The Catcher in the Rye

J.D. Salinger

Dr.K®
Expert in Education

WINC Q Literature Series I

The Catcher in the Rye J.D. Salinger

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Chief Director : Mark P. Ott, Ph.D

Chief Editor : Matthew Langione, Ph.D

Artist & Designer : Stella Joung, Bobae Park, Eom Ji Park

E-mail : info@wincsoft.org

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WINC Q

Literature Series I

Dr.K®

Expert in Education

From Our Team

Dear scholars,

Dr. K's WINC Q Literature Series is an interactive social education curriculum designed not only to teach students, but to teach teachers as well. By guiding readers to think critically, organize their thoughts, and formulate their own opinions, WINC Q aims to enhance the logical, critical, and creative skills of scholars at all levels.

Since 2009, WINC Q team has developed an original educational methodology that begins with a vast database of original content. WINC Q developers have compiled a database of critical thinking questions, key quotations, key words, and cross references for hundreds of books of varying difficulty. All questions are original and have been researched and developed by seasoned educators at preeminent institutions such as Phillips Exeter, Deerfield, Choate Rosemary Hall, Groton, St. George's, Peddie, Taft, Milton Academy, and Cranbrook Schools.

For each book in the database, our developing team has selectively highlighted chapters of overarching significance and generated questions, key quotations, key words, and cross references to guide the readers to contextualize the text through narrative synthesis.

The impetus for our unique curriculum stemmed from our founder. As a scholar of philosophy and education, Dr. Kang was deeply influenced by the great Greek philosopher Socrates. His heuristic approach that led his interlocutors to reach clarity in matters of virtue, knowledge, and existence greatly impressed her and inspired her to devise modern literary curriculum that employs elements of Socratic pedagogy.

We strived to go further, however, by removing the authoritative tone of Socrates and elevating the reader to be the sole agent of autonomous conscience whose intellectual aptitude can be fully exercised and potentiated without the pressure of having to reach some universal "truth" that is becoming increasingly elusive and deconstructed in our pluralistic, evolving societal landscape.

It is our sincere hope that our readers will not only fortify skills in literature and cognition but cultivate long-lasting joy of textual investigation and pursuit of knowledge. Our team of developers has been granted with the privilege of exposures and experiences in literary studies and it is our purest intention that we share this knowledge with greater readership.

Mark P. Ott, Ph.D.

WINC Q Chief Director
New York, New York

The quotations of the questions in this workbook follow
the 1951 Little, Brown and Company Edition of *The Catcher in the Rye*

WINC Q Chief Director

Mark P. Ott, Ph.D.

Teaching

Phillips Exeter Academy

Deerfield Academy

Books

A Sea of Change: Ernest Hemingway and the Gulf Stream (2008)

Ernest Hemingway and the Geography of Memory (2010)

Hemingway and Italy: Twenty-First-Century Perspectives (2017)

Education

PhD University of Hawaii-Manoa

MA University of Wyoming

BA University of Wisconsin-Madison

Dr. Adelaide Kang

Teaching

Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea

Entrepreneurship

Founder and CEO of WINCsoft, INC.

Education

PhD Columbia University, New York, USA

MA Yonsei University

BA Yonsei University

WINC Q Chief Editor

Matthew Langione, Ph.D

Teaching

Deerfield Academy

Education

PhD University of California Berkeley

M.Phil University of Cambridge

MS University of Pennsylvania

BA Amherst College

CONTENTS DEVELOPERS

Jaed Coffin, M.A.

- Teaching -
Deerfield Academy
Bowdoin
University of New Hampshire
- Books -
Roughhouse Friday: A Memoir
A Chant to Soothe Wild Elephants
- Education -
MFA Southern Maine
BA Middlebury

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- Teaching -
History Instructor
Deerfield Academy
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ABD Oxford
MA Toronto
BA Harvard

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BA Duke

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- Education -
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BA Hamilton College

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Cranbrook Schools
- Education -
MA Oakland
BA Kalamazoo

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- Education -
MA University of Virginia
BA Kenyon College

Eve Goldenberg, M.A.

