

May 2009



English  
Department

**Dear Sophomore (soon to be Junior) English Student:**

This year Archbishop Mitty High School continues its Summer Reading Program for all levels. For the American Literature course, we have chosen a book that we think you will enjoy. Furthermore, this novel relates to the class in various ways. The book information is listed below, with a short synopsis following it.

***Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger**  
(Little Brown &; ISBN #978-0316769488)

Holden Caulfield, a teenager growing up in 1950s New York, has been expelled school for poor achievement once again. In an attempt to deal with this he leaves school a few days prior to the end of term, and goes to New York to 'take a vacation' before returning to his parents' inevitable wrath. Told as a monologue, the book describes Holden's thoughts and activities over these few days, during which he describes a developing nervous breakdown created by his bouts of unexplained depression, impulsive spending, and generally odd, erratic behavior.

Since this book connects with many of the issues in the American Literature course, it is important that you do close/active reading because **you will be tested on this book during the first week of classes in August, and you will be asked to write an essay related to the topics below.**

**Chapter Summaries and/or comments on the top of each page should be done; these will provide you with notes to review before the test and during the writing process for the essay.**

Semester one will explore one primary topic in American Literature: Community. Please consider this topic carefully while close-reading *Catcher in the Rye* and, specifically, consider the following question below:

**Community:** Is the community Holden lives in nurturing or detrimental to his development as an individual? Where and how does Holden fit within his designate communities (Pencey Prep., his family, etc.)? Do these mini-communities that Holden lives in hinder his individual development, or does he hinder his own development?

You will be given the above topic and expected to write an essay about it.

Enjoy your summer vacation, and don't forget your summer reading!

**Sincerely,**  
**Junior English Teachers**

## Close Reading for Summer Novels

Close reading means reading *actively*—with a pen or pencil in your hand (**not** a highlighter)—and marking your book with as many responses as possible to what you are reading. You should have questions, ideas, and feelings as you read. Here are some guidelines:

1. **Circle** the names of new characters and of unfamiliar words.
2. **Underline** passages or **put an asterisk \*** beside passages you think are important in the novel. Next to any underlined or asterisked passages you should write comments. You don't have to do this for all passages you mark.
3. Put a **question mark** beside anything that you do not understand or would like to ask about in class. Passages that confuse you need to be clarified; mark them and then use the teacher to help clarify.
4. When you finish each chapter, go back to the top of the first page and **give the chapter a title. You must do this for each chapter.**
5. Also, when you complete each chapter, use the space at the beginning or end of the chapter to write a **brief summary** of what has happened. Your summary may be a short paragraph or it may be a list of what happened. Do this immediately after you finish the chapter. **You must do this for each chapter.**
6. **No highlighting.**