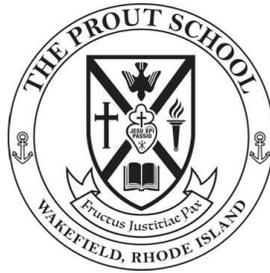


Prout School Summer Reading 2017



Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Prout School encourages students and families to continue reading during the summer months. Literacy research has shown that students often tend to experience the “summer slide” which is a slowing down in reading abilities, vocabulary, comprehension, and focus. This phenomenon is a tendency for students to lose some of the achievement gains they made the previous school year by not reading over the summer. This summer slide will frequently cause students to be less prepared for the academic expectations for the next school year. We want ALL students to have the same chance for academic success from the very first day of school!

Summer reading matters in other ways, too. “Reading empowers critical thinking skills. It can enhance empathy and lead to greater understanding of people who are different from ourselves, and it can help us appreciate other points of view”. (California Library Association) When parents/guardians are able to read the books their children have been assigned for summer reading, the experience can foster wonderful family discussions and build great reading memories. Familial modeling the importance of year round reading will encourage teenagers in becoming lifelong readers.

Reading is an important part of everyday life! The more our students read, the better readers they will be. If you have any questions pertaining to the summer reading, please feel free to contact Miss Mary Hoyt: mhoyt@theproutschool.org.



SUMMER READING 2017 ENGLISH HONORS TEN

Catcher in the Rye (J.D. Salinger)

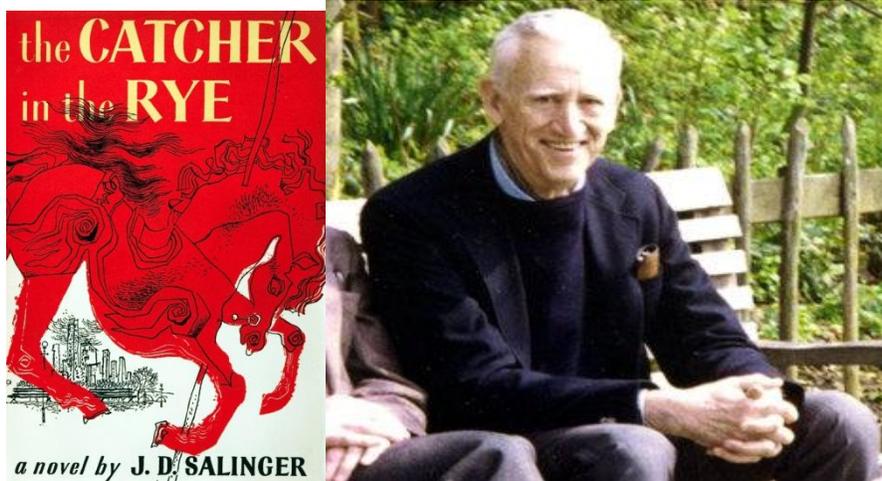
A Separate Peace (John Knowles)

Keep the questions at hand as you read and take notes, in the books (if they are yours) or on paper. **Answers to the questions SHOULD NOT be written out.** Guiding questions are just to help students with more effective comprehension.

Assessment – first full day of classes:

You will be asked to respond to short answer questions related to the Guiding Questions.

Catcher in the Rye



“J. D. Salinger , was born Jerome David Salinger in New York City to Solomon Salinger, a successful importer of European cheeses and meats, and Marie Jillich Salinger. By all accounts Salinger was indulged by his parents while growing up in Manhattan, especially by his mother. His intelligence was generally recognized by family and school instructors, but he refused to focus on his studies. Consequently his grades were consistently lacking and his education was fitful. In 1932, when his family moved to an affluent Park Avenue neighborhood, Salinger was enrolled in the private McBurney School. His poor grades, however, forced his resignation and he was subsequently enrolled in Valley Forge Military Academy in Wayne, Pennsylvania, until his graduation in 1936. After a briefly studying at New York University, Salinger's grades again forced his withdrawal and he was sent to Europe for eleven months to study his father's business. Most of Salinger's time in Europe was spent in Vienna, Austria, as well as in Poland, where he worked for a time at the

