

**UNIT PLAN:** The Catcher in the Rye.

Written by AnnMarie Dull, tenth grade English teacher at the High School for Environmental Studies, New York, NY

**SUMMARY:** This unit plan for The Catcher in the Rye intends to use an observational, journal-writing approach to studying the novel. Directed towards tenth-grade students at a high school in New York City, this approach to the novel will involve students tracking Holden Caulfield’s observations of his environment and the people he is surrounded by. In addition, students will make their own observations about key aspects of the novel, and use the novel and the journal writing activity to make observations about their own world and the people in it. This plan, in place-based journaling fashion, will allow students to closely examine parts of New York City seen in the novel and the parts of New York City they experience on a daily basis. Students will join Holden Caulfield as he searches for a “home,” for that “peaceful place” he desperately searches for in the loud and busy city, and in turn, will be prompted to find and closely observe their own “peaceful place.”

**GOALS AND STANDARDS**


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General	Literature gives voice to issues and themes that transcend time and place. In order to communicate effectively and achieve a particular goal, writing and speaking must be skilled and appropriate.
Reading	Reading allows individuals to reflect on the people, events, and places in their own lives. Literature can be interpreted in various ways; however, there must be a basis for that interpretation. Authors use literary elements and devices to create themes in literature.
Listening/ Communication	Listening and speaking for understanding and social interaction are key components of communicating effectively and interacting with people
Writing	Effective writing keeps purpose and audience in mind. There are distinctions between formal and informal writing
Critical Thinking/ Communication	Making text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-world connections is an effective way to synthesize information from a text.
Expanding Perspective	Withholding judgment allows one to consider unfamiliar concepts, opinions, behaviors, and beliefs until a fair assessment is reached. Opinions and judgments are based upon criteria that come from a variety of perspectives. Personal decisions and actions may have far-reaching consequences and effects.

**ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS**


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Reading for Understanding	Critically analyze literature using interpretive/essential questions within the Junior Great Books framework. Identify the literary elements within a genre (unified characteristics of each genre). Pursue an ongoing reading project. Relate all literature to course themes and understandings. Analyze literature in terms of plot, setting, theme, characterization, protagonist, and antagonist.
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**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

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- What is truth? How do our truths compare to society’s?
  - What rules must people follow?
  - How our perceptions of ourselves differ from others’?
  - What is an individual’s relationship to society?
  - How does our environment (people and places) affect us?
  - How are observations of our surroundings an important way to understand our place in the world?
  - How does experience affect one’s observations?

## SPECIAL PERFORMANCE TASKS

(exams and quizzes excluded. Handouts will also be collected and used to assess student performance)

### TASK I: Ongoing Journal Activity (ATTACHMENT 1)

During the study of *The Catcher in the Rye*, students will be required to maintain a journal of their observations about the novel and about the world around them. Each day, students will record their class activities in their journals as well as maintain record of Holden’s observations about the people around him and about his surroundings. In addition, students will record their personal observations/reflections about the novel and all that inspires them.

The journal will be organized as such:

DATE	
	<u>Class work</u>
Aim:	
Class Activities	
	<u>Observations about the text</u>
Holden’s observations about the people around him:	
Holden’s observations about his surroundings:	
Personal Observations/Reflection:	

### TASK II: Special Observation Tasks – Due at the end of the unit. (ATTACHMENT 2)

Students will be directed to reserve space at the end of their journal notebooks to respond to the Journal Prompts listed below. Students should answer the first two prompts within the first three days of the study of the novel. Prompt #3 should be completed at the middle of the unit, and Prompt #4 towards the end of the unit. These prompts will be evaluated as a task separate from the ongoing journal project.

Each of these entries must contain the following heading information: Date, name of place, time of entry.

