



Austin High School Summer Reading Assignment Incoming 12th grade AP Literature and Composition for 2018-2019

Dear Class of 2019,

While reading in general is the expectation of any student, successful Advanced Placement students are those who read *outside* and *beyond* class assignments. We believe that life-long learners are also life-long readers and thinkers. Additionally, there are certain realities we must accept. In registering for AP Literature and Composition, you are committing to a college level course during your high school career. In order for you to compete with your peers across the nation not only on the AP test but in the college classroom, you need constant exposure to works of literary merit. We think you will find your reading both enjoyable and academically worthwhile.

The assignment asks for you to read and demonstrate some of your thoughts about the narrative elements in the novel *prior to the second day of class*. While we do encourage you to talk with your classmates about the novel, **please do not be tempted to reference or search for additional sources** about the novel such as Sparknotes, Bookrags, etc. as to do so would be in violation of the Austin High Plagiarism Policy because we are not asking you to specifically do any research using outside sources for this assignment. We are interested in discussing *your* thoughts and evaluation of the novel.

We look forward to learning with you,

The AP Literature and Composition Teachers

Summer Reading Selection

The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger

About the Novel

From the *New York Times Book Review*—

"Holden is bewildered, lonely, ludicrous and pitiful. His troubles, his failings are not of his own making but of a world that is out of joint. There is nothing wrong with him that a little understanding and affection, preferably from his parents, couldn't have set right. Though confused and unsure of himself, like most 16-year-olds, he is observant and perceptive and filled with a certain wisdom. His minor delinquencies seem minor indeed when contrasted with adult delinquencies with which he is confronted.

. . . Mr. Salinger's rendering of teen-age speech is wonderful: the unconscious humor, the repetitions, the slang and profanity, the emphasis, all are just right. Holden's mercurial changes of mood, his stubborn refusal to admit his own sensitiveness and emotions, his cheerful disregard of what is sometimes known as reality are typically and heart-breakingly adolescent.

Certainly you'll look a long time before you'll meet another youngster like Holden Caulfield, as likable and, in spite of his failings, as sound. And though he's still not out of the woods entirely, there at the end, still we think he's going to turn out all right."

From Barnes and Noble—

"Ever since it was first published in 1951, this novel has been the coming-of-age story against which all others are judged. Read and cherished by generations, the story of Holden Caulfield is truly one of America's literary treasures."

From Amazon.com Review—

"Since his debut in 1951 as *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield has been synonymous with "cynical adolescent." Holden narrates the story of a couple of days in his sixteen-year-old life, just after he's been expelled from prep school, in a slang that sounds edgy even today and keeps this novel on banned book lists. . . [Holden's] constant wry observations about what he encounters, from teachers to phonies (the two of course are not mutually exclusive) capture the essence of the eternal teenage experience of alienation."

The Assignment

1. Read and enjoy the book!
2. Complete the following **FIVE** responses in preparation of our discussion of the novel. For each of the following prompts, you will :
 - Identify an answer to the prompt.
 - Select a quotation that fits the requested narrative technique.
 - Write a thoughtful, thorough response regarding the significance of the quotation as an example of the narrative technique.

Your responses must be typed, and **they will be due the fourth block of the semester—August 28/29 depending on which day your English class is scheduled.** Please type your response in the format of the sample below. Also be thoughtful about your choices as they should not overlap each other as there are many choices to add an overall variety of subject/character/event to your quotation choices.

- A. Select a quotation that is particularly indicative of **setting**. Discuss the significance of time & place and how the sensory details of the physical and/or social environment are important to the events that happen in that place.
- B. Select a quotation that highlights a **secondary character**. Discuss the significance of how and/or why this character is important to Holden’s journey.
- C. Select a quotation that highlights an **external conflict** between Holden and another character. Discuss the significance of this conflict and how it is important to Holden’s journey.
- D. Select a quotation that highlights an **internal conflict** experienced by Holden. Discuss the significance of the conflict and how it helps us understand Holden or how it is important to his journey.
- E. Select a quotation that highlights a **symbol** found in the text. Discuss the significance of the symbol and how it helps us understand character, plot or setting in the novel. (**Symbols** can be people, places, or things in a narrative that suggest meanings beyond the literal. In *Lord of the Flies*, for example, the conch can represent order or attempts to establish civilization and order on the island. The destruction of the conch symbolizes the final end to civilization and the further descent of the boys into savagery.)

The following is a response to prompt “C” about external conflict—

Holden’s fight with Stradlater over the essay about Allie’s glove and Stradlater’s date with Jane:

“He kept holding onto my wrists and I kept calling him a sonuvabitch and all, for around ten hours. I can hardly even remember what all I said to him. I told him he thought he could give the time to anybody he felt like. I told him he didn’t even care if a girl kept all her kings in the back row or not, and the reason he didn’t care was because he was a goddam stupid moron. He hated it when you called him a moron. All morons hate it when you call them a moron.” (44)

Discussion of how this moment plays a significant role in Holden’s journey:

The fight between Holden and Stradlater serves as the impetus for Holden’s emotional and physical break from Pencey. Before now, Holden tolerates Stradlater’s egotism and even defends him to Ackley, saying “he’s conceited, but he’s very generous in some things” (24). Up to this point Holden’s commentary on Stradlater is a combination of mild annoyance and genuine awe of his physical prowess. But on this occasion, Holden is reeling from the news that Stradlater may have made out with Jane and the nonchalant manner in which he speaks of the encounter. Plus, Holden is insulted and hurt over Stradlater’s rejection of what we know is a deeply personal and honest essay about Allie’s baseball mitt. Holden has offered something genuine to Stradlater: a story of his lost brother’s innocence, and, unwittingly, information about Jane, who up to now he believed to be pure and unsullied. Holden lashes out physically, and the humiliation of being held down and bloodied by Stradlater highlights his feeling of impotence and uselessness. In the face of these feelings after crossing this boundary, Holden essentially propels himself out of Pencey, struggling with a sense of loss, confusion, and anger, and he stumbles out into the cold world of New York City in search of true connection.

Questions

If you have questions or need more information about the assignment, please feel free to contact Mrs. Mast at tanya.mast@austinisd.org, Mrs. Ault at kerri.ault@austinisd.org, or Renae Jackson at renae.jackson@austinsd.org.