Bydgoszcz city slaughterhouse. Salinger was drafted into the U.S. Army in April 1942. Originally assigned to the Army Signal Corps, he was soon reassigned into the Army Air Corps and transferred from Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, to Bainbridge, Georgia. After a short stint in Ohio working for the public relations department of the Army Air Corps, Salinger was accepted into U.S. Army Counterintelligence and transferred to Fort Holabird, Maryland. In January 1944 he embarked for England, where he spent five months completing counterintelligence training and preparing for the Allied invasion of Nazi-occupied Europe.

During his military training Salinger continued to write. Between 1942 and June 1944 he published five stories in several magazines, most notably the *Saturday Evening Post*. He also continued writing his Holden Caulfield series, stories he would eventually build upon to craft *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Salinger landed at Normandy with the Fourth Infantry Division at Utah Beach on D-day (6 June 1944). He served with the Twelfth Regiment of the Fourth as staff sergeant and counterintelligence agent through five battle campaigns that included the Normandy Invasion, the Battle of Hürtgen Forest, the Battle of the Bulge, and the occupation of Germany. He was among the first American soldiers to enter Paris after its liberation, where he met and befriended Ernest Hemingway.

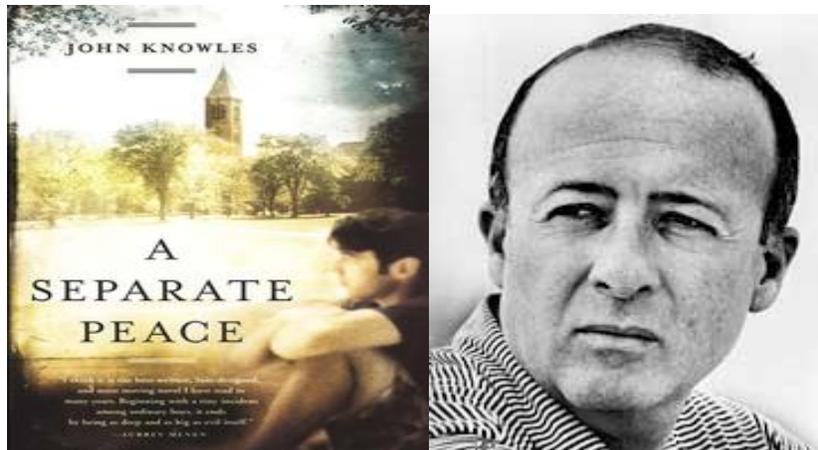
Despite his slim professional output, J. D. Salinger is regarded as one of the most influential and popular American authors of his generation. However, his decision to cease publication coupled with his struggle to protect his privacy during the second half of his life led to the widespread perception that he was a recluse and fueled a public fascination with him that rivaled his reputation as an author. Salinger died at his home in Cornish, New Hampshire in 2010. (directly adapted from: <http://www.anb.org/articles/16/16-03582.htm>)

Summary Overview

The hero-narrator of *The Catcher in the Rye* is a childlike sixteen year old, and a native New Yorker named Holden Caulfield. Not doing well academically or emotionally, he leaves his prep school in Pennsylvania and goes underground in New York City for three days. The novel traces Holden's attempts to come to terms with growing up, and seeing those around him grow up also. He becomes obsessed with trying to "protect" his sister, Phoebe, and his friend, Jane, from entering the world of experience. Holden is haunted by the memory of his brother, Allie, who died at age eleven of Leukemia. Throughout the novel, Holden comes to the realization that, "the thing with kids is, if they want to grab for the gold ring, you have to let them do it, and not say anything. If they fall off, they fall off, but it's bad if you say anything to them."