- Prompt #1: Where do you go when you need a “break” or a “time-out” from the world? Spend at least twenty minutes in this place and describe this place in great detail: make note of what you see, feel, hear, smell, why you visit this place. Be as specific as you can with details. (200 words)
- Prompt #2: Describe a place outside of your home where you feel comfortable, safe and relaxed. Describe this place in great detail: make note of what you see, feel, hear, smell, why you visit this place. Be as specific as you can with details. If you do not have a place, find one! Tell whether or not you have visited this place before, how often, when you usually visit, etc. (250 words)
- Prompt #3: Visit the place you wrote about in Prompt #2 for at least 20 minutes. Sit there for two minutes without talking, writing, texting, etc. –carefully observe your surroundings. Record your observations using as many specific details as possible. YOU MAY: consider how your perception or memory of this place differs than what you have just experienced; focus on one particular object you see. (250 words)
- Prompt #4: REPEAT PROMPT #3. This time, after you have made and recorded your observations, think about how your reading of *The Catcher in the Rye* has affected your ability or desire to observe the people and the world around you. Would Holden like the place you are visiting? Explain. (300 words)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES, HIGHLIGHTED LESSONS

## HIGHLIGHTED LESSON #1

Lesson Plan AnnMarie Dull	The Catcher in the Rye – DAY 1
Objectives (SWBAT)	Record observations about their surroundings; engage in a read-aloud; identify basic elements of setting, plot, and characterization of The Catcher in the Rye.
Understandings	Literature gives voice to issues and themes that transcend time and place; Reading allows individuals to reflect on the people, events, and places in their own lives; Authors use literary elements and devices to create themes in literature; Effective writing keeps purpose and audience in mind; There are distinctions between formal and informal writing; Making text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-world connections is an effective way to synthesize information from a text; Withholding judgment allows one to consider unfamiliar concepts, opinions, behaviors, and beliefs until a fair assessment is reached; Opinions and judgments are based upon criteria that come from a variety of perspectives; Personal decisions and actions may have far reaching consequences and effects.
Aim	How can observing our surroundings help us to understand our place in the world?
Activity 1	<p>Writing: For 30 seconds, look around the classroom. In your journal, describe one thing in the classroom with as much detail as possible (use sensory details). You must write for 5 full minutes. NO STOPPING!</p> <p>Volunteers will share their responses.</p> <p>Discussion: How do our observations of the same environment differ? Why do they differ?</p>
Activity 2	<p>Brief Introduction to <u>The Catcher in the Rye</u> and ongoing Journal Project: Note the importance of observations in the novel. Holden Caulfield, the main character, spends most of his time describing the people and the places around him. It will be your jobs as students to discover why he places such emphasis on these observations. In addition, you will keep a record of your own observations about the novel and about the places and people around you in the style of Holden Caulfield. Note that most of the novel takes place in New York City, where you live and attend school. Use the novel as a different lens through which you see New York.</p> <p>Read-Aloud: Students will take turns reading Chapter 1 aloud.</p>
Activity 3	Begin “Observations About the Text” portion of the ongoing journal project together. Students will work with a partner to identify the observations Holden Caulfield makes in Chapter 1.
Closing	Briefly reflect on the observations Holden makes in Chapter 1. Direct students to live the next month as “quiet observers” of their surroundings. Use Holden’s observations as a guide to view and truly get to know the world you experience each day.
Homework	<p>Begin your “Personal Observations/Reflection” portion of the journal project by answering the following questions in your journal tonight.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe how you perceive yourself as a student. Are you a good student? Do you work hard? Is school relevant?</li> <li>2. Describe your school. What does it look like, smell like, feel like, what do you hear?</li> <li>3. Where do you “fit in” in your school? What clubs do you belong to? Where do you feel most comfortable in your school? Why?</li> </ol> <p>READ CHAPTER 2</p>