- Teaching -
Phillips Exeter Academy (English)
- Education -
MA NYU
AB Barnard

CONTENTS DEVELOPERS

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Phillips Exeter Academy (English)
Avenues (Humanities)
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BA Michigan

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- Education -
MA Columbia
BA Middlebury

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- Education -
M.Ed. Columbia
BA McGill

Sarah Ream, M.A.

- Teaching -
Phillips Exeter Academy (Theatre)
- Education -
MA University of London
BA Yale

Beck Dorey-Stein, B.A.

- Teaching -
Peddie School (English)
- Books -
From the Corner of the Oval: A Memoir
(Obama White House Stenographer)
- Education -
BA Wesleyan University

Laurel Waterhouse, M.S.

- Teaching -
The Taft School
Choate Rosemary Hall
Collegiate School
- Education -
MS LSE
MA Columbia
BA Lafayette

Joe Freeman, M.A.

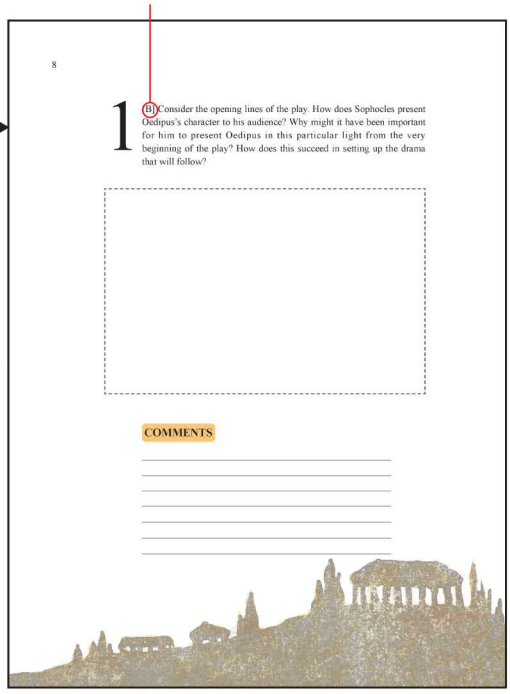
- Teaching -
The Taft School (English)
- Education -
MA Middlebury
BA Hamilton

1 Understanding Question

I. understand intent and purpose of the question
II. recognize the question type

[A] identifying & corresponding question
[B] connecting & inferring question
[C] imagining & conjecturing question
[D] comparing & contrasting question
[E] opinionating & proposing question

the question type


8

1 (B) Consider the opening lines of the play. How does Sophocles present Oedipus's character to his audience? Why might it have been important for him to present Oedipus in this particular light from the very beginning of the play? How does this succeed in setting up the drama that will follow?

