

Symbols in the catcher in the rye



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

English 12 IB September 16th, 2011 Symbols in The Catcher in the Rye The Red Hunting Hat Holden's Red hunting hat is a symbol of his uniqueness throughout the book. It is a concrete representation of his alienation from "common" people as it looks very peculiar, and thus makes him stand out when he wears it. This represents Holden's desire to stand apart from all the "phonies" of the world. However, the fact that Holden refuses to wear the hat while in the presence of people he knows is a representation of his need for acceptance, despite all he says about his indifference regarding what other people think about him.

This means that the hunting hat is a representation of the main conflict in the book, which is that Holden has to balance his need for freedom and isolation with his desire for social relations. The Ducks The ducks of the Central Park Pond are often cited as a major symbol in The Catcher in the Rye. This is because their behaviour is easy to relate to for Holden. Indeed, when the ducks feel the winter is coming, they persevere in the harsher conditions of life at the pond until there comes a point where leaving to a more suitable location becomes necessary.

This is the point in life where Holden is at the moment the story takes place. He faces difficulties in his environment and thus has the strong desire to leave to a better place. However, what's more about the ducks is that they come back every summer. This return to the preceding year's nesting area underlines a certain cycle of life, a repeating cycle of good and bad times. Holden can strongly relate to that and it may be that the ducks actually played a very important role in his final decision to remain in New York as opposed to leaving to California by hitch-hiking. The Carousel

The New York Zoo carousel is an important element in the book because it represents a part of Holden's childhood as well as an important link with his sister Phoebe. Indeed, when toward the end of the book Holden visits it with his sister, he notices that she still enjoys the ride as much as she used to in her childhood, when Holden used to come along with D. B. , Allie and Phoebe. He find this lack of change comforting amongst the numerous changing elements of the world. In a time when his life is in turmoil, the carousel is a place that helps him calm his urges to run away from home.

The Museum of Natural History

New York's Museum of Natural History is another important element of The Catcher in the Rye because it, just as the carousel does, give Holden the peace of mind to see that not everything is changing drastically around him. In fact, Holden notices that it is him that changes every time he visits the museum, not the displays. This helps him find relative calm within the madness of the city for a few moments. The museum is a way for Holden to consolidate within himself the image of his fantasy world with predictable events and simple workings; his world where he is the Catcher in the Rye.

The Fencing Foils The fencing foils that Holden forgets on the subway are one way to exemplify Holden's alienation with others. Although he is responsible for the material, Holden finds a way to do a mistake on his work and thus gives others a reason to criticize him for his wrongdoings. Perhaps this created a certain vicious circle where Holden became less and less interested in his work for others as they criticized him for precisely that reason. The fencing foils provide the reader with a reasonable explanation for Holden's social alienation and insight on how he deals with it.