## HIGHLIGHTED LESSON #2

Lesson Plan AnnMarie Dull	The Catcher in the Rye – Chapter 2
Objectives	Critically analyze literature using interpretive/essential questions; Identify the literary elements; Pursue an ongoing reading project; Relate The Catcher in the Rye to course themes and understandings; Analyze literature in terms of plot, setting, theme, characterization, protagonist, and antagonist.
Understandings	Literature gives voice to issues and themes that transcend time and place; Reading allows individuals to reflect on the people, events, and places in their own lives; Authors use literary elements and devices to create themes in literature; Effective writing keeps purpose and audience in mind; There are distinctions between formal and informal writing; Making text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-world connections is an effective way to synthesize information from a text; Withholding judgment allows one to consider unfamiliar concepts, opinions, behaviors, and beliefs until a fair assessment is reached; Opinions and judgments are based upon criteria that come from a variety of perspectives; Personal decisions and actions may have far reaching consequences and effects.
Aim	How does experience affect one’s observations?
Activity 1	<p>With a partner, use your observations of Chapters 1 and 2 to characterize Holden using the characterization chart <sup>(SEE ATTACHMENT 3)</sup>. Make note of what Holden tells about himself, what others say about him, and what you think about him. Be sure to use quotations and cite page numbers for each of your examples.</p> <p>Briefly Review class findings using Smart Board.</p>
Activity 2	<p>In Chapter 2, Holden says: “People never notice anything” (9).</p> <p>Describe something you notice that others do not. You have 20 minutes to consider and compose your response. Your response can be in the form of a paragraph, poem, song, drawing, etc. You should compose your response on loose leaf or construction paper and may use any of the materials in the art supplies box. You must briefly present your work in order to receive full credit for this assignment.</p>
Activity 3	Students will present their projects to the class.
Closing	Answer the Aim in your journals.
Homework	Continue ongoing journal project. Read Chapter 3.

## HIGHLIGHTED LESSON #3

Lesson Plan AnnMarie Dull	The Catcher in the Rye – Chapter 5
Objectives (SWBAT)	Critically analyze literature using interpretive/essential questions; Identify the literary elements; Pursue an ongoing reading project; Relate The Catcher in the Rye to course themes and understandings; Analyze literature in terms of plot, setting, theme, characterization, protagonist, and antagonist.
Understandings	Literature gives voice to issues and themes that transcend time and place; Reading allows individuals to reflect on the people, events, and places in their own lives; Authors use literary elements and devices to create themes in literature; Effective writing keeps purpose and audience in mind; There are distinctions between formal and informal writing; Making text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-world connections is an effective way to synthesize information from a text; Withholding judgment allows one to consider unfamiliar concepts, opinions, behaviors, and beliefs until a fair assessment is reached; Opinions and judgments are based upon criteria that come from a variety of perspectives; Personal decisions and actions may have far reaching consequences and effects.
Aim	How does Holden connect with the world around him?
Activity 1	With a partner, begin filling in your “Tracking Theme” handouts. <sup>(Attachment 5)</sup> Be sure to explain your choices using specific examples.
Activity 2	<p>In your journal, write about something you keep that is very special to you. From memory, describe that object to the best of your ability using as much detail as you can. You may compose a sketch of that object if you'd like. Explain why you keep this object and what it means to you.</p> <p>Volunteers will share their responses.</p>
Activity 3	<p>Reread the description Holden writes about Allie's mitt on page 38.</p> <p>Distribute the following questions. Students will have 5 minutes to consider and find textual evidence in preparation for a discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why is Holden unable to write the composition about a place and instead chooses to write about Allie's mitt?</li> <li>2. How is Allie's mitt symbolic?</li> <li>3. How is Allie's death symbolic?</li> <li>4. Why does Holden react so violently to Allie's death? Do you sympathize with him?</li> <li>5. Why does Holden choose to write the composition for Stradlater? What does this say about Holden?</li> </ol> <p>Engage in classroom discussion.</p>
Closing	Answer the Aim.
Homework	Continue ongoing journal project. Read Chapter 6.

