could that last line mean? Why would Salinger end the novel on such a line?

**Section IV:**  
**Lesson Plans for Week 1**

## Section IV: Lesson Plans for Week 1

### Day 1 Lesson Plan:

**Time period:** 45 minutes

**Goal:** To prime students to begin thinking about the three major themes of the unit—questioning authenticity, isolation and belonging, and growing up/coming of age—and prepare them to start voicing their opinions on those themes, both through close reading of *The Catcher in the Rye* and in reflecting on their own lives.

**Aim:** How can studying a novel about a teenager from 60 years ago still feel relevant and meaningful to teenagers today?

#### Objectives:

##### Students will know:

- a theme-related analysis of a literary text

##### Students will understand:

- Three major themes of *The Catcher in the Rye* (questioning authenticity, isolation & belonging, and growing up/coming of age)

##### Students will be able to:

- Identify and understand major themes of *Catcher* and how the novel develops and complicates these themes.
- Compare and relate character motivations and interactions in *Catcher* to motivations and interactions in their own daily lives.

#### Materials:

- Anticipation guide
- Small notebooks for reading journals (1 per student)

#### Motivation/Hook:

- Begin lesson by asking students to quickly fill out an anticipation guide that asks students to agree or disagree with 10 broad statements. The questions are unrelated to the plot or characters of *The Catcher in the Rye*, but revolve around the three major themes of the text. Don't mention the text yet. (See "Anticipation Guide," attached) (5 minutes)

#### Development:

- After students finish filling out guide, begin classwide discussion of students' responses, prompting students to explain why they agreed or disagreed. Pay particular attention to students who had trouble picking an answer, or felt torn between two answers. (20 minutes).
- Ask students whether these questions seem like topics that modern teenagers have to deal with, and whether they're questions that are sometimes difficult to have a firm opinion about. Do your answers change depending on where you are and who you're with? Tell students that these are questions that teenagers—and adults, really—have been wrestling with for decades. One such teenager is Holden Caulfield, the narrator and main character of *The Catcher in the Rye*, the novel that we'll be spending the unit reading together.

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Holden spends the novel openly wrestling with finding the answers to questions like these, and we'll be following along. (5 minutes)

- Pass out small notebooks, and tell students to choose one of the anticipation guide questions that they felt most conflicted about and freewrite about it for a paragraph or two. (10 minutes)
- Collect notebooks and anticipation guides and wrap up the discussion, telling students that no matter how conflicted or confused they felt answering these, tomorrow they're going to meet someone who's even more confused about it all. (5 minutes)

### **Summary/Assessment:**

- Student freewrites can help demonstrate if there are any patterns of which particular question students chose to write about. Also reflect on class discussion and see which questions students seemed to respond the most to, or which questions seemed most divisive.

### **Homework:**

- None.

## Section IV: Lesson Plans for Week 1

### Day 2 Lesson Plan

**Time period:** 45 minutes

**Goal:** To introduce students to the character and persona of Holden Caulfield, along with the controversy and fame/infamy surrounding *Catcher* as a literary work.

**Aim:** Who is Holden Caulfield, and what can we learn about him in a single chapter?

#### **Objectives:**

##### **Students will know:**

- Tone

##### **Students will understand:**

- The controversy surrounding *Catcher* and its inclusion on high school reading lists

##### **Students will be able to:**

- Read, discuss, and analyze a novel in large- and small-group settings.
- Recognize and discuss how a writer's tone, vocabulary, and pacing of writing can influence meaning.
- Self-check for understanding of key vocabulary terms, and seek out definitions of words as needed

#### **Materials:**

- Mark David Chapman biography
- Overhead projector or large computer screen
- Copies of *Catcher* to hand out and have students keep
- "Dictionary in the Rye" project instructions

#### **Motivation/Hook:**

- Have the Mark David Chapman biography on the projector/computer screen for students to read as they come into the room. Once class has begun, ask one student to read the article aloud. (3 minutes)

#### **Development:**

- Begin by surveying students to see who knows John Lennon and the Beatles. Use feedback from article to discuss the controversy surrounding *Catcher* as an in-school text; it's one of the most widely taught and referenced novels in high schools around the country, considered an American classic, and yet a mental patient and assassin credits the novel as a personal manifesto. According to reports, Chapman remained at the scene of Lennon's shooting, took out a copy of the novel, and quietly read it until police arrived. Tell students that there are a lot of rebellious thoughts in the novel, and a lot of mature content, but you are confident that the class is mature enough to handle the book and discuss whether Holden is a normal, confused teenager—or something more than that. (10 minutes).
- Pass out copies of the novel and ask students to turn to the first page. Begin directed, class-wide reading of Chapter 1, reading the text aloud for students. (See "Key Reading Points," attached.) (20 minutes)

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- Summarize discussion by asking students to provide a single word that describes Holden, then explain why they chose that word. What have we learned about him from only 6 pages, and how did we learn it? (7 minutes)
- Hand out “Dictionary in the Rye” project instructions. Go over instructions and notify first set of 4 students that their contributions will be due on Day 4. Also notify students that during this unit, you’ll be giving 3 reading quizzes, relating to three broad parts of the novel. The quizzes are simple, short-answer prompts that ask students to recall basic information about character names and major plot events. The first quiz will be on Monday, Day 6. (5 minutes)

### **Summary/Assessment:**

- In-class discussion and one-word descriptions of Holden can act as a wrap-up and formative assessment of the lesson, to see if students are beginning to get a grasp on Holden’s defining characteristics, mannerisms, and thoughts.

