

Protagonist holden in
"the catcher in the
rye" by j.d. salinger
essay sample



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Protagonist Holden in “ The Catcher in the Rye” by J. D. Salinger Essay Sample

Intro: The Austrian psychiatrist Wilhelm Stekal once said: “ the mark of an immature man is that he wants to die nobly for a cause, while the mark of an immature man is he wants to live humbly for one. I believe he’s trying to tell us that the main difference between someone mature and immature is that the mature man would look for a solution to the problem in a way that will benefit everyone while an immature man would look for a solution that will only benefit themselves. Thesis: In Catcher in the Rye by JD Salinger the main protagonist Holden shows the mark of an immature man.

Topic Sentence #1: Instead of confronting his feelings about the events in his life Holden chooses to bury his problems inside because he is not mentally mature to face them

Quote #1: Allie’s death: “ I’d say to him “ Allie don’t let me disappear. Allie don’t let me disappear . Allie don’t let me disappear. Please Allie’, And then when I’d reach the other side of the street without disappearing I’d thank him. Then It’d start all over again as soon as I got to the next corner.” (198)

Quote #2: “ ‘ Jane Gallagher, Jesus’ I couldn’t take my mind off her ‘ Is should at least go down and say hello’ I walked over to the window, but you couldn’t see out of it. It was so steamy from all the heat in the can, ‘ I’m not in the mood right now’ I said. I wasn’t either.” (33)

Quote #3: “ Finally I decided what I’d do, I decided I’d go away. I decided I’d never go away to another school again. I’d decided I’d just see Phoebe and

sort of say goodbye to her and all and return her Christmas dough. Then I'd head out West." (198)

Topic Sentence #2: Holden's desire to be a catcher in the rye shows immaturity because Holden is aiming for a goal that cannot be realistically achieved

Quote #1: " I'm standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff I mean if they're running and they don't look where they're going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them. That's all I'd do all day. I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all. I know it's crazy but that's the only thing I want to be" (172)

Quote #2: I thought about how Phoebe and all the the other kids would see it and how they would wonder what the hell it meant, then finally some dirty kid would tell them, and how they would think about it, and maybe even worry about it for a couple of days." (201)

Quote #3: " I tried to rub it off with my hands again but this one was scratched on with a knife or something" (202)

Topic Sentence #3: Holden has the potential to be mature but chooses not to make the transition to adulthood because to him adolescence is more appealing.

Quote #1: I was sixteen and I'm seventeen now and sometime I act as if I'm about thirteen" (9)

Quote #2: One side of my hair the right side is filled with a million grey hairs yet I still act as if IM twelve" (9)

Quote #3: " Among others, you'll find that you're not by all mean the first person who was ever confused frightened or even sickened by human behavior. You're by no means alone in this score. Many many men have been just as troubled morally and spiritually as you are right now..." (197)

Conclusion sentence : Holden's struggle with maturity and maintaining adolescence is what teenagers experience on a daily basis. The transition to adulthood is frightening because it is a time when you have no one to rely on but yourself.