Niagara Catholic District School Board Writing Style Guide for High School Students

REVISED June 2008

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Preamble

The most frightening sight for any writer is the blank page. We may sit down with an idea, a plan, even some notes, but that blank page is an obstacle we have to overcome before the real work can begin. Getting to that first keystroke or putting pen to paper takes both effort and courage.

Becoming comfortable with the rules for the basic mechanics of scholarly prose is one way to begin that process. We all know by now that our writing should be grammatically correct, have no spelling errors, meet the requirements of the assignment, and so on. But the information provided here is about more than just another set of rules, protecting us from charges of sloppiness or, worse, plagiarism. This document is about learning how to become part of something bigger than ourselves, about joining a conversation, about making our words *matter*.

That is why instead of memorizing a set of conventions (after all, documents like this one can always be at hand) we should try to understand *why* we should pay attention to them. Think of these as a kind of code or shorthand: when scholars write for each other, they follow conventions like these so that certain information can be implicitly understood instead of overtly explained. They know, for example, that the parentheses at the end of some sentences point to a source; that the words in quotation marks or block indented twice from the left-hand margin were written or spoken by someone else; that underlined and italicized phrases are often book titles; and so on. None of that information needed explaining: the fact that the text was formatted according to Modern Language Association (MLA) conventions was all that was necessary. Before they even begin to read the text carefully, to see what the author has to say or to pay attention to the argument, the very fact that the text carefully follows the accepted conventions shows that the author is part of the conversation and should be taken seriously. That, more than anything else, is why attention to these kinds of conventions is necessary. In the end, if we want to be heard, we have to ensure that what we are saying can be understood.

Of course, we often find rules constraining, and we may think that having to follow them might stifle our creativity and make what we have say seem boring. To be sure, having the freedom to write anything we want, to say something interesting, provocative, and important, without any kind of rules or encumbrances, takes a certain degree of imagination and creativity. But saying something interesting, provocative, and important while still obeying a fairly strict set of policies--from the basic rules of grammar to the demands of assignments to the conventions detailed in the following pages--calls for a very different but equally challenging sort of imagination and creativity. From this perspective, then, such rules are perhaps less oppressive than they are liberating: rather than being thrown blindly into the wilderness, conventions like these provide a sense of direction but still leave the journey and the destination entirely up to us.

Every one of us has something to say, ideas and insights that deserve a fair hearing from classmates, from instructors, from anyone who chances to come across what we have written. And while it is true that we may not always be heard in the ways we would like, we have an obligation to make the effort, to do everything we can to ensure that we are heard when we have the chance. The guidelines that follow offer a way to ensure that we get that chance every time we pick up a pen or sit down at the keyboard.

And it is up to us to make the most of the opportunity, to make our voices heard, to join the conversation, to fill the blank pages.

