

THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY
IN
J.D. SALINGER'S
"THE CATCHER IN THE RYE"

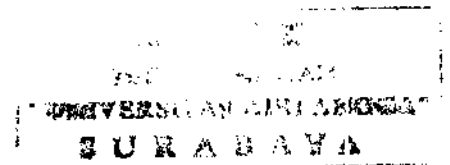


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ABSTRACT

Holden Caulfield is an adolescent boy on the brink of adulthood, who searches for identity as his attempt to find a meaningful place in adult society. He is a young adolescent, a native New Yorker, who has to undergo his adolescence without any kind of parental guidance, while his school to which he has been sent also fails to take place of his parents. He runs away from his prep school as part of his long protest against falsities around him and gets himself into a series of adventures which bring him to face more intense forms of the same kind of problems he has already experienced.

From his adventures, Holden finds that adult world is corrupt, full of hypocrisy and inhumanity, the kind of world he does not wish to enter. He is sickened by human behaviors and feels alienated from society. He finds it difficult to face the realities of the adult world and prefers to live in his own vision in which he becomes "a catcher in the rye," keeping children from falling off the cliff as his dream to prevent them entering the adult world.

Holden then fails in his search for identity since nobody gives him love, sympathy and understanding, the adolescent urgently needs to pass through this crucial period. The world around Holden even makes him feel alienated and isolated, therefore, he cannot adjust to society. Holden finally has to end up in a "rest-home," a place that gives him enough time to recall all his experiences and try to take a lesson from them.-