ENG2D Unit 2 Midterm

Essay Topics for The Catcher in the Rye

Choose ONE topic

All essays will be five paragraphs. You must use concrete details from the novel to support your thesis.

This essay must be typed, double spaced, and in MLA Format.

1. In what ways is The Catcher in the Rye a novel of social protest? What aspects of society does Salinger critique? What alternatives does he offer?
2. Arthur Heiserman and James E. Miller Jr. write, “American literature seems fascinated with the outcast, the person who defies traditions in order to arrive at some pristine knowledge, some personal integrity.” In what ways does this novel exhibit a fascination with the outcast? Does Holden reach “pristine knowledge” or “personal integrity”?
3. The novel is structured around Holden’s encounters and interactions with other people. Does any pattern seem to emerge, or does anything change in his interactions as the novel progresses? How do Holden’s encounters with adults, children, women, and his peers evolve as the novel progresses?
4. Salinger in *The Catcher in the* Rye, uses symbolism to support the thematic idea that maturation and the loss of innocence are an inevitable rite of passage for all of humanity. In a well-written essay, prove this thematic statement using three different symbols. Discuss each symbol’s meaning and how it connects and aides the development of Salinger’s message.
5. Does Holden truly understand who he is? According to Holden, he is *not* a phony, he *is* a pacifist, and he would make a good “catcher” for children. Write an essay examining how Holden characterizes himself. Explain whether or not you believe he is fully honest with himself and others.