

Catcher in the rye dialogue and structure analysis

Business



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Chapter 1 p. 3-8 After setting the tone of the story he is going to write, Holden talks about Pencey Prep.

, his brother, and how he is going to go visit a former teacher after being kicked out of school. “ If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you’ll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don’t feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth.” (3) This is a strong example of characterization. Holden is making clear the kind of book he is writing, he’s creating a narrative voice, and he’s challenging writing standards. Already, his rebellious nature is clear. Chapter 2 p.

9-19 Holden talks to a very agitated old Spencer, who wants to discuss Holden’s future, but Holden’s reluctance forces old Spencer to show him a particularly bad History essay, prompting Holden to make up a reason to leave due to irritation. “ It was pretty depressing, old Spencer had on this very sad, ratty old bathrobe that he was probably born in or something. I don’t much like to see old guys in their pajamas and bathrobes anyway. Their bumpy old chests are always showing. And their legs.” (10) First, this quote exemplifies Holden’s brutal honesty, cementing the fact that no one is safe, not even the old or frail.

Also, it shows just how cruel Holden can be, judging people relentlessly for things they can’t help. Furthermore, the imagery is good, contrasting the roguish and young Holden to the steady “ old Spencer.” Finally, it further creates the impression of an unreliable narrator, as Holden is easily

distracted, and goes into detailed descriptions on a whim. Chapter 3 p. 19-31 We learn more about Holden's sense of humor and classmates as he attempts to read his book alone, but the bothersome Ackley interrupts him, sparking reluctant conversation which comes to involve Holden's roommate Stradlater.

"It was a very good book. I'm quite illiterate, but I read a lot." (21) This is the perfect example of Holden's mindset. Everything he says is a contradiction as he jumps from one train of thought to another, completely obliterating his ideas. Everything is a chaotic mess which Holden doesn't come close to understanding, and he doesn't pretend to either. Holden merely says what he thinks.

Chapter 4 p. 31-30 Ackley leaves, and Holden talks to Stradlater and about his character while he prepares for a date with an old friend of Holden, whom Holden can't stop thinking about. "'She's a dancer,' I said. 'Ballet and all. She used to practice about two hours every day, right in the middle of the hottest weather and all.

She was worried that it might make her legs lousy-all thick and all. I used to play checkers with her all the time.'" The chapter essentially boils down to this. For the first time in the book, Holden stops being apathetic, and shows that he cares about something. He reveals a sincere detail about a girl he knew. Holden also talks about being nervous that Stradlater is seeing Jane, and up until this point, Holden has not been anything but c***y and rude.

It's a clearly revealing moment which will drive the plot. Chapter 5 p. 40-45 Holden talks about the food at Pencey, an uneventful time at the movies with <https://assignbuster.com/catcher-in-the-rye-dialogue-and-structure-analysis/>

Ackley, and reveals the story of his dead brother and emotional issues. "He's dead now. He got leukemia and died when we were up in maine." This quote is an extremely revealing remark, and the ultimate point of the chapter.

It also explains Holden's mental state, and backs his character. He is so nonchalant about something so important. Chapter 6 p. 45-52 Holden, fearing Stradlater behaved badly toward Jane, tries to seriously injure Stradlater, but ends up incapacitated; so Holden leaves to see Ackley, disgruntled. "'Coupla minutes,' he said.

'Who the hell signs out for nine-thirty on a Saturday night?' God, how I hated him." This quote exemplifies how Holden changes his mind to suit a point of rebellion. No matter what his previous viewpoint was, Holden abandons it quickly. Before, Holden was a fan of Stradlater, defending him. Granted, he has a reason to be mad at Stradlater. Chapter 7 p.

52-59 Holden has some sarcastic banter with Ackley in the bed of Ackley's roommate in an attempt to distract himself from Stradlater's date with Jane, but when this fails, Holden makes the decision to leave Pencey and head to New York on a train. "I was sort of crying. I don't know why. I put my red hunting hat on, and turned the peak around to the back, the way I liked it, and then I yelled at the top of my goddam voice, "Sleep tight, ya morons!" The whole point of the chapter is revealed in this quote. Specifically, in the first sentence.

