

Name:

US Lit – Cahill

Final Paper – The Catcher in the Rye

For this paper, you will be doing *Literary Analysis*, in you describe a certain way of reading a text, and use the text itself to support your argument. The skills involved in writing a paper like this (careful analysis, drawing conclusions based on evidence, justifying an opinion to other people) are not only necessary in academics but in your future professional and personal life.

Below is a process to follow to begin the paper. Answer the questions (where appropriate) on another sheet.

1. Choose a symbol or motif to focus on. Remember, symbols are concrete objects that represent some abstract idea, while motifs are concepts that are repeated throughout a work in different ways. We have discussed a few symbols in class (the red hunting hat, the ducks in Central Park, the History Museum) and some motifs (sexuality, falling (and catching), loneliness/alienation), and you can choose one of these or something different.
2. List a number of passages from the book (you should have a short quote or a paraphrase for a longer section, and a page number) that you will use in your essay.
3. Develop a thesis for your topic. You can use the format we did in class, in which you freewrite first and then sort through your freewrite. Remember, your thesis should be focused, specific and insightful.
4. Outline your paper. Decide what provable points will support your thesis. A lot of students organize their paper in chronological order (that is, following the order things happen in the book), but that might not be the best choice. Try to find patterns that link the details in other ways.
5. Write your essay. It should be **typed, 12-point font, and double-spaced**, and probably about 500 words. You should take into account a number of conventions of literary analysis as you write:
 - a. Assume that your audience has read the book. This means you should never summarize the story except to support a point of your argument. There is no need to begin your essay by giving a detailed overview of the plot, and major events and characters can be referenced without background.
 - b. Use MLA formatting. Since this should be a single-source paper (unlike a research paper, which draws from multiple sources)

you do not need a Works Cited or Bibliography page. Instead, name the source and author in the opening paragraph.

Thereafter, each quote or paraphrase should be followed by the page number in parentheses, like this (67).

- c. A novel is not a historical event or artifact. It exists always in the present. Be sure that when you reference events in story, you always use the present tense. For example, we do not write “Holden went skating with Sally” or “Holden put on the hunting hat when he felt alienated.” Instead, we write “Holden goes skating with Sally” and “Holden puts on the hunting hat when he feels alienated.”