## HIGHLIGHTED LESSON #4

Lesson Plan AnnMarie Dull	The Catcher in the Rye – Chapter 15
Objectives (SWBAT)	Critically analyze literature using interpretive/essential questions; Identify the literary elements; Pursue an ongoing reading project; Relate The Catcher in the Rye to course themes and understandings; Analyze literature in terms of plot, setting, theme, characterization, protagonist, and antagonist.
Understandings	Literature gives voice to issues and themes that transcend time and place; Reading allows individuals to reflect on the people, events, and places in their own lives; Authors use literary elements and devices to create themes in literature; Effective writing keeps purpose and audience in mind; There are distinctions between formal and informal writing; Making text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-world connections is an effective way to synthesize information from a text; Withholding judgment allows one to consider unfamiliar concepts, opinions, behaviors, and beliefs until a fair assessment is reached; Opinions and judgments are based upon criteria that come from a variety of perspectives; Personal decisions and actions may have far reaching consequences and effects.
Aim	How does experience affect one’s observations?
Activity 1	<p>Choose one of the following prompts and respond in your journal:</p> <p><u>OPTION 1:</u> Recall a person you saw today on your way to school. Describe this person and invent a story about them: Who is he/she? Where is that person going? Invent a distinct characteristic or hobby you think this person would have based on what you observed about him/her this morning.</p> <p><u>OPTION 2:</u> Compose a detailed observation about someone in your family, providing details that would give your reader insight into that person. Describe this person – physical and personal attributes. Describe what he/she does, a habit, or if he/she has a particular way of doing things.</p> <p>Share our observations.</p>
Activity 2	With a partner, revisit Chapter 15. Using specific examples and quotations, characterize the members of Holden’s family. <small>(Attachment #6)</small>
Activity 3	Using the Smart Board, have students share their findings.
Closing	Answer the Aim in terms of the descriptions you wrote in today’s first activity, and in terms of how Holden views his family.
Homework	Continue ongoing journal project. Read Chapter 16.

## HIGHLIGHTED LESSON #5

Lesson Plan AnnMarie Dull	The Catcher in the Rye – Post-Study
Objectives (SWBAT)	Research the history of key places featured in The Catcher in the Rye; Examine how these two settings have a profound effect on the protagonist; Relate The Catcher in the Rye to course themes and understandings; Analyze literature in terms of plot, setting, theme, characterization, protagonist, and antagonist; summarize and extract key facts from a source.
Understandings	Reading allows individuals to reflect on the people, events, and places in their own lives; Authors use literary elements and devices to create themes in literature; Making text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-world connections is an effective way to synthesize information from a text.
Aim	How can researching the setting of The Catcher in the Rye effect our reading of the novel?
Activity 1	<p>The class will be divided into groups of three. Each group will receive a different source of information related to Penn Station, The Museum of Natural History, or Central Park. Some sources detail the history of one of the places, while other sources detail specific details about that place (exhibits, architecture, features, etc.). Each group will read and analyze the source and present the material to the class. You must address the following points in your presentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Summarize the key points of your source.</li> <li>2. How does this information affect your reading of the novel?</li> <li>3. Do you think Holden would be comfortable in such a place? Explain using specific examples from the text.</li> <li>4. Have you ever been to this place? Share one of your experiences with the class.</li> </ol>
Activity 2	Class Presentations. I will project images of each place during the presentations. Presenters will be given hard copies of these images at the start of the task.
Closing	Answer the Aim.
Homework	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. EXTRA JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT (OPTIONAL): Visit one of the places researched today and compose an observation journal entry based on what you experience. Follow the instructions for “Special Observation Task – Prompt #3.”</li> <li>2. Ongoing journal project.</li> </ol>

