Socratic Discussion Notes Catcher in the Rye Part 1 – Chapters 1-7, pages 3-59

Socratic Seminar General Rules:

1. Speak so that everyone can hear you.
2. Speak without raising your hand.
3. Listen closely (take notes).
4. Refer to the text.
5. Talk to each other, not just the leader.
6. Invite and allow others to speak.
7. Consider all viewpoints and ideas.
8. Ask for clarification; don’t stay confused.
9. Know that you are responsible for the quality of the seminar.

Directions: Use the graphic organizer below to collect material for use in the Socratic Seminar

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| Opening Question:  Put yourself into Holden’s shoes.  What would you do if you were expelled from school and knew that your parents would not know you were expelled for two days?  Plan out those two days and please keep your responses school appropriate. |  |
| Core Question:  Consider the degree to which we can trust Holden's descriptions of other people.  For instance, is Ackley really as pimply and disgusting as we're told he is? (consider page 23)  Is Stradlater really as self-absorbed as Holden perceives him to be?  Describe how these characters might appear to someone other than Holden. |  |
| Core Question:  Holden often uses the term ‘Phony’ to describe people and their actions.  What does he mean? |  |
| Core Question:  How does J.D. Salinger create a strong narrative voice?  What words or phrases does he use to make us visualize, understand, or relate with Holden Caulfield? |  |
| Core Question:  On page 21, Holden states, “I’m quite illiterate, but I read a lot.”  What is Holden’s definition of a really good book?  What do you think a book has to do or have to be really good? |  |
| Core Question:  What does Holden like about the way Jane plays checkers?  Why do you think Holden doesn’t go down to say hi to Jane?  Why is Holden so nervous and worried while Stradlater is out with Jane?  A good |  |
| Core Question:  Holden has an interesting perspective on things that lends itself to humor.  Consider pages 11-12, where Holden describes himself, and pages 19-21, where he describes his red hat and Ossenburger the former Pency student.  List any other examples of Holden’s negativity and cynicism resulting in humor. |  |
| Core Question:  What do we know about Holden’s family?  In particular, describe Holden’s brother Allie. |  |
| Core Question:  Why is Holden being kicked out of Pencey?  In chapter one, why does Salinger show us the essay Holden wrote (the one about Egyptians)?  Why does Holden write a composition for Stradlater, though he can’t seem to pass his (Holden’s) own classes? |  |
| Closing Question:  Mr. Spencer tells Holden that life is a game, a game that one must play by the rules. Holden disagrees.  He feels it is only a game for people on the side with all the “hotshots.”  What does Holden mean?  Does he have a good point? |  |