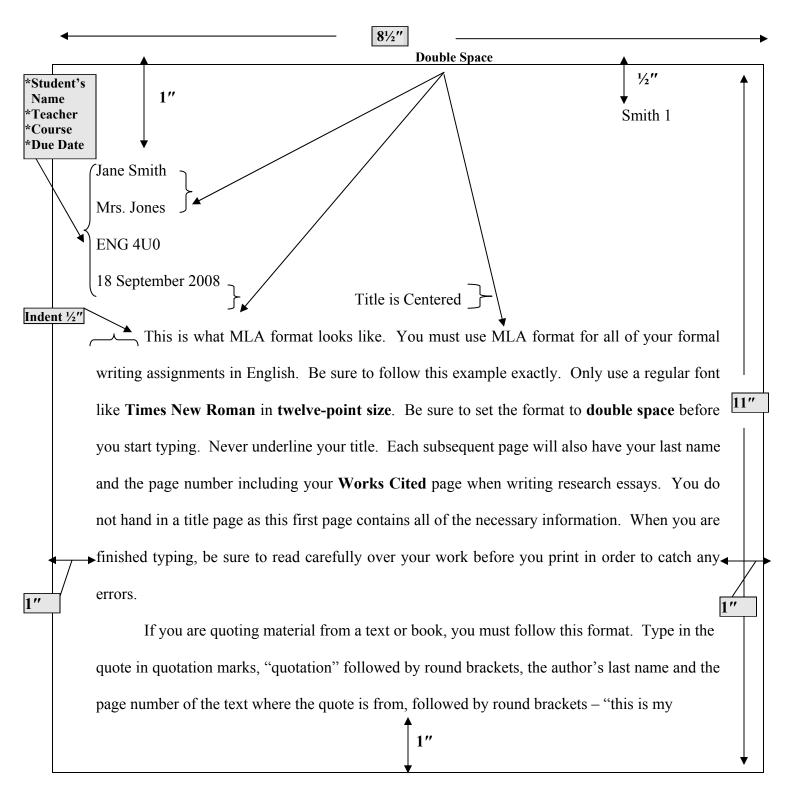
Dr. James Allard

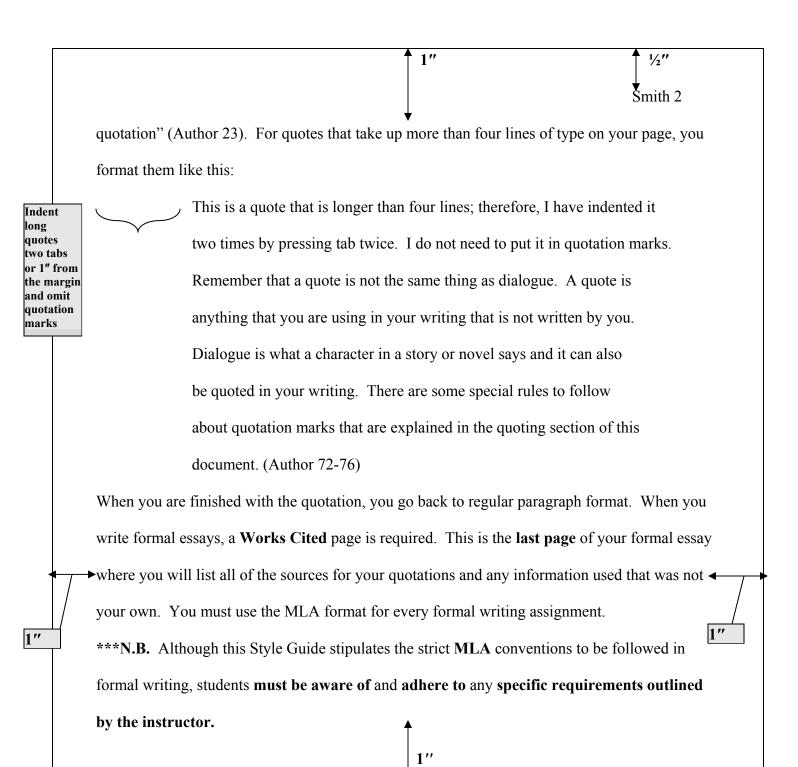
Department of English Language and Literature Brock University

Style Guide Practices – Technical Aspects

The following gives some basic features on MLA style practices. For details, check **The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers Sixth Edition**. © 2003

Parenthetical Documentation and the List of Works Cited





In addition to being listed in the **Works Cited** at the end of an essay, sources are also documented throughout the text of an essay in parenthetical citations. Sources fall into two general categories: **primary sources** and **secondary sources**. **Primary sources** are original works (novels, plays, films, paintings, poetry, recordings, etc.) and **secondary sources** are the commentary on those original works. The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself, or in parentheses (), at the end of your sentence. See sample parenthetical documentation that follows.

Examples of Parenthetical Documentation in MLA Format:

1. Author's name in text —

*Place page in <u>parentheses</u> ()

Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

2. Author's name in reference —

*Place author's name and page in <u>parentheses</u> ()

Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous flow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).



Why?

When writing a formal essay, it is important to incorporate quotations into your essay to strengthen your thesis. Your argument must be supported with proof in the form of quotations. Select quotations that will help illustrate the argument you are making.

When?

Each paragraph of a formal essay requires generally **one or more pieces of textual evidence in the form of quotes** to defend the topic of that paragraph.

How?

1. Long (Extended) Quotes

When a prose quote exceeds four (4) typed lines on your page it should be indented ten (10) spaces from the left margin and continue over to the right margin. A long prose quote is double-spaced.

