1. What kind of people, and/or under what kind of circumstances, does Holden call “phonies”? What do you think he means by this?
2. At times Holden tells us he acts like a little kid, and at times he tells us how mature he is. What do you make of this? What does this say about Holden? Cite examples of when he says both.
3. The two people Holden seems to have the most adoration for are Allie and Phoebe. Why do you think this is? Is it strictly familial, or is there something else? Who else does Holden consistently speak highly of? Why might this be?
4. What is it about the ducks that seems to captivate Holden? Why does he keep bringing them up?
5. Holden frequently says he’s not “in the mood” to call Jane. Why do you think that is?
6. On numerous occasions and all throughout the book, Holden constantly tells us he is lonely and depressed. Give reasons why you think he is lonely and depressed. How does this explain Holden’s journey from Pencey to the carousel in the park.
7. Why does Holden agree to meet Sally Hayes when he can’t seem to bring himself to even call Jane Gallagher, even though he seems to like Jane a lot more than Sally?
8. What is it about being “the catcher in the rye” that appeals to Holden?
9. What does Holden mean when he says “The thing with kids is, if they want to grab for the 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”?
10. At the end, we finally hear Holden say, I felt so damn happy, if you want to know the truth.” What made him feel this way, so contrary to how he had been the entire novel up to this point?