### **Homework:**

- Read the rest of Chapter 1 (if not completed in class), and Chapter 2 (10 pages).
- First “Dictionary in the Rye” entries are due on Day 4.

## Section IV: Lesson Plans for Week 1

### Day 3 Lesson Plan

**Time period:** 45 minutes

**Goal:** To introduce students to the three major themes of unit study and begin to use one of those themes to interpret and discuss events in the novel.

**Aim:** Does a piece of literature have one “main” meaning, or can it have different effects on readers depending on how they read it?

#### **Objectives:**

##### **Students will know:**

- a theme-related analysis of a literary text
- the basics of literary theory and how different theoretical approaches influence critical reading

##### **Students will understand:**

- Three major themes of *The Catcher in the Rye* (questioning authenticity, isolation & belonging, and growing up/coming of age)

##### **Students will be able to:**

- Read, discuss, and analyze a novel in large- and small-group settings.
- Identify and understand major themes of *Catcher* and how the novel develops and complicates these themes.
- Write an ongoing journal of their opinions of and reactions to a literary text.

#### **Materials:**

- Reading journals
- Reading journal assignment directions
- Theme poster

#### **Motivation/Hook:**

- Begin by handing back students’ journals, along with the reading journal assignment directions. Tell them that the question they chose to write on for their freewrite was actually a secret test! Kind of. The 10 questions in the anticipation guide were all related, but touched upon three different themes that we’re going to use as different access points into the novel. Think of each one of the themes as a different kind of camera lens: Depending on which lens you choose to use on your camera, you can get three very different-looking photographs of the same object. (5 minutes)

#### **Development:**

- Read through the directions for the reading journal assignment together as a class. Show students the *Catcher* Theme Poster and point them to the three major themes: Questioning authenticity, belonging & isolation, and growing up/coming-of-age. Describe the concept of themes and essential questions, and have students read each essential question aloud. Ensure that students are familiar with the terminology (e.g., what “authenticity” means). (15 minutes)

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- Tell students that you will be examining how all three themes work within the novel, but we'll begin by talking about "questioning authenticity." From Chapter 2, read aloud the section talking about how his old school, Elkton Hills, was "surrounded by phonies." Key students in to the word "phony" and how this is a very, very important word for Holden. Open into class discussion: Based on what students know so far about Holden, what kinds of things does he think are "phony," and why does he hate them so much? (15 minutes)
- If it hasn't already, steer conversation to the irony of how Holden hates phonies, and yet he started lying to Mr. Spencer ("shot the bull"). For a laugh, be sure to highlight the line where Holden says "You don't have to think too hard when you talk to a teacher." (5 minutes)
- As a wrap-up, ask students to focus on what Holden thinks about phonies during their reading that night. Read aloud the first paragraph of Chapter 3 ("I'm the most terrific liar you ever saw in your life. It's awful...") Remind students that the first batch of "Dictionary in the Rye" entries are due tomorrow (Day 4), and the second reading journal entry is due on Friday (Day 5). (5 minutes)

### **Summary/Assessment:**

- Responses to in-class discussion of both the novel's major themes and the specifics of Holden's grievances against "phonies" will help evaluate whether students are beginning to make connections between the text and the major themes.

### **Homework:**

- Read Chapters 3 and 4 (19 pages).
- First "Dictionary in the Rye" entries are due tomorrow (Day 4).
- Second reading journal entries are due Friday (Day 5).

## Section IV: Lesson Plans for Week 1

### Day 4 Lesson Plan

**Time period:** 45 minutes

**Goal:** To prime students to look for and discuss characterization and possible meanings of symbolism in the novel, specifically in the form of Holden’s red hunting hat.

**Aim:** What is symbolism, and what can something like a hat be a symbol of?

#### **Objectives:**

##### **Students will know:**

- symbolism

##### **Students will be able to:**

- Read, discuss, and analyze a novel in large- and small-group settings.
- Self-check for understanding of key vocabulary terms, and seek out definitions of words as needed
- Compare and relate character motivations and interactions in *Catcher* to motivations and interactions in their own daily lives.

