

# Conflicts in the catcher in the rye



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The main character in *The Catcher in the Rye* is a seemingly pessimistic sixteen year old named Holden Caulfield. Chapter One of this novel tells us of Holden's attitude and thoughts on various occasions and in a variety of situations. Holden is the narrator of the story. This enables readers to enter Holden's thoughts and see the world from his perspective. He is a very multifarious character.

The first chapter presents the readers with background information on Holden. He has an older brother, D. B. who he expresses his views on his chosen lifestyle as " Now he's out in Hollywood... being a prostitute"; meaning Holden does not agree that D. B. should write what people tell him to write for money (like a prostitute). Readers also discover that Holden has been kicked out of school for failing four out of five of his classes. The first two sentences of the novel already give readers a perception of what Holden Caulfield is like. He rejects the habitual manner of narrating a story, and opts for his own more casual approach.

Furthermore, he says "... but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth". This connotes that Holden sets his own rules, he will tell what he wishes to tell, and is fairly insubordinate to customary practices in various situations. One of these situations is when Holden decides, in his own rebellious manner not to attend the school football game, because everyone else is. " you were supposed to commit suicide if... Pencey didn't win". This quote suggests that Holden never does what he is " supposed" to do.

This also emphasizes that Holden feels that following the customary narrative is inconsequential compared to his own viewpoint. Holden openly

divulges that he will only do what he wishes to do, not what others tell him to do, and not because he is compelled to do so. This is a very important aspect of Holden's personality. Readers learn that Holden has a loathing for falsity; he condemns his brother for being a "prostitute" because he was not true to himself. Holden also tends to criticize, for example, his school, Pencey Prep.

He dislikes the fact that they advertise a concept completely different from what actually goes on within the school. He feels that it gives outsiders the wrong (but right) impression of the school. He also tends to be very critical of people as well. As an oblique result of his narrow minded criticism, he has become isolated. This is shown when he tells a story about the fencing team, and how it was his fault that they were late in getting home. Although he does admit this, he covers up his embarrassment by saying "it was pretty funny, in a way".

Holden also seems quite hypocritical. He criticizes people for being "phonies" and himself turns around and contemplates how much he wants to leave, right after he tells Mr. Spencer of his view on people's false personalities. Holden tends to be very biased when it comes to ideas and virtues. To shortly summarize Holden Caulfield, it would be said that he is a very critical and rebellious young adult. Although his individuality can be a good attribute, at times he does not realise when this is inappropriate.