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Throughout the novel, Holden thinks of almost everyone as “phony”. What does he mean by this? And why you feel Holden looks at people in this way?
2. Holden *loves* the American Museum of Natural History. He has visited there every year throughout elementary school, and he very often returns to visit it as a teenager. Reflecting on what the museum deals with in terms of exhibits, why would Holden feel comfort retuning there again and again?
3. One of the most famous quotes in the book, and an allusion to the title, is: *I’m standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff—I mean if they’re running and they don’t look where they’re going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them. That’s all I’d do all day. I’d just be the catcher in the rye and all.* After finishing the book, what significance do you feel this quote has in relationship to how Holden looks at life and experience?
4. J.D. Salinger develops many symbols in the book to help illustrate what seem to be his perceptions on growing up, innocence and experience. As you are reading, take particular note of the following: Allie’s baseball glove, Holden’s hat, the ducks in the pond, the carousel. Keeping the entirety of the story in mind, what do you feel each represents? Do you feel these are effective symbols to help the reader understand the main theme? Why or why not?
5. On his own in New York City for the three days, what things does he experience have to deal with that teenagers of any time period have had do deal with? Why is Holden not very successful in coping with these common adolescent issues?



John Knowles was born in Fairmont, WV, September 16, 1926. He left home at the age of 16 to attend Phillips Exeter Academy, a New Hampshire boarding school. Knowles graduated from Phillips Exeter in 1945, then spent eight months in the U.S. Army Air Force's Aviation Cadet Program. He enrolled in Yale University, completing a bachelor's degree in 1949. After Yale, he became a reporter for the Hartford, Connecticut Courant, a position he left in 1952 to become a freelance writer. Knowles remained a freelancer for the next four years, until he became an associate editor for *Holiday* magazine in 1956. He spent those years traveling through Italy and southern France. He also wrote his first novel during this time, the unpublished *Descent into Proselito*. His first published novel, *A Separate Peace*, was published in 1959 in England and a year later in the United States. When it became clear that *A Separate Peace* was going to be a publishing success, Knowles resigned his position at *Holiday* to embark on a two-year tour of Europe and the Middle East. His second novel, *Morning in Antibes*, was published in 1962 while Knowles was still abroad. *Double Vision: American Thoughts Abroad* (1964) is a chronicle of this two-year journey.

He returned to the United States in the early sixties, though he continued to spend time abroad in between periods as writer-in-residence [University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (1963-4); Princeton University (1968-9)] and time in New York City. His third novel, *Indian Summer* was published in 1966 followed by the short story collection *Phineas* in 1968. He continued to write, publishing six more novels over the next two decades. In 1978, he donated his early longhand manuscripts to the Phillips Exeter Academy. John Knowles died on November 29, 2001, in Fort Lauderdale, FL, after a short illness. (adapted from: https://www.wvwc.edu/library/wv_authors/john_knowles.html#biography)

Summary Overview

The novel is set in a flashback style when the narrator, Gene, returns to the boys' boarding school, Devon Academy, he attended as a teenager. Set in New England, the story explores the friendships developed at the school during the time of the early years of World War II. The two main characters, Gene and Phineas (Finny) are complete opposites of each

other, although best friends at the same time. Coming back to the school as a thirty year old man, Gene reflects on the tragedies experienced there and the lessons learned.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Both *Catcher the Rye* and *A Separate Peace* deal with issues of growing up and discovering one's personal identity and place in the world. Compare and contrast the characters of Holden and Gene in relationship to how they each cope with the experiences they go through.
2. Gene and Finny are thought of as best friends throughout most of the novel. Reflect on their relationship: what are the individual personality traits of each? Do you think they have a "good" relationship? Why or why not?
3. Do you feel Gene purposely, or accidentally, or not at all caused Finny's accident? Why or why not?
4. Think about what could be major themes within the story: friendship, forgiveness, jealousy, competition, growing up. How does John Knowles develop each of these primary thematic messages in the story? Is he effective as a writer in exploring these themes? Why or why not?