Sample

At the conclusion of <u>To Kill a Mockingbird</u>, Scout experiences an epiphany of sorts while standing on the Radley front porch:

Neighbors bring food with death and flowers with sickness and little things in between. Boo was our neighbor. He gave us two soap dolls, a broken watch and chain, a pair of good-luck pennies, and our lives. But neighbors give in return. We never put back into the tree what we took out of it: we had given him nothing, and it made me sad. (Lee 278)

Scout's realization shows her transition from innocence to experience.

2. Short Quotes

When a prose quote is four (4) typed lines or less on your page it should be incorporated into the grammatical structure of your sentence.

Sample

Holden Caulfield is not the most reliable narrator. He says himself that he is "THE MOST terrific liar you ever saw in your life" (Salinger 16). Because of this, the reader must question the veracity of Holden's assertions.

3. Quoting Dialogue

A short quote that is dialogue is to be contained by double quotation marks; for quoted (spoken) material within the quote use single quotation marks. For a long quote of more than four (4) lines, use double quotation marks, indented ten (10) spaces from the left margin when the quoted material is dialogue.

Sample

In Salinger's <u>The Catcher in the Rye</u>, Holden expresses his concern about where the ducks in the lagoon go during the winter to his cab driver, "'The ducks. Do you know, by any chance? I mean does somebody come around in a truck or something and take them away, or do they fly away by themselves – go south or something?'" (Salinger 81-82). This is an example of Holden's Christ-like concern for the outcast and the innocent.

Sample

The mystery of Boo Radley is intensified when Jem confesses to Scout that he did not tell her everything about the night they went into the Radley's back yard:

"When I went back for my breeches – they were all in a tangle when I was getting' out of 'em, I couldn't get 'em loose. When I went back —" Jem took a deep breath. "When I went back, they were folded across the fence

... like they were expectin' me ... And something else – "Jem's voice was flat. "Show you when we get home. They'd been sewed up. Not like a lady sewed 'em, like somethin' I'd try to do. All crooked." (Lee 58)

Jem's admission explains his moodiness and foreshadows the gifts left in the hollow tree.

4. Quoting Verse (Poetry)

When quoting three (3) lines of verse or less, incorporate them into your own sentences. The end of each line of verse in the original is to be indicated with a slash (/). Verse quotations that exceed three lines are to be indented ten spaces from the left margin, just like long prose quotations. It is important to transcribe verse exactly as it appears in the original source.

Sample

It is important to note the difference between Macbeth's "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand?" (2.2.77-78) and Lady Macbeth's own reaction to the blood on her hands, "My hands are of your colour, but I shame / To wear a heart so white" (2.2.81-82). At this point in the play, it is she who is the author of the murder plot.

Sample

John Keats evokes a melancholy mood through the drug induced sleep imagery present in "Ode to a Nightingale":

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains

One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk: (1-4)

The speaker's dark quest for forgetfulness contrasts the bright summer song of the nightingale.

5. Quoting Drama (Plays)

When quoting dialogue between two or more characters in a play, you set the quotation off from your text as you would for a long quotation: indented ten (10) spaces from the left margin. Begin each line with the character's name in all capital letters followed by a period or a colon (whichever is used in the source).

Sample

Amanda is not the only character who dwells in the past in Williams's <u>The Glass</u>

Menagerie; Laura also treasures her high school memory of Jim:

LAURA: Yes. His name was Jim. (*Kneeling on floor, gets year-book from under menagerie.*) Here he is in "The Pirates of Penzance."

AMANDA (*Absently*): The what?

LAURA: The operetta the senior class put on. He had a wonderful voice. We sat across the aisle from each other Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in the auditorium. Here he is with a silver cup for debating! See his grin? (Williams 63)

The coincidence that Jim is later Laura's gentleman caller adds to the dream-like quality of this memory play.

6. Quoting from an Electronic Source (Internet)

When quoting from the Internet, follow the same rules that apply to other sources. For the citation of web sources, use the simple form of the URL enclosed in angled brackets. You should avoid using the Internet as a resource for academic essays.

