

# THE CATCHER IN THE RYE – J.D. SALINGER

## Book report

### 1. WORD STUDY

| Word                  | Word class                           | Meaning  | Sentence from the book (chapter, page)   | Word family  |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>1.CRUMBY</b>       | Adjective (slang); Variant of crummy | Miserable, wretched; shabby, cheap; dirty, run-down.           | That isn't too far from this <b>crumby</b> place,... (chapter 1, p. 5)                                 | No other word family   |
| <b>2.PHONEY</b>       | Adjective (slang)                    | Not genuine, fake; (of a person) insincere or pretentious.     | She probably knew what a <b>phoney</b> slob he was. (chapter 1, p. 7)                                  | Phoney (n.)  |
| <b>3.CORNY</b>        | Adjective (slang)                    | Banal; sentimental or mawkish; rustic or old-fashioned.        | I mean if a boy's mother was sort of a fat or <b>corny-looking</b> or something,... (chapter 2, p. 18) | Cornily (adv.), corniness (n.)                               |
| <b>4.A MUFFLER</b>    | Noun                                 | A heavy scarf worn around the neck for warmth.                 | "Under your <b>muffler.</b> " (chapter 4, p. 38)   | No other word family   |
| <b>5.HALITOSIS</b>    | Noun (medicine)                      | A condition of having offensive-smelling breath; bad breath.   | Sinus trouble, pimples, lousy teeth, <b>halitosis</b> , crumby fingernails. (chapter 5, p. 43)         | No other word family   |
| <b>6.UNSCRUPULOUS</b> | Adjective                            | Not scrupulous; unconscionable; conscienceless; unprincipled.  | He was <b>unscrupulous.</b> (chapter 6, p. 44)   | Unscrupulously (adv.), unscrupulousness, unscrupulosity (n.) |
| <b>7.TO GRIPE</b>     | Intr. verb                           | To complain naggingly or petulantly; grumble.                  | He came in <b>gripping</b> about how cold it was out. (chapter 6, p. 44)                               | No other word family   |
| <b>8.ROTTEN</b>       | Adjective                            | Distressed, uncomfortable, embarrassed.                        | Boy, did I feel <b>rotten.</b> (chapter 7, p. 52)  | Rottenly (adv.), rottenness (n.)                             |
| <b>9.A WAD</b>        | Noun (slang)                         | A sizable roll of paper money; a considerable amount of money. | My grandmother'd just sent me a <b>wad</b> about a   | To wad (v.)  |

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|                         |           |  | week before.<br>(chapter 7, p. 55)  |   |
| <b>10.SOGGY</b>         | Adjective | Humid; moist and heavy   | He was always going down the corridor, after he'd had a shower, snapping his <b>soggy</b> old wet towel at people's asses. (chapter 8, p. 58) | Soggily (adv.),<br>sogginess (n.)   |
| <b>11.SNOBBISH</b>      | Adjective | Having a character of a snob (anyone who thinks they are better than someone else based upon superficial factors).   | Like when I first met him, I thought he was kind of a <b>snobbish</b> person. (chapter 8, p. 60)  | Snobbishly,<br>unsnobbishly (adv.),<br>snobbishness,<br>unsnobbishness (n.),                          |
| <b>12.ABSENT-MINDED</b> | Adjective | So lost in thought that one does not realize what one is doing, what is happening; preoccupied to the extent of being unaware of one's immediate surroundings. | I'm so damn <b>absent-minded</b> , I gave the driver my regular address, just out of habit and all. (chapter 9, p. 63)                        | Absentmindedly (adv.),<br>absentmindedness (n.)   |
| <b>13.DISTINGUISHED</b> | Adjective | Having an air of distinction, dignity, or eminence.  | I saw one guy, a gray-haired, very <b>distinguished-looking</b> guy with only his shorts on... (chapter 9, p. 65)                             | Distinguishedly (adv.),<br>undistinguished,<br>welldistinguished (adj.)                               |
| <b>14.HIGHBALL</b>      | Noun      | A drink of whiskey mixed with club soda or ginger ale and served with ice in a tall glass.   | It probably was <b>highballs</b> , not water, but I couldn't see what they had in their glasses. (chapter 9, p. 65)                           | Highball (v.)   |
| <b>15.TO BRAID</b>      | Verb      | To fasten or decorate (hair) with a band or ribbon. To make a braid out of hair.   | Sometimes my mother <b>braids</b> it, and sometimes she doesn't. (chapter 10, p. 71)  | Braid (n.), braid (adj.)  |
| <b>16.PUTRID</b>        | Adjective | Of very low quality; rotten.   | The band was <b>putrid</b> . (chapter 10, p. 73)  | Putridity,<br>putridness,<br>unputridness (n.),<br>putridly,<br>unputridly (adv.),<br>unputrid (adj.) |
| <b>17.CRUELY</b>        | Adverb    | Crude (adj.) - not carefully or skillfully made; rough.  | I didn't do it <b>crudely</b> , though.   | Crude (adj.)  |

