

3 Short Essays for *Catcher in the Rye*

Objective: students should make arguments that perhaps didn't think about while reading the book. They should learn that any argument can be made as long as it is well supported with textual evidence and that evidence is logically explained.

Directions: For the following paper topics, I am looking for how you support your argument. You must provide evidence from the novel. And you must explain that evidence. Don't merely say that the evidence shows something. Make sure you include your thinking of **how** the quotation or paraphrase shows what you think it shows. Pretend your reader has no idea of what you are talking about.

You are limited to one page. Make sure you don't waste space. This is more of an exercise in defending an argument than it is in writing a formal paper. Use quotations sparingly. You don't have a lot of space to summarize much. Don't write an introduction or a conclusion.

We are going to write on all three of the topics.

Tip to student: I care more about your explanation and how you make sense of the evidence than I do in what argument you make or what passage you quote.

Essay Topics:

1. What is Holden's relationship with his father? (Note: Holden's father does not appear in the book. We do not see Holden's interactions with his father. However, there is enough in the novel to draw an idea about what Holden's relationship is with his father.)
2. What does Holden feel about being rich? (Note: Holden does not explicitly comment on his wealth in the novel. But there is enough evidence in the novel to support an argument.)
3. Argue that Holden is not in love with Jane. Make it clear that even though most readers will think that Holden is in love with Jane, this is completely not the case. Make the argument that Holden does not want to be with Jane and use evidence from the text.