Sample

During his torture of Winston at the conclusion of Nineteen Eighty-Four, O'Brien explains why the party works:

The image he gives of the future is that of a boot stamping on a human face—forever. Winston protests, because he thinks that there is something in the human nature that will not allow this, he calls it "The Spirit of Man." O'Brien points out that Winston is the last humanist, he is the last guardian of the human spirit. Then O'Brien gets Winston to look at

himself in the mirror. Winston is horrified by what he sees. The unknown time of torture has changed him into a shapeless and battered wreck. This is what the last humanist looks like. <www.genreser.com>

When faced with this bleak vision, Winston is finally broken: mentally, spiritually, and physically.

7. Adding or Deleting Words from a Quote

Sometimes it is necessary to add words to a quote in order to have it fit into your sentence; likewise, it is sometimes necessary to delete words from a quote for grammatical reasons or because the deleted material is lengthy or not necessary to your point. To add words to a quote, put the added words in square brackets []; to delete words, you must use an ellipsis mark (. . .) to show where the words have been deleted.

Sample

The harsh conditions at Lowood are emphasized with the change in the weather on Jane's second day at the school, "a keen north-east wind . . . had made us shiver in our beds, and [had] turned the contents of the ewers to ice" (Brontë 63).

Sample

The history and tradition of the draw in Shirley Jackson's short story "The Lottery" is apparent as Mr. Summers mixes the papers inside the black box, "The original paraphernalia for the lottery had been lost long ago, and the black box now resting on the stool had been put into use even before Old Man Warner . . . was born" (Jackson 25).

Style Guide – Works Cited: Sample Book Entries

- The heading **Work(s)** Cited is centered at the top of the last page of the formal writing assignment
- A list of all sources used must be documented
- Entries should be double-spaced and listed alphabetically by author (if no author is given, use the title)
- All lines except the first line of each entry should be indented five spaces.

1. The Basic Entry: A Book or Pamphlet by a Single Author

Salinger, J.D. <u>The Catcher in the Rye</u>. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1951.

2. An Anthology or Compilation

Toye, William, ed. <u>The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature</u>.

Toronto: Oxford UP, 1983.

3. Two or More Books by the Same Author

Steinbeck, John. Of Mice and Men. New York: Bantam, 1988.

---. The Pearl. New York: Bantam, 1975.

4. A Book by Two or More Authors

Scholes, Robert, and Rosemary Sullivan. <u>Elements of Fiction: Shorter Canadian</u>
Fiction. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1986.

5. An Introduction, a Preface, a Foreword, or an Afterword

Wiseman, Adele. Introduction. <u>The Stone Angel</u>. By Margaret Laurence.

Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989. xi-xvii.

6. A Book by a Corporate Author

Ministry of Education, Ontario. <u>The Ontario Curriculum Exemplars (Grade 11)</u>.

Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2003.

7. A Literary Work in an Anthology

Shakespeare, William. <u>Hamlet</u>. <u>The Heath Introduction to Literature</u>. Ed. Alice S. Landy and Dave Martin. Canadian ed. Canada: D.C. Heath, 1982. 437-556.

King, Stephen. "Apt Pupil." <u>Different Seasons</u>. New York: Signet, 1982. 111-290.

7.a. A Literary Work in an Anthology – Reprinted Article Previously Published

Ellis, James. "<u>A Separate Peace</u>: The Fall from Innocence." <u>English Journal</u> (1964): 313-318. Rpt. in <u>Contemporary Literary Criticism</u>. Ed. Jean C. Stine. Vol. 26. Detroit: Gale, 1983. 248-249.

7.b. Ohmann, Carol and Richard. "Reviewers, Critics and <u>The Catcher in the Rye</u>."
 <u>Critical Inquiry</u> (1976): 15-37. Rpt. in <u>Contemporary Literary Criticism</u>.
 Ed. Dedria Bryfonski. Vol. 12. Detroit: Gale, 1980. 516-517.

8. A Book in a Series

Blodgett, E.D. <u>Alice Munro</u>. Twayne's World Authors Ser. 800. Boston: Twayne, 1988.

9. An Article in a Reference Book

9.a. **Signed Article**

Thomas, Clara. "Laurence, Margaret." The Canadian Encyclopedia. 1988 ed.

9.b. **Unsigned Article**

"Berton, Pierre." The Canadian Encyclopedia. 1988 ed.

Style Guide – Works Cited: Sample Periodical Entries

1. An Article in a Newspaper

1.a. Signed Newspaper Article

Abley, Mark. "Irving Layton: The lion in winter." <u>Toronto Star</u> 15 Mar. 1997: J12.

