

# Catcher in the rye

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



& Number: Catcher in the Rye (Jerome David Salinger) 14 November  
(Estimated word count - 694) Introduction J. D. Salinger is considered as one of the icons in modern American literature and his work has been compared to the works of Mark Twain in some respects. His style of writing is to use exposition and juxtaposition of events to illustrate and flesh out his characters, mainly the chief protagonist, Holden Caulfield. His style is of unstated simplicity, using a lot of those profanities to give vent to an adolescents frustration with the world. Overall, the theme of the novel is one of undiagnosed depression. Salinger is very good at providing descriptions such that the reader can easily identify with some of the characters perhaps without meaning to. He allowed Holden to use a lot jargon or street lingo to give an uncanny realism to the novel.

#### Discussion

The novel seems to have an overwhelming sense of doom and gloom. The character of Holden Caulfield wants to get out of his familiar surroundings because he was not satisfied. In a sense, he seems to be going somewhere else but with no definite direction or destination. Holden feels an unsettled spirit, he wants to go from here to there and is always in the habit of saying goodbye to someone or someplace he had been to before. His restless spirit wants to be always on the go but he lacks a certain motivation, like he is lost to the world.

“ . . . I mean Ive left schools and places I didnt even know I was leaving them. I hate that. I dont care if its a sad good-by or a bad good-by, but when I leave a place I like to know Im leaving it. If you dont, you feel even worse.”  
This line sets the tone for the rest of a story that is one of unmitigated ennui.

Boredom, restlessness, insecurity and emptiness had pervaded the novel all throughout except when Holden is with children whom he is fond of.

“ I dont even know what I was running for - I guess I just felt like it.” With this line, it is quite obvious that Holden wants to get away from something but he just cannot put his finger on it or what he was running away from. Perhaps he was running away from himself as he is mostly disgusted with the ways things are in his life, especially with the death of brother Allie to sickness (leukemia). He is merely ambivalent with anything and everything, from his own father, himself and also with the whole world itself. Holden had been traumatized by this death but he does not even know it or will admit to it (Bloom 8); he is haunted by it.

In a sense, Holden wants to disappear from this world, perhaps to stop his worrying. He is always worried, “ when I really worry about something, I dont just fool around. I dont want to interrupt my worrying . . .” and this quote indicates how worrisome he has become. It is a manifestation of his bottled-up emotions from the death of Allie and seemed not to have grown after that, sort of a perpetual adolescent who could not move on in his life. Part of the reason why Holden seems to be rootless is his inability to form meaningful relationships with adults; he is most happy when dealing with children because he thinks they are innocent.

### Conclusion

Holden Caulfield has an abiding mistrust of adults because he himself, by his own admission, is a congenital liar, as he says “ people always think somethings all true,” and that “ Im the most terrific liar you ever saw in your life. Its awful. . . . Its terrible.” He lies easily and therefore mistrusts all other

people because he thinks they also lie just like him. The style of J. D. Salinger is one of unremitting realism, complete with profanities and street jargon to make it connect with the readers of his novel. In short, this novel is all about juvenile revolts or delinquency; Holden is the epitome of a rebel without a cause, so to speak. Young people can easily identify with the story of Holden because he exemplifies them at this stage in life.

#### Work Cited

Bloom, Harold. *The Catcher in the Rye*. New York, NY, USA: Infobase Publishing, 2007. Print.