CHAPTER ACTIVITY AND FOCUS QUESTIONS

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- Chapter 1
1. How are observations of our surroundings an important way to understand our place in the world?
  2. Describe how you perceive yourself as a student. Are you a good student? Do you work hard? Is school relevant?
  3. Describe your school. What does it look like, smell like, feel like, what do you hear?
  4. Where do you “fit in” in your school? What clubs do you belong to? Where do you feel most comfortable in your school? Why?
- Chapter 2
1. What depresses Holden? Why does he find these things depressing? (USE HANDOUT TO TRACK – ATTACHMENT 4)
  2. How does Holden feel about phony people? Do you share his views?
  3. What rules does Holden live by? What rules must people follow?
- Chapter 3
1. Why does Holden spend time with Ackley?
  2. How does Holden really feel about Stradlater?
  3. What are the things that depress Holden?
  4. What are the things that bother Holden?
- Chapter 4
1. Are people naturally good or bad at things?
  2. How much power do you have to alter your abilities?
  3. What is Holden good at?
  4. Can we trust Holden as a narrator?
  5. How does Holden interact with those around him?
  6. How do the people around us affect our behavior and mood?
  7. Why is Holden so protective of Jane?
- Chapter 5
1. Why is Holden unable to write the composition about a place and instead chooses to write about Allie’s mitt?
  2. How is Allie’s mitt symbolic?
  3. How is Allie’s death symbolic?
  4. Why does Holden react so violently to Allie’s death? Do you sympathize with him?
  5. Why does Holden choose to write the composition for Stradlater? What does this say about Holden?
- Chapters 6-7
1. What does Holden’s altercation with Stradlater say about him?
  2. Why does Holden attack him?
  3. Who or what was Holden actually defending?
  4. Why does Holden interact with these people whose values he despises?
- Chapter 8
1. Why does Holden lie so much?
  2. Is Holden a hypocrite? Is Holden the type of person he despises? What makes him so different?
  3. Does leaving Pencey early help or hinder Holden?
- Chapter 9
1. Where does Holden fit in?
  2. Why does he go to the Edmont Hotel? How does this new environment affect him?
- Chapters 10-12
1. What type of people does Holden actually like?
  2. Why does Holden visit places he doesn’t really like?
  3. Why are we polite? Why do we adhere to social norms?
- Chapters 13-14
1. Why is Holden depressed?
  2. How does Holden view himself?
  3. Why does Holden cry in this chapter?

4. Why does Holden engage with people he does not like, people he considers to be below him?
5. Why is Holden fixated on violence and suicide?

Chapter  
15

1. Is Holden Caulfield a hypocrite?
2. Where is Holden’s home?
3. How do our surroundings affect the way we think, grow, act?
4. How does Holden gauge intelligence?
5. Why can’t Holden stay in one place?
6. How does experience affect one’s observations?

Chapter  
16

1. How does Salinger use symbolism in The Catcher in the Rye?
2. How is the title symbolic?
3. Why does hearing the poor man sing the line “If a body could catch a body coming through the rye” make Holden feel better?

Chapter  
17

1. Are Holden’s dreams realistic?
2. Why does Holden engage with people he does not like, people he considers to be below him?
3. Was Holden’s date with Sally doomed to fail?
4. Why does Holden get so incensed when Sally does not support his dreams?

Chapter  
18

1. Why is Holden lonely? Is he ever able to feel less lonely? How?
2. What is Holden’s view of human nature?

Chapter  
19

1. What are Holden’s values?
2. What does Luce illuminate about Holden?

Chapter  
20

1. How can the events in Chapter 20 be considered Holden’s lowest point?
2. What is revealed about Holden in this Chapter?

Chapter  
21

1. Is Holden comfortable in his own home?
2. How does being with Phoebe affect Holden?
3. How does Holden’s relationship with Phoebe embody his values?

Chapters  
22-23

1. Why is Holden able to be so honest with Phoebe? Why does he choose to be honest with her?
2. How is Phoebe able to be so insightful?
3. Why does Holden get angry when Phoebe tells him he can’t like someone who’s dead?

Chapter  
24

1. How does Mr. Antolini represent Holden’s feelings and experiences with adults?
2. Why does Holden feel comfortable in Mr. Antolini’s home?
3. How are the events at the end of the Chapter symbolic and indicative of Holden’s inability to find a peaceful and comfortable place?
4. How can Mr. Antolini be seen as a “catcher in the rye”?

Chapters  
25-26

1. How is Holden’s interest in the ducks a metaphor for himself?
2. What is the “golden ring” Holden reaches for?
3. Why does he wish to disappear? Why does he feel the need to isolate himself from the world?
4. Why does Holden believe: “You can’t find a place that’s nice and peaceful because there isn’t any”? (204)
5. Why does talking about what happened make Holden miss everyone in the story?