1.b. Unsigned Newspaper Article

"New honour for Carol Shields." Toronto Star 23 April 1992: D7.

2. An Article in a Magazine

- 2.a. Barris, Ted. "Looking for eyewitnesses." Quill & Quire June 2004: 47.
- 2.b. Turbide, Diane. "Prairie Pulitzer: The prize caps a string of honours for <u>The Stone Diaries</u> by Winnipeg's Carol Shields." <u>Maclean's</u> 1 May 1995: 76-77.

3. **A Review**

Kerzter, John. "That house in Manawaka." Rev. of <u>A Bird in the House</u>, by

Margaret Laurence. <u>University of Toronto Quarterly</u>. 64 (1994): 213-216.

4. An Article in a Scholarly Journal

Thompson, Eric. "The World of Farley Mowat: A Selection from his Works." <u>Canadian</u>
Literature 90 (Autumn 1981): 163-164.

Style Guide: Citing Miscellaneous Non-Print Sources

1. A Television or Radio Program

- 1.a. "Yes . . . but Is It Art?" Narr. Morley Safer. <u>Sixty Minutes</u>. CBS. WCBS, New York. 19 Sept. 1993.
- Welles, Orson, dir. <u>The War of the Worlds</u>. By H.G. Wells. Adapt. Howard Koch. Mercury Theatre on the Air. CBS Radio. WCBS, New York. 30 Oct. 1938.

2. A Sound Recording

- Williams, Tennessee. <u>The Glass Menagerie</u>. Perf. Montgomery Clift,
 Julie Harris, Jessica Tandy, and David Wayne. Dir. Howard Sackler.
 Audio Cassette. Caedmon, TRS-M301, 1964.
- 2.b. IL Divo. Encore. Sony, 2005.

3. A Film or Video Recording

3.a. <u>The Polar Express.</u> Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Perf. Tom Hanks. DVD.
 Warner Brothers, 2004.

3.b. <u>It's a Wonderful Life</u>. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, and Thomas Mitchell. 1946. DVD. Republic, 2001.

Style Guide: Citing Electronic Publications

Possible components of an **Internet** entry.

- 1. Name of author, editor, or compiler of source.
- 2. Title of article enclosed in quotation marks.
- 3. Title of book or site underlined.
- 4. Name of editor, compiler of text.
- 5. Electronic publication data (date of electronic update and name of institution).
- 6. Date of access.
- 7. URL Uniform Resource Locator < enclosed in angled brackets>.

Note: Not all components may be available for every entry.

1. A Document from an Internet Site

"Margaret Laurence: Canada's Divine Writer." <u>CBC Archives</u>. 2006.

26 May 2007 http://archives.cbc.ca/IDD-1-74-161/people/margaret_laurence/.

2. An Entire Internet Site

Leonard Cohen: The Leonard Cohen Files. Ed. Jarkko Arjatsalo. 3 Sept. 1995.

