Catcher in the Rye

J.D. Salinger
J.D. Salinger

- Born 1919 in New York City
- Flunked out of school and sent to military school
- Autobiographical
- Withdrew from society: conscious isolation and intentional separation
- Published 1951
- In some estimates, second most taught book in American high schools
- **Realism aspects:** language, problems faced by teens
- **Romantic elements:** innocence of childhood, quest for truth, idealization of past
- With its adolescent hero—twentieth century version of Huckleberry Finn.
The Controversy- “The Bad”

- Colloquial slang- use of profanity
- Cynical central characters
- “seedy scenes”

Watch for juxtaposition of above with romantic elements
The Controversy- “The Good”

• “Teaching without preaching”
• Addresses the adolescent stage of human development realistically
• Holden- composite sketch of American teen: most identify with aspects of his character
Does he represent every teenager's struggle for independence?
Themes (27)

- Phoniness in our society
- Dealing with changes
- Reality vs. illusion
- Dealing with death
- Adolescent problems and pressures
Motif - a recurring pattern of features: objects, images, symbols
Symbol - represents something that it is not

See handout (24) - note as you read
Title Passages

A: Allie’s baseball glove (38-39)
B: Kid singing (114-115)
C: Holden and Phoebe (172-173)
D: Phoebe and carrousel (211-213)