

Literature and Composition II
The Catcher in the Rye
Symbols Project

During our reading of *The Catcher in the Rye*, we've discussed Holden's place as the main character, analyzing both his actions and his thoughts to obtain a better grasp of who he is as a person and why he's telling his story. In keeping consistent with this, you are going to accurately depict who Holden is by portraying the symbols mentioned in the book and writing about their importance in relation to his life.

A symbol is something that represents an idea or a concept. A heart represents love, a wedding ring represents the commitment between two people through marriage, etc. Think about 2 symbols discussed in the book that Holden mentions: physical possessions, key thoughts, important ideas he has, people, etc. Then, create a graphic representation of these as you imagine them. Draw it using Sketchbook Pro or use other any other means of visual graphic display. Along with the art, you are to write two paragraphs of four-five sentences each explaining what the symbol is (1st paragraph) as well as discussing its importance to Holden's character (2nd paragraph).

You should focus on picking a variety of symbols to hit all aspects of Holden's character. For example, you don't want both of your symbols to be two of his physical possessions. You will spread it out a bit: one common saying of his, a physical possession, a person in his life, an event in his life, etc. Your choices should span his personality and life, portraying him to the best of your ability to me as if I don't know a thing about him.

Try to dig deeper than the obvious. Don't reiterate what we've already discussed in class unless you can analyze it in a way we have not yet explored. Use some of your insight and interpretation to add more depth to what's already there.

Example of written assignment with image (2 paragraphs):

Holden mentions travel and transportation throughout the book as he's leaving one place to venture to another. Upon his exit of Pencey Prep, Holden takes the train to New York City and engages himself in a conversation with Mrs. Morrow, a student's mother. He also mentions the subway where he loses the fencing team's equipment as he attempts to keep them from getting lost. Trains, along with buses, describe modes of transportation involving other people which force Holden to be somewhat social, a task he does not manage easily. Therefore, he often opts to travel



around the city in **taxicabs**. In Chapter 9, Holden rides in a cab on his way to the Edmont Hotel and irritates the cabbie by asking him seemingly ridiculous questions about the Central Park ducks. This same conversation reoccurs with Horwitz, another cabbie, in Chapter 12.

As **taxi**s are more expensive than buses or trains, Holden's preferences for them prove his need for convenience, efficiency, and lack of concern for finances since he comes from a wealthy background. More than this, however, the taxicabs offer him a chance to be the only traveler in private where he doesn't have to share his space with anyone else. This privacy allows him time to have conversations with each driver, to possibly connect with another person and not feel as lonely as he's been feeling throughout the book. As a troubled teenager, Holden craves a connection to something or somebody. This connection will perhaps give him hope that loneliness and sadness will not last forever.

Rubric and Checklist of Requirements:

- 2 graphic representations of various symbols in the book...
 - ____ / 3 points: Should be vivid and detailed to the best of your ability
 - ____ / 3 points: Original Graphic/Digital art should be used (*Do not "Google Image Search.")
 - ____ / 3 points: Symbols are well analyzed, accurate, and recognizable as a means of interpreting *The Catcher in the Rye*)
- 2 paragraph write-up/explanation of each symbol...
 - ____ / 5 points: Paragraph 1: provides a description of symbol, its sequence in the story (chapter reference), and Holden's connection to it. (At least four sentences.) Includes no grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors. Content is clarifying and exploring in its analysis.
 - ____ / 5 points: Paragraph 2: Identifies what the symbol means, its importance to Holden, its value, and how it affects him both literally and figuratively. (At least four sentences.) Includes no grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors. Content is clarifying and exploring in its analysis.
- Presentation...
 - ____ / 2 points: Neat and organized; visually appealing; groups presents the symbols to the class

TOTAL: ____ / 20 Points

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