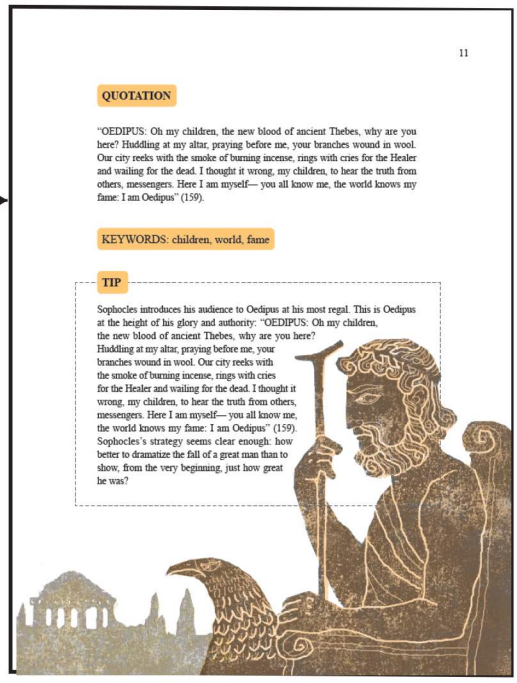
COMMENTS

2 Finding Facts for Answering

I. keywords

II. major incidents and events

III. metaphors and other literary devices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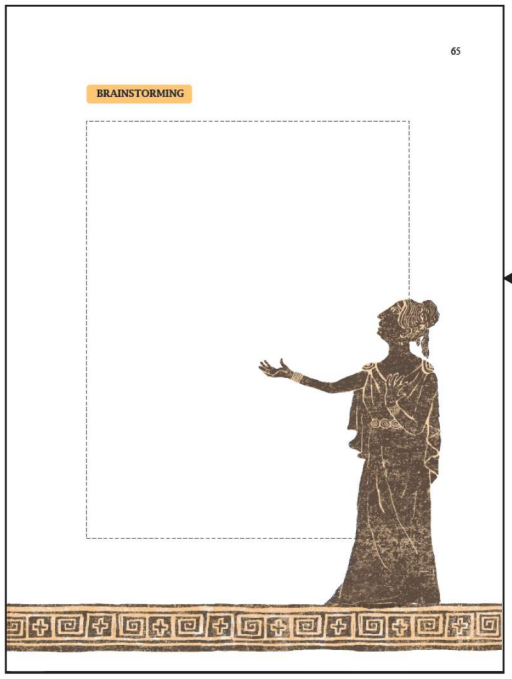
QUOTATION

"OEDIPUS: Oh my children, the new blood of ancient Thebes, why are you here? Huddling at my altar, praying before me, your branches wound in wool. Our city reeks with the smoke of burning incense, rings with cries for the Healer and wailing for the dead. I thought it wrong, my children, to hear the truth from others, messengers. Here I am myself— you all know me, the world knows my fame: I am Oedipus" (159).

KEYWORDS: children, world, fame

TIP

Sophocles introduces his audience to Oedipus at his most regal. This is Oedipus at the height of his glory and authority: "OEDIPUS: Oh my children, the new blood of ancient Thebes, why are you here? Huddling at my altar, praying before me, your branches wound in wool. Our city reeks with the smoke of burning incense, rings with cries for the Healer and wailing for the dead. I thought it wrong, my children, to hear the truth from others, messengers. Here I am myself— you all know me, the world knows my fame: I am Oedipus" (159). Sophocles's strategy seems clear enough: how better to dramatize the fall of a great man than to show, from the very beginning, just how great he was?



3
Organizing & Systematizing Facts

I. definition and meaning

II. time order and chronology

III. process and development

IV. conflict and resolution

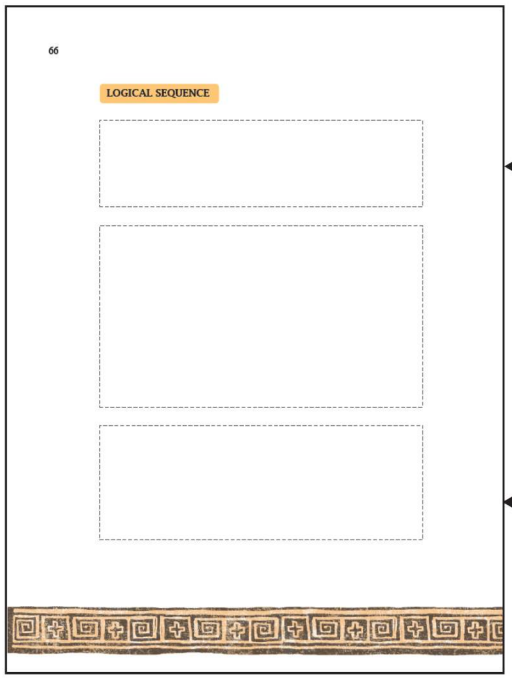
V. cause and effect

4
Summarizing & Synthesizing Idea: Main Idea + Supporting Ideas

I. organize collected data to sum up main idea

II. label supporting ideas into proper groups

III. prioritize data into a logical order to distinguish supporting ideas



5
Constructing Framework for Writing

I. posit thesis statement

II. use major quotations and metaphors

III. set up logical sequence

Chapter 1

1 [A] The first line of *The Catcher in the Rye* reads as follows:

"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" (1).

