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# The Catcher In The Rye As A Bildungsroman Written By J.d Salinger

## The Catcher in the Rye is a bildungsroman written by J.D Salinger

The Catcher in the Rye captures the story of Holden Caulfield, the narrator, and protagonist of the novel who is an intelligent but troubled teenage boy that struggles with adolescence. Holden's coming of age story is told over a period of three days in New York City where Holden endures many mental and physical challenges. The Catcher in the Rye contains many symbols that have a profound effect on the plot such as Holden's red hunting hat, the ducks in Central Park, the catcher in the rye, the Museum of Natural History, the carousels gold ring, and Pencey Prep. Holden's red hunting hat is mentioned many times throughout The Catcher in the Rye and holds many symbols. "Caulfield feels alienated as if he doesn't belong in the world".(the catcher in the rye). Holden's red hunting hat symbolizes this alienation from the outside world, Holden wears his outlandish hunting hat to be different, he believes the world is full of phonies, and he doesn't want to be associated in any way with them. "Although alienation is often the cause of Caulfield's problems it also gives him strength and allows him to protect himself". Although Holden's hat symbolizes his alienation, it also acts as a protector from the outside world. Holden's little sister Phoebe who still has her innocence and Allie, Holden's little brother who passed away with his innocence and whose death caused Holden to lose his innocence, both are described to have red hair, red which is the same color as Holden's hunting hat. The red color in Holden's hunting hat symbolizes Holden's attachment to childhood, and he wants to still be innocent like his younger siblings. Holden Caulfield has an obsession with the ducks in the pond at Central Park. The pond in Central Park at the time that Holden goes to visit the ducks is half frozen, this half-frozen pond comes to symbolize where Holden is in life, Holden is stuck halfway in his journey to adulthood, he has already lost his innocence, which represents the unfrozen side of the pond, but he has to come to terms with it, which represents the frozen part of the pond. "You know those ducks in that lagoon right near Central Park South, that little lake. By any chance do you happen to know where they go, the ducks, when it gets all frozen over"(Salinger 35). Holden is curious where the ducks go when there's no more unfrozen water because one day Holden will have to grow up, the whole pond will eventually fully freeze over but it will unfreeze again after winter which symbolizes hope, hope that when your all grown up you can still be happy.

The Museum of Natural History is Holden's haven. "The best thing... in the museum was that everything always stayed right where it was"(Salinger 109). Holden loves the Museum of Natural History because the displays are frozen and unchanging, they represent the world Holden wishes he could live in. Holden wishes that he and other people were more like the museum. Holden is terrified by the unpredictable challenges of the world and the museum gives Holden the peace of mind to see that not everything is drastically changing around him.

Pencey Prep and Elkton Hills are private schools that Holden went to and got kicked out of representing the cruel, phony world that administrators created. " Holden says that the world belongs to adults and it seems to him that they have filled it with phonies"(Seng). The

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Administrators at Holden's most recent school, Pencey Prep fill the brochures with lies to get more people to attend the school and Holden feels like the school is just one big corrupt money-loving system planed by phony adults. School also symbolizes snobbishness, the students at Holden's school are all mean rich guys or phonies. Holden feels like school is pointless and it's just another thing created by Adults to try to make kids more mature.

The most important symbol in *The Catcher in the Rye* is in the title. In the novel Holden's dream job is protecting kids from the dangers of growing up, he wants to be the catcher in the rye. Holden pictures himself wearing a giant glove ready to catch kids who are about to fall of a cliff while playing in the rye. In this instance, the kids represent childhood, the rye innocence, and the fall represents the loss of innocence. The thing that Holden desires the most is saving others from the pain and torment of growing up, he wants to save younger kids from seeing that the real world is one big phony lie.

The carousel and the carousel's gold ring represent life, its cyclical quality, and its opportunities for change and growth. The carousel's golden ring is a ring you can grab while riding the carousel to win a prize, grabbing the gold ring involves taking the risk that you might fall off and hurt yourself, however, one must extend oneself in order to mature. The horses on the carousel move up and down, just as people have high and low moments in life, life is essentially one big carousel that never stops turning. When Holden sees Phoebe on the carousel reaching for the gold ring he realizes that children will always try to go for the gold rings, even if it's risky, they'll do it for the prize. Adults must let their kids go for those opportunities in life no matter the risk they have to take getting there. Holden finally comes to the realization that his fantasy of being the catcher in the rye will never come true, you can't save children from the inevitable. Holden Caulfield is a one-of-a-kind character. Throughout most of the novel, Holden struggled to let go of his childhood and face his problems. Holden was attached to things that symbolized where he was in his life. J.D Salinger's use of symbols helps readers connect to Holden Caulfield on a better level. The plot was heavily influenced by Holden's red hunting hat, the ducks in Central Park, the catcher in the rye, the Museum of Natural History, the carousel's gold ring, and Pencey Prep, all these symbols made *The Catcher in the Rye* very relatable and easy to read.