By admitting that he was crying, Holden finally reveals that there is some emotional side to him, even though he tries his hardest to bury it. However,
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sticking true to his character, Holden merely brushes it off and distracts himself. Chapter 8 p. 59-66 Holden, still covered in blood, boards a train to New York where he meets the mother of Pencey Prep student Ernest Morrow, whom Holden likes, but lies to for the duration of their talk as to the nature of Ernest, and his own reason for being on the train. “‘ No, everybody’s fine at home,’ I said. ‘ It’s me.

I have to have this operation’ ‘ Oh! I’m so sorry,’ she said. She really was, too. I was right away sorry I’d said it, but it was too late.” This serves an important purpose in the characterization of Holden. It makes clear that Holden does feel guilt about some of his actions, though not prolonged. It also shows that Holden doesn’t really hate everyone, and there are people he can genuinely communicate with even when he’s...lying.

This is basically a contradiction, but so is Holden. Chapter 9 p. 66-74 A sexually frustrated Holden reminisces about his perversions at a seedy, cheap hotel, then proceeds to call a semi-prostitute to no avail. “ I was going to tell whoever answered the phone that I was her uncle. I was going to say her aunt had just got killed in a car accident and I had to speak to her immediately. It would’ve worked, too.

The only reason I didn’t do it was because I wasn’t in the mood.” This quote reveals more with what is not said. Essentially, it proves that Holden has SOME sense of social tact. He obviously cares what people think, he just covers it up by saying things like “ he isn’t in the mood.” He cares more than he wants to admit, and he shocks us with terrible and occasionally humorous lies because it masks an injured interior. Chapter 10 p.

74-85 Holden heads to a night club, fails to order alcohol due to his age, and dances with three middle aged, movie star obsessed women whom he calls ugly and stupid after they make fun of his age. " I was about half in love with her by the time we sat down. That's the thing about girls. Every time they do something pretty, even if they're not much to look at, or even if they're sort of stupid, you fall half in love with them, and then you never know where the hell you are." The point of the whole chapter can be boiled down to this.

Holden is clearly reaching out for Jane by seeing other girls. Though seemingly a cynic, Holden is clearly in love with the idea of love. Chapter 11 p. 85-90 Holden becomes tender and protective for a moment as he discusses memories of Jane and her abusive childhood, and then Holden heads to a nightclub his brother D. B.

used to go to. " She was sort of muckle-mouthed. I mean when she was talking and she got excited about something, her mouth sort of went in about fifty different directions, her lips and all." Throughout the whole book, the author hasn't put a single description as detailed as this. The choice worked really well, and was strongly indicative of Holden's feelings.

Chapter 12 p. 90-98 Holden sees an old friend of D. B.'s at a club, becomes annoyed by her and her date, and then leaves, even more annoyed. " After I'd told her I had to meet somebody, I didn't have any goddamn choice except to leave. I couldn't even stick around to hear Ernie play something halfway decent.

" This is a revealing remark as to Holden's character, and how much he actually cares. He pretends to be, and wants to be, completely separate from <https://assignbuster.com/catcher-in-the-rye-dialogue-and-structure-analysis/>

social norms, but secretly adheres to them. Treating it nonchalantly, he covers it well. Chapter 13 p. 98-110 A prostitute comes to Holden's hotel room, but Holden doesn't desire sex, so they have a tense conversation until the prostitute leaves. " It was funny.

It made me feel sort of sad when I hung it up. I thought of her going in a store and buying it, and nobody in the store knowing she was a prostitute and all." This is an example of how Holden finds faults everywhere but internally. He fails to realize that he is the sad one, not her. He is a failure in school, partly drunk in a big city, and he has a prostitute in his room. Yet SHE makes him sad.

Furthermore, it sorts of shows how sweet Holden can be on occasion. He steps into the shoes of the prostitute, and says something which isn't cold for a change. Chapter 14 p. 110-117 Holden decides not to pay the money a pimp is asking for, saying that he was tricked, so the pimp beats up Holden, leaving him bloodied and thinking of suicide. " I felt like jumping out the window. I probably would've done it, too, if I'd been sure somebody'd cover me up as soon as I landed.

I didn't want a bunch of stupid rubbernecks looking at me when I was all gory." Holden can't admit that that he's too scared to kill himself. It's not really about not being seen, Holden just can't admit fear. In all reality, the only reason he isn't jumping out the window is because he isn't sure what's waiting will be any better. He wants to be edgy and important and apathetic, but he's just a scared kid trying to work up the nerve to kill himself. Chapter 15 p.

