

Catcher in the Rye
Chapters 1-3

1. On the bottom of page 8, Holden and Spencer discuss life as a game. Holden says, “Game, my ass. Some game. If you get on the side where all the hot-shots are, then it’s a game, all right—I’ll admit that. But if you get on the other side, where there aren’t any hot-shots, then what’s a game about it? Nothing. No game.”
 - a. Whom does Holden mean when he says “the hot-shots”? Who are they in the novel?
 - b. What do you think these remarks reveal about Holden’s attitude toward life?
2. As Holden and Spencer “[shoot] the bull,” Holden thinks of the ducks in Central Park (top of page 13). Considering Holden’s current predicament, what do you think prompts Holden to wonder where the ducks go when the lagoon freezes?
3. What does Holden mean when he says that he and Spencer are “on opposite sides of the pole” (15)?
4. Reread the last paragraph beginning on page 17 and ending on page 18. Later, Holden pulls the peak of his hat “around to the front. . . way down over [his] eyes. . . [so he] couldn’t see a goddam thing” (21), and says to Ackley, ““This is a people shooting hat. . . I shoot people in this hat”” (22).
 - a. What might Holden’s hat symbolize? (Consider how he wears it).
 - b. In the first three chapters, how does Holden “shoot people”?