

# Raygor Readability Estimate

## *The Catcher in the Rye*

### Purpose of the Strategy

Devised by Alton Raygor, this readability formula gives a grade-level score for a novel based upon word complexity and sentence structure. While the grade-level is reliable in determining if students will be able to decode the text, it remains important to take the thematic elements and other aspects of the text into consideration when assessing the novel as well.

### Passage One: Chapter One, page 2

"Where I want to start telling is the day I left Pencey Prep. Pencey Prep is this school that's in Agerstown, Pennsylvania. You probably heard of it. You've probably seen the ads, anyway. They advertise in about a thousand magazines, always showing some hotshot guy on a horse jumping over a fence. Like as if all you ever did at Pencey was play polo all the time. I never even once saw a horse anywhere *near* the place. And underneath the guy on the horse's picture, it always says: 'Since 1888 we have been molding boys into splendid, clear-thinking young men.'"

### Passage Two: Chapter Fifteen, page 107

"While I was in the cab, I took out my wallet and sort of counted my money. I don't remember exactly what I had left, but it was no fortune or anything. I'd spent a king's ransom in about two lousy weeks. I really had. I'm a goddamn spendthrift at heart. What I don't spend, I lose. Half the time I sort of even forget to pick up my change, at restaurants and night clubs and all. It drives my parents crazy. You can't blame them. My father's quite wealthy, though. I don't know how much he makes-he's never \*discussed that stuff with me- but I imagine quite a lot."

### Passage Three: Chapter Twenty-five, page 211

"I went over and sat down on this bench, and she went and got on the carrousel. She walked all around it. I mean she walked once all the way around it. Then she sat down on this big, brown, beat-up-looking old horse. Then the carrousel started, and I watched her go around and around. There were only about five or six other kids on the ride, and the song the carrousel was playing was 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes.' It was playing it very jazzy and funny. All the kids kept trying to grab for the gold \*ring, and so was old Phoebe, and I was sort of afraid she'd fall off the goddamn horse, but I didn't say anything or do anything."

	<u>Sentences</u>	<u>Words</u>
Passage One	8	25
Passage Two	10.5	17
Passage Three	6.3	15
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Totals:	24.8	57
Averages:	8.3	19

*Reading Level Estimate:* According to the Raygor Readability Test, this text registers at a fourth grade reading level. In my opinion, this is partially due to Salinger's purposeful short sentence structure. The subject matter, content, and age of the protagonist, make this text more appropriate for juniors or seniors in high school.