ATTACHMENT 1

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**Ongoing Journal Activity for *The Catcher in the Rye***

During the study of *The Catcher in the Rye*, you will be required to maintain a journal of your observations about the novel and about the world around you. Each day, you will record your class activities in your journals as well as maintain a record of Holden’s observations about the people around him and about his surroundings. In addition, you will record your personal observations/reflections about the novel and all that inspires you.

Each journal entry should be organized by DATE. All class work and homework activities should be clearly labeled with a heading for each section. I cannot attribute points to unlabeled sections!

MODEL:

DATE
<u>Class work</u>
Aim:
Class Activities
<u>Observations about the text</u>
Holden’s observations about the people around him:
Holden’s observations about his surroundings:
Personal Observations/Reflection:

**NOTES:**

- Journals will be collected at the end of this unit and I will announce the date two weeks prior.
- I will randomly collect journals at regular intervals. These collections will not be announced, so be sure to stay on track!
- You should have one journal entry for each chapter. Should you choose to compose additional entries, you will be receive extra journal points.

ATTACHMENT 2

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Special Observation Tasks

In addition to composing ongoing journal entries, you must complete four special observation tasks that will gauge your composition and observation skills. These observations should be included in a special section at the end of your journal notebook.

You must answer each of the four prompts below. You should compose responses to the first two within the first three days of the study of the novel. Prompt #3 should be completed at the middle of the unit, and Prompt #4 towards the end of the unit.

These prompts will be evaluated as a task separate from the ongoing journal project and are worth 100 points each! While I will collect these at the end of the unit, I will check your progress through unannounced journal checks throughout the course of the unit.

Each of these entries must contain the following heading information: Date, name of place, time.

- Prompt #1: Where do you go when you need a “break” or a “time-out” from the world? Spend at least twenty minutes in this place and describe this place in great detail: make note of what you see, feel, hear, smell, why you visit this place. Be as specific as you can with details. (200 words)
- Prompt #2: Describe a place outside of your home where you feel comfortable, safe and relaxed. Describe this place in great detail: make note of what you see, feel, hear, smell, why you visit this place. Be as specific as you can with details. If you do not have a place, find one! Tell whether or not you have visited this place before, how often, when you usually visit, etc. (250 words)
- Prompt #3: Visit the place you wrote about in Prompt #2 for at least 20 minutes. Sit there for two minutes without talking, writing, texting, etc. –carefully observe your surroundings. Record your observations using as many specific details as possible. YOU MAY: consider how your perception or memory of this place differs than what you have just experienced; focus on one particular object you see. (250 words)
- Prompt #4: REPEAT PROMPT #3. This time, after you have made and recorded your observations, think about how your reading of *The Catcher in the Rye* has affected your ability or desire to observe the people and the world around you. Would Holden like this place you are visiting? Explain. (300 words)

\*BONUS POINTS\*

Research the place you visit. Find its history, its purpose, its function, architecture; research the environment including plants, soil, climate; the economy, population and so forth. You may do general research or choose to focus on one specific aspect. Compile this information and summarize it in no less than 200 words. Your research must be properly cited in MLA format and include a Works Cited Page.

ATTACHMENT 3Holden Caulfield Characterization Chart

Remember to use specific examples and cite page numbers!

<u>Observations Holden Makes About Himself</u>	<u>Observations Others Make About Holden</u>	<u>Observations You Make About Holden</u>

ATTACHMENT 4**What Makes Holden Depressed?**

Use this chart to keep track of the things that depress Holden. This will help you understand how Holden views the world, and what he thinks is important. You can also use the information in this chart to help characterize him.

Quotation	Page	Explanation	What Does this Say about Holden?



## ATTACHMENT #6

Caulfield Family Characterization Chart

Character	Characterization	Specific supporting examples from the text with page numbers
Holden's Father		
Holden's Mother		
Phoebe		
D.B.		
Allie		