How does this opening line grab the reader's attention? What do we understand about the narrator?

COMMENTS

BRAINSTORMING

LOGICAL SEQUENCE

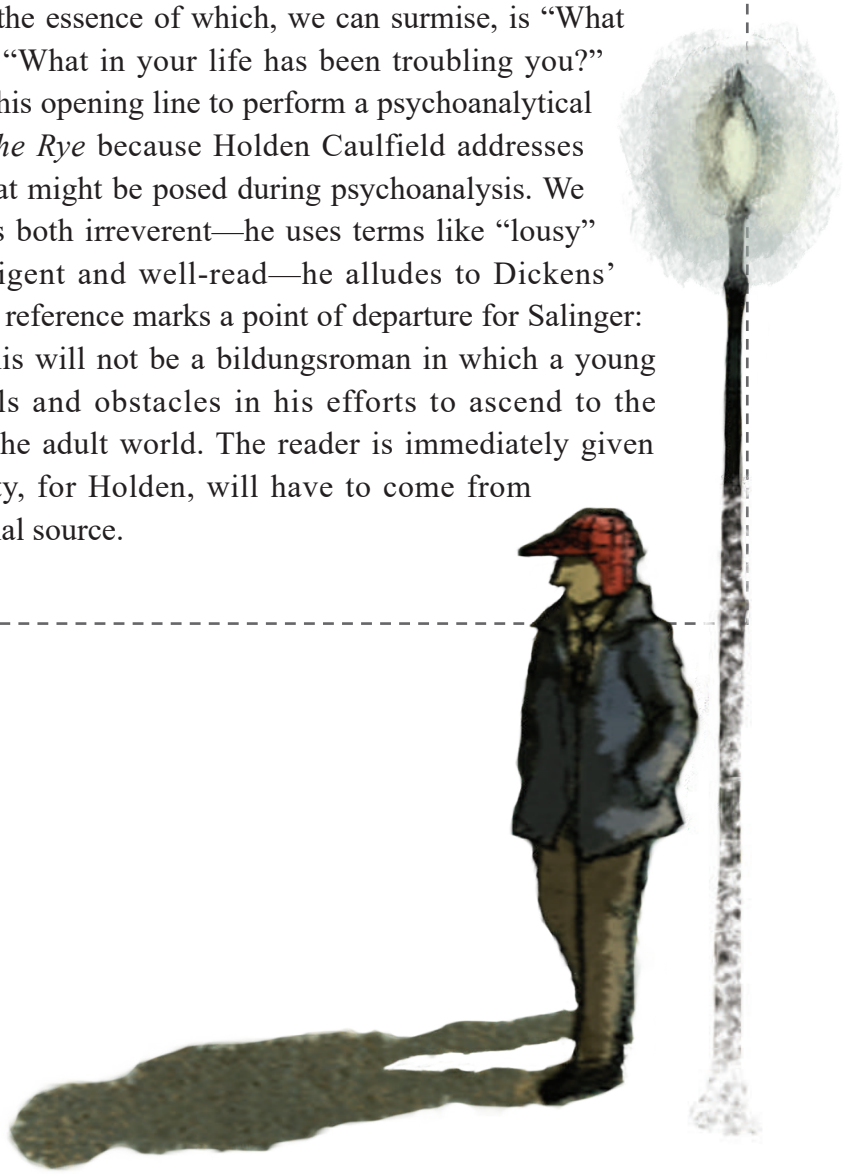
QUOTATION

"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" (1).