#### **Materials:**

- “Dictionary in the Rye” banner and corkboard
- Red hunting hat
- Several other types of hats (e.g., fedora, beret, top hat, golf cap, fez)
- “Woman & Hats” picture
- Hunting hat handout

#### **Motivation/Hook:**

- Begin with first “Dictionary in the Rye” entries: Have assigned students read their chosen word and definition aloud. Then have class as a whole vote on whether they consider that a suitable entry and definition, though the teacher has the final say on tweaks and additions to the definition. Thumbtack revised entries onto “Dictionary in the Rye” corkboard. (10 minutes)

#### **Development:**

- Change gears by asking for “brave student volunteers” (equal to the number of hats you have). Tell them that today we’ll be talking about appearance and identity—then hand out hats randomly to volunteers. As students try on hats, talk about hats as an interesting symbol of identity because they have a dual purpose: They’re functional (as in protecting your head or blocking the sun), but they’re also stylish and visual—like a symbol of one’s identity. (5 minutes)
- Show “Woman & Hats” picture, with the caption “One woman, nine hats: How is each hat a symbol of her identity?” Ask students to talk about what they know about symbolism in literature—what is it, and what could something like a hat be a symbol for? (10 minutes)

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- As students discuss, duck under desk or behind podium and reappear wearing the red hunting hat. Ask students what they think this hat might say about the person wearing it—then ask if they noticed a similar hat pop up in last night’s reading. (5 minutes)
- Pass out “Hunting hat handout” and tell students that Holden’s red hunting hat would be a good symbol to keep track of to help learn something about his personality. Divide students into pairs, and have them begin searching in Chapters 3 and 4 for appearances of Holden’s hat. (Students can continue wearing their hats if they wish.) Cycle around the room and observe students as they work, taking note of their responses for what the hat might be a symbol of in each case. (13 minutes)
- At class’s end, have students complete an exit ticket of one possible interpretation of what Holden’s hat could be as a literary symbol. tell students to keep a sharp lookout for the hat in tonight’s reading, and add anything they find to their hunting hat hunt. (2 minutes)

### **Summary/Assessment:**

- Exit ticket, along with class discussion of symbolism, acts as a formative assessment to gauge student understanding of and familiarity with looking for symbols in a literary text.

### **Homework:**

- Read Chapters 5 and 6 (11 pages).
- Second reading journal entry is due tomorrow (Day 5).

## Section IV: Lesson Plans for Week 1

### Day 5 Lesson Plan

**Time period:** 45 minutes

**Goal:** To introduce students to the concept of the unreliable narrator, how it manifests itself in *Catcher*, and how their interpretation of the novel may be affected by Holden's unreliability.

**Aim:** How unreliable are memories, and how can an author use unreliability as a literary device?

#### **Objectives:**

##### **Students will know:**

- the unreliable narrator as a literary device
- a theme-related analysis of a literary text

##### **Students will understand:**

- Three major themes of *The Catcher in the Rye* (questioning authenticity, isolation & belonging, and growing up/coming of age)

##### **Students will be able to:**

- Read, discuss, and analyze a novel in large- and small-group settings.
- Identify and understand major themes of *Catcher* and how the novel develops and complicates these themes.
- Use one or more themes from *Catcher* to analyze passages and characters from the text and present well-developed opinions and arguments.
- Compare and relate character motivations and interactions in *Catcher* to motivations and interactions in their own daily lives.
- Write an ongoing journal of their opinions of and reactions to a literary text.

#### **Materials:**

- n/a

#### **Motivation/Hook:**

- When class begins, tell students to take out a sheet of paper for a pop quiz. The question: List which students volunteered to wear hats yesterday (Day 4), and which hats they wore. (Optionally, you can also have students try to recall and list the nine hats in the "Woman & Hats" picture from Day 4.) (3 minutes)

#### **Development:**

- Tell students that this was an exercise to illustrate how unreliable our memories can be sometimes, particularly if we're not paying attention. In Chapters 5 and 6 from last night, Holden begins describes some really erratic behavior, and he chalks it up to a bad memory, but what J.D. Salinger is doing here is using a technique known as the "unreliable narrator." (10 minutes)
- Begin class discussion of Chapter 6 (see Key reading points). (15 minutes)
- Change gears, and tell students that they have the rest of the period to read Chapter 7 independently to themselves. You'll also be collecting reading journals at the end of the period—if students have not completed their entries yet, they may do so now. (15 minutes)

#### Section IV: Lesson Plans for Week 1

- At end of period, collect reading journals. Remind students that they have one more chapter to read over the weekend, and that their first reading quiz on Chapters 1-7 is on Monday (Day 6). (2 minutes)

#### **Summary/Assessment:**

- Listening to student responses during discussion will help assess whether students grasp the concept of the unreliable narrator and how Holden displays these signs.

#### **Homework:**

- Finish Chapter 7 and read Chapter 8 (6 pages)
- Study for Part 1 quiz on Monday (Day 6)