

Hypocrisy in *Catcher in the Rye*

Hypocrisy is the practice of professing beliefs, feelings, or virtues that one does not hold or possess; falseness. The word hypocrite was the word the Classical Greeks used for actor. Now we use the word to label someone who says one thing and acts differently. We call our parents hypocrites when they tell us not to do something, but they themselves do it all the time.

Holden in the novel sees hypocrisies in many of the people he meets. He finds these people “phony.”

Directions: while reading, make a list of hypocrisies. Paraphrase the scene or quote specific passages. Be sure to include page numbers. In the second column, explain what is hypocritical about the person and/or action. Many of the moments of hypocrisy might be what you as a reader find to be hypocritical of Holden. Don’t be afraid to include these moments also.

List at least 6. Please use back if necessary.

Quotes/ Paraphrase

Explain how this is hypocritical?

Example:

“Stradlater was more a secret slob. He always looked all right, but for instance, you should’ve seen the razor he shaved himself with. It was always rusty as hell and full of lather and hairs and crap” (27).

Stradlater puts out the image of cleanliness. He is a good looking boy. It is as if he professes the feeling that being clean is extremely important. But this is only superficial. As it turns out, he does not conduct his life with clean habits that fit the appearance that he puts off. This adds to Holden’s idea of him being a “phony.”