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|                        |   |  | (chapter 10, p. 74)  |   |
| <b>18.A GROOL</b>      | Noun (this word was invented by Salinger) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A pimpy-looking person;</li> <li>2. An unattractive, unfashionable person;</li> <li>3. A mixture of words girl, drool and ghoul;</li> <li>4. A mixture of words great and cool.</li> </ol> | The other two <b>grools</b> nearly had hysterics when we did. (chapter 10, p. 75)                  | No other word family                            |
| <b>19.TO JITTERBUG</b> | Verb                                      | To perform the dance jitterbug (n.) - a strenuous dance performed to quick-tempo swing or jazz music and consisting of various two-step patterns embellished with twirls and sometimes acrobatic maneuvers.                          | “Do you feel like <b>jitterbugging</b> a little bit, if they play a fast one?” (chapter 10, p. 77) | Jitterbug (n.)                                  |
| <b>20.TO CONCEAL</b>   | Verb                                      | To keep from discovery; to keep secret; hide something.  | I was <b>concealing</b> the fact that I was wounded sanuvabitch. (chapter 20, p. 156)              | Concealable (adj.), concealer, concealment (n.) |

## 2. QUOTES ANALYSIS

### IDIOMS

I mean he didn't **hit the ceiling** or anything. (chapter 2, p. 13)

**Explanation:** to get very angry and fly into a rage or start shouting.

**Comment:** it's an idiom, that can also be said: hit the roof.

I didn't have anything special to do, so I went down to the can and **chewed the rag** with him while he was shaving. (chapter 4, p. 31)

**Explanation:** to talk together in a friendly, leisurely way; chat at length.

**Comment:** It's a slang idiom, that can also be said: chewed the fat.

I'll **be up the creek** if I don't get the goddam thing in by Monday. (chapter 4, p. 32)

**Explanation:** to be in a very difficult situation that you are not able to improve.

**Comment:** it's an informal idiom, that can also be said: be up shit creek (without a paddle).

### QUOTES

“As a matter of fact, I'm the only dumb one in the family. My brother D.B.'s a writer and all, and my brother Allie, the one that died, that I told you about, was a wizard. I'm the only really dumb one.” (chapter 10, p. 71)

**Explanation and comment:** Almost everyone in the book kind of believe that Holden's the dumbest in the family, because he's the only one not concerning about

school and other people's opinions. Although, Holden also said that he's the dumbest in the family, I'm not sure if he really believes it. But I don't. I think he's just a quite normal teenager, maybe a little bit weird, but in a positive way, what, I think, it's good. If a teenager is only listening and doing things, others told him to do, without making his own opinions and decisions, then he's kind of a robot, I think. And Holden is just an opposite of that. He's an obstinate teenager, doing and discovering things on his own. The fact is that he's a little bit lost, but I think being lost in teenager years is sort of necessary, because only questioning and discovering ourselves makes our mind strong.

"Hey Horwitz," I said. "you ever pass by the lagoon in Central Park? Down by Central Park South?"

"The what?"

"The lagoon. That little lake, like, there. Where the ducks are, you know."

"Yeah, what about it?"

"Well, you know the ducks that swim around in it? In the springtime and all? Do you happen to know where they go in the winter-time, by any chance?" (chapter 12, p. 86)

**Explanation and comment:** I don't really have an explanation for this conversation between Holden and the taxi driver, but all I can say is, that I kind of understand Holden and his meaningless questions, because sometimes I also have that kind of questions, that nobody understand or finds it ridiculous. That's why I like this conversation. It's not an ordinary one.