26 May 2007 http://www.leonardcohenfiles.com/indez.html >.

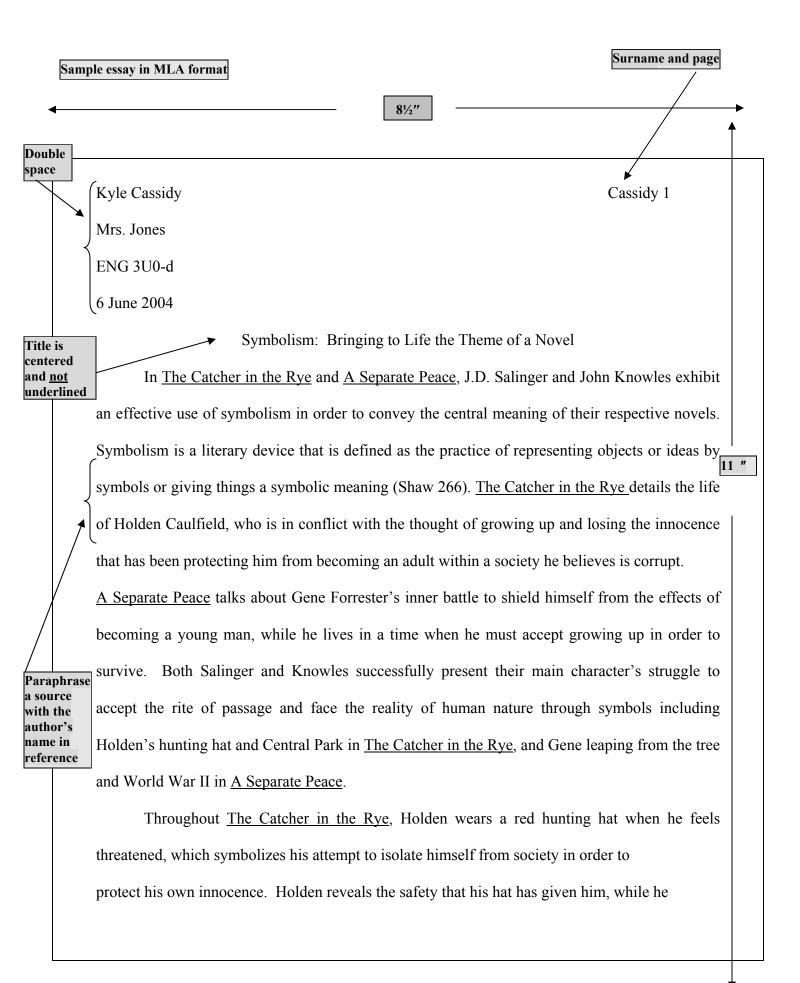
3. An Article from an Online Database

Takeuchi, Yasuhiro. "The Burning Carousel and the Carnivalesque: Subversion and
Transcendence at the Close of <u>The Catcher in the Rye</u>." <u>Studies in the</u>

<u>Novel</u> 34.3 (Fall 2002): 320(17). <u>Student Resource Centre Canadian</u>

<u>Edition</u>. Gale. ST MICHAEL HIGH SCHOOL. 3 June 2008

http://find.galegroup.com/ips/start.do?prodId=IPS>.



is sitting on a bench near the carousel. He says, "My hunting hat really gave me quite a lot of protection, in a way, but I got soaked anyway" (Salinger 212-213). Holden's hat does not protect him from the rain, but rather offers him the protection of his immaturity. Literary critic, Clinton Trowbridge, comments on Holden's hat as he discerns that "... wearing the cap also symbolizes his desire to break through the phony conventions of his world; ..." (Trowbridge 340). The hat prevents Holden from facing the reality of

growing up, and becoming a part of the adult society he is avoiding.

In-text
-citation
with the
author's
name in
reference

In <u>A Separate Peace</u>, Gene's first leap from the tree into the Devon River symbolizes a loss of innocence and his entrance into a fearful phase of growing up. At first, Gene is intimidated by the challenge ahead of him, but eventually he leaps from the tree without any idea of the repercussions it will have on him. Gene reveals, "With the sensation that I was throwing my life away, I jumped into space" (Knowles 9). Gene does indeed leave a part of his life behind on the branch when he jumps. He leaves his years of innocence behind and is now confronted with the reality of being grown up. Literary critic, James Ellis, reflects on Gene's transition as he states:

Long Quotation
Citation:

Indent two tabs.
Omit quotation
marks around
the quote.
Citation comes
after the period.

As the Biblical tree of knowledge it is the means by which Gene will renounce the Eden-like summer peace of Devon and, in doing so, both fall from innocence and at the same time prepare himself for the second world war. What Finny represents . . . is the pure spirit of man (mirrored in the boy Finny) answering its need to share the experience of life and innocent love. (Ellis 248)



This leads to Gene's struggle to come to terms with human nature and accept the rite of passage into adulthood

The ducks in Central Park, which Holden is worried about, symbolize his vulnerability to change, including growing up. When Holden is bored of listening to Mr. Spencer lecture him about life, as he is visiting the ailing teacher, he begins thinking to himself about Central Park. He discloses, "I was thinking about the lagoon in Central Park . . . wondering if it would be frozen over . . . and if it was, where did the ducks go" (Salinger 13). Holden concentrates on the ducks, because they are an important part of his childhood that he wishes will never evolve. He is afraid that if the ducks are forced to leave the park during winter, this will mean that it has come time for his own seasons to also change; instead of fall to winter, it will be the passage from childhood to young adulthood. Holden's struggle with accepting this change in human nature is his downfall and shows his deep reluctance to grow up, for fear of losing his childhood memories and innocence.