KEYWORDS: If, you, want

TIP

The reader's attention is "grabbed" through direct address: "you" is the second word of the novel. The opening line takes the form of a response to an unarticulated prior question, the essence of which, we can surmise, is "What has your life been like?" or "What in your life has been troubling you?" Thus, we are conditioned in this opening line to perform a psychoanalytical reading of *The Catcher in the Rye* because Holden Caulfield addresses the narrative to a question that might be posed during psychoanalysis. We also learn that the narrator is both irreverent—he uses terms like "lousy" and "crap"—but also intelligent and well-read—he alludes to Dickens' *David Copperfield*. The latter reference marks a point of departure for Salinger: unlike *David Copperfield*, this will not be a bildungsroman in which a young protagonist overcomes trials and obstacles in his efforts to ascend to the wisdom and equanimity of the adult world. The reader is immediately given to understand that tranquility, for Holden, will have to come from another, perhaps less traditional source.



2 [C] What is the significance of Holden "standing way up on Thomsen Hill, instead of down at the [football] game" (3)? Why, in the most basic sense, is he standing on the hill? What is the deeper significance of his stance, his act of self-positioning?

COMMENTS

BRAINSTORMING

LOGICAL SEQUENCE

QUOTATION

"The reason I was standing way up on Thomsen Hill, instead of down at the game, was because I'd just got back from New York with the fencing team. I was the goddam manager of the fencing team. Very big deal. We'd gone in to New York that morning for this fencing meet with McBurney School. Only, we didn't have the meet. I left all the foils and equipment and stuff on the goddam subway. It wasn't all my fault. I had to keep getting up to look at this map, so we'd know where to get off. So we got back to Pencey around two-thirty instead of around dinnertime. The whole team ostracized me the whole way back on the train. It was pretty funny, in a way" (3).

KEYWORDS: up, down, manager, fault, ostracized

TIP

On the literal level, Holden explains why he is standing on the hill: "The reason I was standing way up on Thomsen Hill, instead of down at the game, was because I'd just got back from New York with the fencing team. I was the goddam manager of the fencing team. Very big deal. We'd gone in to New York that morning for this fencing meet with McBurney School. Only, we didn't have the meet. I left all the foils and equipment and stuff on the goddam subway. It wasn't all my fault. I had to keep getting up to look at this map, so we'd know where to get off. So we got back to Pencey around two-thirty instead of around dinnertime. The whole team ostracized me the whole way back on the train. It was pretty funny, in a way" (3). The final line, here, is instructive. Holden stands on the hill both because he has been ostracized and because he considers himself "above" the rest of the Pencey students, who are "down" at the game. He feels both the pain of exclusion and a sense of superiority over the frivolous concerns of those his age, in his particular social class.

Chapter 2

3 [D] Before leaving school, Holden goes to visit his history teacher, Mr. Spencer, who says, "Life is a game, boy. Life is a game that one plays according to the rules" (8). How does Holden respond externally and internally—that is, in voice and in mind? What hypocrisy is the reader meant to perceive in Holden's internal response?

COMMENTS

BRAINSTORMING

LOGICAL SEQUENCE

QUOTATION

"Game, my ass. Some game. If you get on the side where all the hot-shots are, then it's a game, all right—I'll admit that. But if you get on the *other* side, where there aren't any hot-shots, then what's a game about it? Nothing. No game" (8).

KEYWORDS: side, hot-shots, other

TIP

Holden responds very reverentially to Mr. Spencer, "Yes, sir. I know it is. I know it" (8). For all his protest against what is "phony," Holden himself does not speak his mind to Mr. Spencer. His mind's response to the notion that "Life is a game" is: "Game, my ass. Some game. If you get on the side where all the hot-shots are, then it's a game, all right—I'll admit that. But if you get on the *other* side, where there aren't any hot-shots, then what's a game about it? Nothing. No game" (8). Of course, on the one hand, Holden is apart from the game; at Pencey, in the current moment, he is not at the football game while his classmates are. But his sense that he is not "on the side where all the hot-shots are" is short-sighted. He has many privileges that allow him to move from one prep school to the next despite poor behavior and disaffection. It is, of course, possible that he is referring to a world outside his privileged social class, but there is little ground for this conclusion; he makes practically no reference to any realm of experience outside (or too far outside) his own.