**The Catcher in the Rye Reading Guide**

**Chapters 1 and 2** 1. Where is Holden while he tells his story?

2. What two reasons does Holden give for not being at the game?

3. Why is Holden being kicked out of Pencey?

4. What does Holden find depressing about Mr. Spencer?

5. Holden often uses the term ‘Phony’ to describe people and their actions. What does he mean?

**Chapter 3** 1. What does Holden admire about Edgar Marsala?

2. Describe Holden’s hat. Other than for warmth, why do you think he wears it?

3. What is Holden’s definition of a really good book?

4. What do you think a book has to do or have to be really good?

**Chapters 4 and 5** 1. Describe Stradlater – what does Holden like/dislike about him?

2. What does Holden like about the way Jane plays checkers?

3. Why do you think Holden doesn’t go down to say hi to Jane?

4. List five examples of Holden’s negativity and cynicism.

5. Describe Holden’s brother Allie.

**Chapters 6 and 7** 1. Why is Holden so nervous and worried while Stradlater is out with Jane?

2. Why does Holden attack Stradlater?

3. How does Holden provoke Stradlater into hitting him?

4. Why does Holden decide to leave Pencey immediately?

**Chapter 8** 1. How does Holden’s trip to the train station highlight his isolation?

2. How does Mrs. Morrow’s impression of her son compare to Holden’s impression?

3. What evidence is there in this chapter that Holden is trying to make the transition from school to the adult world?

**Chapter 9** 1. Why must the cab driver turn around once he has driven through Central Park?

2. What is it about the Edmont Hotel that surprises Holden once he has checked in?

3. Why does Holden call Faith Cavendish? How does his phone call show Holden’s inexperience with women and relationships?

**Chapters 10 and 11** 1. List several things Holden admires about his sister Phoebe.

2. Why is it difficult for Holden to carry on a conversation with the blonde woman he meets at the Lavender Room?

3. How does Holden amuse himself while dancing with Marty?

4. Holden repeatedly comments that the three women from Seattle are boring and unattractive. Why does he sit with them?

5. How did Holden first meet Jane Gallagher?

6. List several things Holden admires about Jane.

7. What evidence is there that Holden was comfortable when with Jane?

**Chapters 12 and 13** 1. Holden tends to scorn people who he finds boring, unintelligent, or fake. Name the characters he scorns in chapter 12 and explain why he scorns each one.

2. Does Holden demonstrate any of the qualities he scorns in others? Give evidence.

3. What does Holden’s concern for the ducks in Central Park reveal about him?

4. What does Holden reveal about himself when he talks about his stolen gloves?

5. How does Holden’s behavior with the prostitute demonstrate his innocence and vulnerability?

6. Why is Holden saddened when he hangs up the prostitute’s green dress?

**Chapters 14 and 15** 1. When he is very depressed, Holden says he “talks” to Allie. What past event is Holden remembering, and what does it reveal about him?

2. How do Maurice and the prostitute take advantage of Holden?

3. Explain Holden’s state of mind at the end of Chapter 14.

4. Why does Holden imagine he has been shot? What does this reveal about him?

5. Money often makes Holden feel “blue as hell.” How is money often a trigger for Holden’s depression?

**Chapters 16 and 17** 1. What does Holden buy for Phoebe?

2. Why can’t Holden enjoy plays and movies?

3. What does Holden notice (obsess over) when he arrives at the theatre?

4. What crazy idea does Holden propose to Sally?

5. How does the botched date with Sally represent Holden’s entire character and behaviour?

**Chapters 18 and 19** 1. Describe D.B.’s army experience. What does he say about the army?

2. How do Holden’s comments about war and the atomic bomb show his immaturity?

3. What does Carl Luce think of Holden?

**Chapters 20 and 21** 1. Who does Holden call from the bar? What does this reveal about him?

2. Why isn’t Phoebe in her room when Holden goes to see her?

3. What does Holden do while Phoebe is sleeping?

4. What does Phoebe do with the broken record?

5. What shows that Phoebe is an intelligent, perceptive young girl?

**Chapters 22 and 23** 1. What does Phoebe realize about Holden that she isn’t ready to admit?

2. What happened to James Castle?

3. What does Holden tell Phoebe he would really like to be (what is the Catcher in the Rye)?

4. Why does Holden like Mr. Antolini?

5. What does Holden do that scares Phoebe?