117-126 Holden wakes up, leaves the hotel, arranges a date with Sally Hayes, talks about his parents, meets two nuns in a restaurant, donates to their collection, strikes up a literary conversation with one of the, inquires as to why they are there, and then the nuns leave. " It's just like those suitcases I was telling you about, in a way. All I'm saying is that it's no good for a nice conversation. That's all I'm saying." This evoked a personal response more towards the writer than Holden. He is clearly stressing a metaphor here, and asking you to think deeply.

By going back to the suitcases, he reveals their importance. Furthermore, it summarizes the point of the chapter, which has to do with shallowness. Everything Holden says is sort of proverbial in a round about way, and this suitcase example is really a look into the nature of human instinct and feelings of inferiority. Chapter 16 p. 126-136 Holden, after walking around Broadway and buying theatre tickets for Sally, tries to call Jane, then goes to the park to ask about Phoebe, eventually deciding to head The Museum of Natural History. " You could tell, for one thing, that they never went anywhere for lunch.

" No Holden, you cannot tell that. You want to be master of the universe, but there are things you simply can't know. You create a million ideal universes in your head, often contradicting your own contradictions. You think you could tell. That's all.

Chapter 17 p. 136-149 Holden takes Sally to a skating rink, asks her to run away with him in a strange fit of " passion", then insults her, so she leaves. " I stuck around for a while, apologizing and trying to get her to excuse me,

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but she wouldn't." Once again the problem returns to accountability. Holden, after admitting fault, quickly takes it back and passes the blame to his date.

He just can't accept responsibility, or anything even close, but he is acutely aware of the inherent guilt that comes with his actions. The only reason he apologizes is to make himself feel better, not those he has wronged. Chapter 18 p. 149-156 Holden arranges a late night drink with an old schoolmate, sees a movie he finds putrid, describes it in detail, talks about how much he would hate being in the army, and characterizes D. B.

a bit more. " My brother D. B. was in the Army for four goddamn years. He was in the war, too- he landed on D-Day and all- but I really think he hated the Army worse than the war.

" I chose to note this quote because it is stylistically seamless. This is clearly the main point of the chapter, the characterization of Holden's family, particularly D. B. Salinger slips it into the middle of the chapter in a stroke of genius, so the whole thing doesn't come off as a piece of blatant exposition of character building. Furthermore, he creates a springboard to talk about Holden's beliefs on war, and further characterize him with such a complex issue. Chapter 19 p.

157-165 Holden, in an extremely lonely state, tries to talk to Luce about his sex life and relationships, but Luce becomes uncomfortable and points out Holden's immaturity, eventually leaving the bar. "' Have just one more drink,' I told him. ' please. I'm lonesome as hell. No kidding'" This is the first time in the book that Holden has verbalized what he is truly feeling. The

whole chapter has been about what a terrible pretentious person Luce is, and Holden just wants him to stay a little bit longer.

Furthermore, it shows why Holden is bitter toward everyone, when Luce simply leaves the bar. It's symbolic of all his interactions. Chapter 20 p. 165-173 Holden gets extremely intoxicated, calls Sally, thinks about calling Jane, has a drunken conversation with a club piano player and a coat check worker, tries to go see ducks in a pond at central park in the early morning, and then decides to go see his sister My content for this chapter is the tone which switches between drunk dialogue and sophisticated humor. Salinger alternates between a very drunk Holden and a normal narrator Holden in this chapter, and the strategy works seamlessly. You don't really have a gauge of just how drunk Holden is until his phone call with Sally, and the reveal is both slightly humorous and very, very sad.

His normal narration persists, and you can tell that Holden just wants to be an adult, but his child like antics, terrible decisions, and overall attitude stand his way. One of the most intense scenes came when Holden pointed out that he was crying for no reason. It's clearly a big deal, but Holden is so self diluted he can't even admit his own defects. Chapter 21 p. 173-183 Holden heads to his house, goes into Phoebe's room, reads her journal, wakes her, then has a conversation with her, in which Phoebe realizes that Holden was kicked out of school. " I sat there on D.

