

Pre-Reading Activities

Part One: Discovering Universal Themes

In literature, themes are universal, underlying ideas that relay a greater depth of meaning to the work. Below are several themes that J.D. Salinger incorporates into *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Directions: *In the space provided, define and identify the themes listed then evaluate and justify why they might constitute a universal idea. How might they affect the behavior of a character in a novel?*

For Example:

Themes	Define/Identify	Evaluate/Justify
Appearance vs. Reality	<i>The difference between or the inability to differentiate what is real from what is imagined; irony</i>	<i>Considering the limitations of human understanding and knowledge, fictional characters are often blocked by faulty information, their own misconceptions, or supernatural barriers.</i>

Themes	Define/Identify	Evaluate/Justify
Alienating Oneself as a Form of Protection		
Loss of Innocence		
Guilt for Sins/Crimes		
Disgust with Hypocrisy of the Adult World		
Anger as a Shield Against Pain		
Failure as Achievement		
Pain and Confusion of Sexuality		
Confrontation of Fear		