



# The Catcher in the Rye

Chapters 20, 21, & 22

## Selective Reading Guide

**Directions:** This section of the novel is especially important! Take your time while reading, and answer the following questions **THOUGHTFULLY** (that means more than one word answers) to help you successfully understand Salinger's message:

1. *Page 154.* Holden visits the lagoon and searches for the ducks that usually live there. Find another place in the text where the ducks are mentioned. What is the page number? Why do you think Holden is so worried about the ducks?
2. *Pages 155-156.* Holden mentions visiting Allie's grave with his parents. He says, "It wasn't too bad when the sun was out, but twice- *twice*- we were there when it started to rain...All the visitors...started running like hell over to their cars..." Why is Holden so upset by this incident?
3. What effect do you think Allie's death has had on Holden? Find a couple of textual references (with page numbers) that support your reasoning.
4. *Page 165.* When Phoebe finds out that Holden has been kicked out of school, she says, "Daddy'll *kill* you!" What kind of expectations do you think Holden's parents have for him? What kind of expectations do your parents have for you? Do you always see eye-to-eye?
5. *Page 167.* Holden gives Phoebe several reasons for leaving Pencey Prep. List two reasons. Do you think he is justified in his decision to perform poorly at school?

6. *Page 167-170.* Do you see any similarities between Holden's school and our high school? How are people treated? Are there expectations that have to be met in order to "fit-in?"

7. *Page 161-180.* What kind of relationship do Holden and Phoebe have? What makes you say this?

8. *Page 172.* Holden gives very explicit reasons for not wanting to become a lawyer when he "grows up." Holden asks "How would you know you weren't being a phony?" Do you think some people choose careers just for the glory associated with it? What do you picture yourself doing when you "grow up?" Why does that career appeal to you?

9. *Page 173.* Why do you think Holden wants to be a catcher in the rye?



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-Teacher Copy-

## Selective Reading Guide

**Purpose of the Strategy:** The Selective Reading Guide ensures that students slow down, think, and analyze important information in a text. It is used with complex sections of reading. Chapters 20, 21, & 22 provide a turning point in *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Understanding many of the events in this section of the novel is essential in order to understand the overall thematic message of the book. This guide, therefore, is to get students to think about some of these important issues as they read. It is also a great way to prepare students for class discussion.

### Directions:

**Step One-Introduce the Strategy.** Pass out the selective reading guides to students. Explain the purpose behind it: that they are about to encounter some very important elements of the text and that the questions will serve as a guide to keep their thinking on track and ensure they are grasping important issues in the reading. Read the directions out loud to the students and make sure everyone understands the assignment.

**Step Two-Reading Time.** Either allow time in class for silent reading/answering or give the reading guide as homework to bring back to class the next day. Students should fill out the guide as they are reading. This will ensure they slow down and take the time to analyze the text in the correct places.

**Step Three-Discussion Time.** Have a group discussion where students can share their insights from the text. Especially discuss some of the more debatable issues that aren't just black-and-white answers. Go on to the conclusion of the novel, but keep this guide as a reference to connect some of these main thematic ideas later on.

**Assessment:** The strategy will be effective when students come prepared with something to contribute to group discussion. They will also be able to grasp the more complicated thematic elements because they took time to consider them *while* reading.