



The Catcher in the Rye Youth Versus Adulthood: Holden's Struggle

The theme of **youth versus adulthood** in *The Catcher in the Rye* refers to Holden's struggle between the innocence and simplicity of childhood and the skepticism and phoniness of adulthood. While Holden clearly prefers childhood, he also decides to go on an adventure full of adult experiences, something he is not mentally or physically ready for.

Join Holden's debate between youth and adulthood in *The Catcher in the Rye* by finding specific text examples and/or quotes that reveal each side of this theme. Using the balance scale graphic organizer below, weigh each side of this theme-driven argument based on Holden's actions and opinions. Find weight for the **Adulthood** side by listing examples of when Holden is trying to act more adult-like or attempts to participate in adult behaviors. Then, add weight to the **Youth** side by listing examples of when Holden is favoring child-like behaviors or expresses a distrust of adulthood. If your opinion is that Holden sits in the middle of this debate, include at least two examples for each side of the argument to show "balance" in the scale. If your opinion is that Holden favors one side, youth or adulthood, include examples to support your opinion.

Youth	Adulthood
Holden resents his brother's success as a Hollywood scriptwriter because it represents the adult responsibilities of having a job and working instead of taking fun trips to NYC.	Holden orders alcohol at several nightclubs and restaurants, trying to act older than he is.

RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.