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 **Prestwick House**
Activity Pack
Literature Made Fun!



The Catcher in the Rye

BY J. D. SALINGER


Prestwick House

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ISBN 978-1-60389-205-6
Item No. 201029

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All references come from the Little, Brown and Company Edition of *The Catcher in the Rye*, published 1951.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Introduction

Theme

Objective: Recognizing emerging themes

Activity

Holden Caulfield, the main character and narrator of *The Catcher in the Rye*, has been described as “yet another quizzical adolescent, scornful of what he does see and quite sure there is even more to unearth and condemn....He serves the author’s purpose: to scrutinize the banalities and cruelties that the rest of us, grown up and so sure of our right to preach to children, often make a point of ignoring or justifying.” Divide the class into small groups. Each group should select a different topic from the list that follows.

In small groups, discuss your chosen topic from the list below. After taking a close look, make a list of all the “banalities and cruelties” that you associate with the topic. Include specific examples for each point on your list.

Topics to Examine:

- The way parents react to the failure of their children
- The attitude of teachers toward students who fail
- The attitude of handsome, athletic males towards females
- The methods school administrators use in dealing with failing students
- The attitudes of social misfits towards others
- The attitude of wealthy private school students and faculty
- The way students who are failing react to their failure
- The differences between private and public schools

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 1 - 7**Satire****Objective:** Understanding satire as a device for characterization**Activity I**

Some readers are amused by Holden's satirical presentation of people. Concrete, detailed descriptions of the way people look and act are part of his description. Often, aspects of the people are exaggerated or oversimplified by Holden.

- Spencer
- Ackley
- Stradlater
- Jane
- Allie
- Dr. Thurmer
- Headmaster—Mr. Haas
- Holden

Use the following page to take a close look at the assigned character. You are to take the character your group is assigned and answer the questions on the chart.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 8 - 15**Literary Techniques**

Objective: Recognizing literary techniques

Activity

In small groups, complete the following chart by finding a quotation that illustrates the literary technique.

After work is completed, each group should give its example for the first technique, then each give its example for the second, and so on. After each set of examples, the literary technique can be discussed further by the entire class.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 16 - 17**Theme**

Objectives: Understanding themes
 Inferring meaning from what a character says and does
 Relating literature to life

Activity I

Throughout the novel, Holden complains about people who are “phonies.” In Chapter 16, Holden calls Sally “the queen of the phonies.” Holden’s description of the young man Sally talks to in Chapter 17 is especially biting.

1. In small groups, list the characteristics of Sally and the young man in Chapter 17 that annoy Holden and make them “phony” in his mind.
2. Using your list, collaboratively write Holden’s definition of a phony. Use quotations from Holden’s descriptions of Sally and the young man to illustrate your points.

THE PHONIES CHART

Sally	Young Man

Definition of a Phony: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 15 - End**Allusion II**

Objectives: Interpreting a character's internal conflict from his or her actions and statements
Relating literature to life

Activity I

Divide the class into small groups. Holden realizes that he is depressed or that he is at least suffering from some type of emotional instability.

- Complete the Signs of Holden's Emotional Instability chart on the next page to prepare your explanation of how Holden's actions and statements support the idea that he is unstable. Refer to the text and include quotations.
- Each group should present its explanation of Holden's mental state to the class.