

Catcher in the Rye
Chapters 18-20

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. On p. 136, Holden once again muses about girls. Based on this passage, on Holden's earlier comments about girls (p.73, p.92), and on Holden's experiences with girls (Jane, Faith, Sunny, and Sally), characterize Holden's attitude toward girls.
2. Explain why the crying woman at the movies (p.139-140) bothers Holden.
3. At the end of ch.18, Holden says, "Anyway, I'm sort of glad they've got the atomic bomb invented. If there's ever another war, I'm going to sit right the hell on top of it. I'll volunteer for it, I swear to god I will"(141). Earlier, after the fight with Maurice, he said he "felt like ...committing suicide"(104). Do you think Holden has a death wish? Explain your answer.
4. a. How do Holden's recollection of Luce's ideas about "flits" and Holden's reaction to Luce's ideas (p. 143) illustrate Holden's naïveté?
b. Twice during Holden's conversation with Luce (144-149), Luce asks him, "When are you going to grow up?" How does their conversation support the idea that Luce has grown up and Holden has not?
c. Considering Holden's naïve attitude about sex, how can you explain his rather mature remarks at the top of page 148?
5. On p. 150, Holden once again doesn't call Jane. Why do you think Holden keeps resisting his urge to call her?
6. On p. 153, Holden says he "didn't even know where [he] was supposed to go," so he goes to Central Park to check on the ducks. Before he finds the lake "partly frozen and partly not frozen" (154), he drops the "Little Shirley Beans" record.
 - a. What could the broken record symbolize?
 - b. What could the condition of the lake symbolize?
7. As Holden envisions his funeral (155), he imagines that his mother wouldn't allow Phoebe to be there, and he mentions that he wasn't at Allie's funeral. Considering this similarity, what analogy can you draw between Holden's relationship to Allie and Phoebe's relationship to Holden?
8. On p. 156, Holden says, "You didn't know [Allie]. If you'd known him, you'd know what I mean," as he attempts to explain why the rain falling on Allie's grave "nearly drove [him] crazy." What else does having known Allie explain about Holden?
9. At the end of chapter 20, Holden says, "It was just very cold and nobody around anywhere" (157). How can you interpret this statement in a broader, metaphorical way?