"The mark of the immature man is that he wants to die nobly for a cause, while the mark of the mature man is that he wants to live humbly for one." (chapter 24, p. 195)

**Explanation and comment:** This is the sentence, Mr. Antolini wrote on a piece of paper and gave it to Holden. Mr. Antolini wanted to catch Holden in the middle of a fall, because he believed Holden's riding for some kind of terrible, terrible fall. I kind of agree with Mr. Antolini's sentence, but I don't agree with his affirmation about Holden's horrible fall, because I don't think Holden's falling or dying inside or something. I know that's Holden's lost and confused about his life, but I also know that he's not going to give up.

### 3. MY OPINION OF THE BOOK

I find this book very interesting and attracting, mostly because of the way that's written. The writing method, Salinger used in this book, is really different from other writing methods, I have met till now, because usually the book's idea is presented through the happening in the book, but Salinger's events have no particular or important meaning. He just presents the way of thinking of the main character Holden and that's why everyone can have their own version of understanding and making the opinion. The idea of the book isn't just right in front of our nose, but we have to find and understand it through the main character's comprehension, what makes the book more interesting. And I like the way Holden Caulfield is explaining things or experiences to himself,

because his explanations are kind of weird but at the same time very interesting and sometimes also funny. There are some thoughts, I found really interesting, for example: "The best thing, though, in that museum, was that everything always stayed right where it was. Nobody'd move. You could go there a hundred thousand times, and that Eskimo would still be just finished catching those two fish..." Although it's not a very special thought (it's just a fact), I can find a particular meaning in it. The museums are always going to stay the same, but we, people are changing all the time and that's why every time we visit a museum, we find it different. I like this idea a lot, because it's sort of explaining the nature of humans incessant changing. I can say that I like Holden's general way of thinking and explaining things, because I can kind of find myself in it. For example, I agree with his opinion about his school maids in Pencey Prep or his opinion about the famous performers in clubs. I also like his conversations with other people, because in the first place his questions and answers often seem kind of weird and without any meaning, but in the second place they are very true, direct and without any reflections or second thoughts. For example, the conversation with the taxi driver in chapter 12. I like people that are sincere, direct and obstinate and Holden is just that kind of a person. Choosing slang as a writing style, gave me more interest reading the book, because I have never read an English book written in slang, so I learned a lot of new words.

#### 4. CHAPTER 27 / MY OWN CONTINUATION OF THE STORY

I finally got out of this lousy place, where everyone thinks your mind got lost and they have to put it back there, where it belongs. Although, they sort of helped me, it almost killed me. I could probably tell you how it was, when I got home; you know, those dull conversations and everyone getting sentimental and all, but I don't feel like it. I really don't. But I can tell that I'm truly feeling much better now and much livelier than ever before. I guess those goddam psychoanalysts do really help, with all those ten thousand questions, you have to answer.

So, when I got home to my family and all, the summer holidays began, so we went on summer vacation, to the very same place as every year. So, I kind of feel, I should let you know what happened with that girl Jane Gallagher. When we got to our summer place, I gave her a buzz and she answered. I was sort of in shock at first and didn't know what to say, because I wasn't sure if she'll remember me, but she did and everything went well. I was really surprised and happy that she remembered me so well and wanted to see me again. So, we made an arrangement to meet in some pub on the very same day and have a coffee. It was nice seeing her again, but I can say, she wasn't the same person as the summer before last. Now I understand why she went out with that bastard Stradlater. Because they both have a goddam phoney character. I felt kind of sorry for her, but it didn't last long.

Mostly I'm bored on summer vacations with my family, but this time was different. Maybe because I was more positive minded and wanted to have some fun and that kind of stuff. I have met an interesting girl. Her name is Claire Stodfoot and I'm crazy about her. She mixed my head the first time we met on the beach. I kind of looked at her only

because of her great body and her beautiful red hair. I had no intention talking to her or something. But then she killed me. She came right in front of me and asked me this stupid question: "Do you feel all right, handsome?" The funny thing was, that she looked really concerned and all. She totally killed me, twice at once. So, till that day we kind of stick together all the time. I don't know if she is my girlfriend but I like just the way it is. She sort of reminds me of my sister Phoebe, only that she is much older. I know it's kind of weird and incestuous but it's true.