Lastly, World War II, an ongoing event of great importance for Gene and his classmates at Devon, symbolizes the war underway within Gene's head. This is how human nature has transformed his best friend into his worst enemy. He remembers Finny's views on war and is looking toward entering the fight. Gene considers his own view of war:

I could never agree with either of them. It would have been comfortable, but I could not believe it. Because it seemed clear that wars were not made by



generations and their special stupidities, but that wars were made instead something ignorant in the human heart . . . I myself had often been happy at Devon, but such times it seemed to me that afternoon were over now. Happiness had disappeared along with rubber, silk, and many other staples, to be replaced by the wartime synthetic, high morale, for the Duration. (Knowles 193-94)

Gene is acknowledging the fact that war is a part of human nature. After fighting a battle within his own mind, he understands the effects a war has on people. In war everyone loses, and boys are forced to grow into men, which is exactly what Gene experiences in his final year at Devon.

Within The Catcher in the Rye and A Separate Peace, the themes are conveyed through the use of symbols such as Holden's red hunting hat, Central Park, Gene's leap from the tree, and World War II. J.D. Salinger and John Knowles successfully reflect their character's struggle with the rite of passage and loss of their childhood innocence which protect them from the harsh reality of human nature. The result of each main character's struggle is the understanding that all nature must evolve and grow. Holden finally realizes this when he sees the carousel:

All the kids kept trying to grab for the gold ring, and so was old Phoebe, and I was sort of afraid she'd fall off the goddam horse, but I didn't say anything or do anything. 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. (Salinger 211)

Gene also reveals the understanding that he gains in his final year at Devon, with the recollection, "I never killed anybody and I never developed an intense level of hatred for the enemy. Because my war ended before I ever put on a uniform; I was on active duty all my time at school; I killed my enemy there" (Knowles 196). In the end, the effective use of symbolism by Salinger and Knowles allows their respective themes to evolve and grow, along with their characters, Holden and Gene.

Works Cited appears on the last page of the document.

The heading Works Cited is centered and <u>not</u> underlined.



Cassidy 6

Works Cited

Ellis, James. "A Separate Peace: The Fall from Innocence." English Journal.

(1964): 313-318. Rpt. in Contemporary Literary Criticism. Ed. Jean C.

Stine. Vol. 26. Detroit: Gale, 1983. 248-249.

Knowles, John. <u>A Separate Peace</u>. New York: Bantam Books, 1975.

Salinger, J.D. <u>The Catcher in the Rye</u>. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951.

Shaw, Harry. <u>Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms</u>. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976.

Trowbridge, Clinton W. "Salinger's Symbolic Use of Character and Detail in

The Catcher in the Rye." The Cimarron Review. (1968): 5-11. Rpt. in

Contemporary Literary Criticism. Ed. Roger Matuz. Vol. 56. Detroit: Gale

Research, 1989. 339-341.

Alphabetize entries according to the author's surname.

The first line of each entry begins at the left margin; subsequent lines are indented five spaces.

Double space within as well as between entries.

Plagiarism

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is literary or intellectual theft. Every student is expected to produce his/her own schoolwork. A student has plagiarized if he/she:

- 1) does not cite quotations and/or borrowed ideas.
- 2) does not include borrowed language in quotation marks.
- 3) does not put summaries and paraphrases in his/her own words.
- 4) copies and pastes information from the WEB without quotations and without citing the source(s).
- 5) purchases or acquires essays or other works and submits them as his/her own.

Plagiarism is both a moral and ethical offence and will <u>NOT</u> be tolerated. Be honest!

Be aware that teachers are licensed to use the web-based computer software **Turnitin** ® that detects plagiarism in student work. By analyzing a student's work and then comparing it against various other documents from sources like the Internet, databases, and other submitted documents, **Turnitin**® is able to mathematically assess the originality of a student's work as well as expose the plagiarized sections of the assignment.

Consequences that will result from plagiarism:

An automatic mark of zero on the assignment

Additional consequences that may result as determined by school Administration:

- Suspension
- Loss of privileges
- A loss of credit
- Parental contact/interview

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