

AP Literature & Composition

Summer Reading: Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*

These questions are designed to help you efficiently spot important features of *The Catcher in the Rye* as you read it independently. Please answer the questions thoroughly in writing, including specific details (quotes and paraphrases). We will begin the new school year in September discussing these and other issues from the novel; be prepared to contribute your ideas and responses to the text in class.

1. Consider the narrative structure of the novel. How is it different from other texts with first-person narrators you've encountered in the past? How is understanding the novel's structure necessary to fully understand its thematic and stylistic elements? (2 hints: Does the narrative seem written or spoken? Is *where* the story is being narrated from different from where most of its action takes place?)

2. To what extent is Holden Caulfield portrayed sympathetically? Is there a point in the novel where you begin to understand him, or does he remain beyond your grasp throughout?

3. This book was considered controversial for several decades after its 1951 publication. What elements do you think might cause some people to react to it in such a way?

4. To what extent has Holden shown signs of personal growth over the course of the novel? What evidence do you see as support?

5. What issues does *The Catcher in the Rye* explore that, in your estimation, are still important to contemporary readers?