B.'s desk and read the whole notebook. It didn't take me long, and I can read that kind of stuff, some kid's notebook, Phoebe's or anybody's, all day and all night long." This is quite revealing as to Holden's bias. It doesn't matter if a

kid does something he would call someone else phony for, the fact that they're a kid changes Holden's opinion. It kind of shows just how skewed Holden's perception of reality is, made up of entirely unrelated rules and ideologies.

Chapter 22 p. 183-192 Holden goes back to talk to Phoebe about the things he likes, getting kicked out, Allie's death, why he hated Pencey, and other random topics. The piece of content is how Salinger doesn't really stay true to Holden's tone with this chapter, and it's intentional. Salinger makes Holden a lot nicer in this chapter. Harder to hate. It's in an attempt to allow the reader to absorb the major metaphor in the chapter.

Sort of butter them up. Also, it further hammers the point that Holden doesn't hold children to the same standards as anyone else. Chapter 23 p. 192-199 Holden makes plans to go see Mr. Antolini, Holden's parents arrive home, Phoebe talks with her mother and covers for Holden, and Holden borrows money from Phoebe, causing him to break down and cry. " I found the edge of the bed in the dark and sat down on it and started putting on my shoes.

I was pretty nervous. I admit it." This quote is very subtle, but it goes very deep. Holden is nervous, and at face value, it's about being caught by his parents and put into an awkward situation. However, when put into context, Holden is nervous about disappointing his sister when he leaves, though he doesn't want to flat out say this. Within the next few pages Holden stops caring about his parents finding him, so his nerves more likely come from his sister's opinion of him.

Chapter 24 p. 199-213 Mr. Antolini, while drunk, tries to talk to Holden about straightening out his future, and applying himself, but then Holden goes to sleep in Mr. Antolini's house, wakes up to Mr. Antolini patting his head, and then leaves in panic. "It may be the kind where, at the age of thirty, you sit in some bar hating everybody who comes in looking as if he might have played football in college.

Then again, you may pick up just enough education to hate people who say, 'It's a secret between he and I.' Or you may end up in some business office, throwing paper clips at the nearest stenographer.'" This just hits too close to home. I can't go a single moment without finding something to hate in a person. I'm the type of guy who uses sarcasm to account for the fact that he isn't really where he wants to be at all times, and so is Holden. The same with the "He and I" thing.

I can't stand the little things that people say to each other simply because they're supposed to. When someone says something like "literally" or "Like" I want to scream or vomit, and I know this is a problem with my self and not others. It's just a colloquialism. And with a plethora of alcoholic family members, the idea of being a sad guy in a bar who thinks he is too smart for this world isn't that far from a real fear. Even the office thing. I mean, would I hate myself more if I was a sad drunk or the sober guy in the office who enjoys wacky tie Wednesday and office Christmas parties.

Everything just really was too close for comfort with this quote. Chapter 25 p. 213-234 Holden decides to head out west, erases graffiti from Phoebe's school while waiting to give her a note informing her of his plans, goes to the

museum, talks to two kids, sees more graffiti, passes out, sees Phoebe, takes her to the zoo after upsetting her and telling her to shut up due to her plans to accompany Holden West, takes her to a carrousel, watches her ride it, and she sits happily in the pouring rain. " That's the whole trouble. You can't ever find a place that's nice and peaceful, because there isn't any. You may think there is, but once you get there, when you're not looking, somebody'll sneak up and write ' F*** you.

" Very clearly metaphorical of Holden's life and mind. He doesn't believe that there is anywhere peaceful on Earth, and the ' f*** you' is representative of bad things in general, the general course of nature. The whole book has been leading up to this, as Holden has been tested and battered again and again. It's not quite giving up, it's just a clear idea that everything is actually terrible being formed and cemented. All it took to push him over the edge was a small piece of graffiti on a museum wall. Chapter 26 p.

234 Holden, admitting he is in a psychiatric ward, says he doesn't want to talk about his story anymore, admits he misses everyone in it, and hints at the possibility that he may improve in school and apply himself. " If you want to know the truth, I don't know what I think about it. I'm sorry I told so many people about it." I find it unique how Salinger retains the " Holdenism," if you want to know the truth. I mean, we've read for 234 pages so we obviously want to know the truth. It's kind of a stupid thing to say, but it sticks true to the tone, so props I guess.

Like, after 234 pages of reading we spontaneously stop wanting to know the truth. Don't be weird Holden; don't say dumb stuff.