

Death young age.  
another example of  
holdens confusion



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Death is one of life's most mysterious occurrences. It is sometimes difficult to comprehend why an innocent young child has to die, and a murderer is released from prison and gets a second chance at life. There is no simple explanation for this. Though, perhaps the best, would be the theological perspective that God has a prewritten destiny for every man and woman. In J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* Holden often finds himself questioning his faith and pondering why an innocent adolescent like his brother Allie has to die.

By the close of the novel Holden learns to accept not only death but life as well. There are several instances within J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* in which Holden expresses his misapprehension of death. In Chapter 5, on page 38 Holden provides a long excursus on Allie, specifying the particulars of his life and death. The consequential point comes at the close of the digression when Holden discloses his own reaction to Allie's death. In this Chapter Holden first poses the question of why did Allie have to die at such a young age.

Another example of Holden's confusion about death can be found in Chapter 9, on page 60. In a cab on the way to the Edmont Hotel Holden asks the cab driver if he knows what happens to the ducks in the lake in Central Park during the winter. Although this question may seem trivial, it is in fact a way of Holden asking what happens to people when they die.

What Holden really wants to know is if they just disappear or do they move on to a more suitable place. Unfortunately the cab driver doesn't truly comprehend Holden's question and is unable to provide an adequate

explanation for him. One final illustration of Holdens misconception of death is evident in Chapter 12, on pages 81-82. In this instance Holden once again poses the question of what happens to the ducks in the lake in Central Park during the winter. This driver, Horowitz, responds much more climactically than the anonymous driver in Chapter 9. , and he provides a ardent series of remarks. Horowitz changes the subject of the conversation from ducks to fish, because he can cope with them. Horowitz is also a believer of the rightness of things.

His departing comment: " Listen, if you was a fish, Mother Natured take care of you, wouldnt she? Right? You dont think them fish just die when it gets to be winter do ya? Youre goddam right they dont." elucidates his thinking completely. This conversation clarifies many things for Holden and helps him begin to understand the true meaning of death. Throughout the novel *The Catcher in the Rye* Holden is constantly struggling to accept and understand the true meaning of not only death but life as well, for if Holden doesnt accept death he can never truly understand life. By the end of this great work by Salinger, Holden is on the road to recovery with a much more detailed and complex understanding of life and death. He now accepts Allie's death, and will be able to continue to live a much less stressful and much freer life.