

Characteristics of Holden's Style

1. use of first person viewpoint
2. use of dialogue
3. use of colloquial language / slang ("lousy," "crumby," "moron")
4. use of taboo language / curse words (esp. goddam and _____ as hell)
5. repetition of certain phrases ("kills me," "I really mean it")
6. vagueness ("and stuff")
7. exaggeration ("in about a thousand magazines")
8. contradiction ("I'm quite illiterate, but I read a lot.")
9. avoidance ("My hand hurts me...I don't care much.")
10. digression (everywhere apparently)

Warnings:

- Remember that Holden does not say everything that he thinks. Neither should you. Look back at how he talks to teachers and other adults. Hint, hint.
- Stay true to Holden's era. Do not modernize the curses or update the slang. If Holden didn't use the word, you can't use it.
- Talk the talk . . . but dig deeper than just the words. Create a piece of writing that moves as Holden's language moves – avoiding, contradicting, digressing – you know.

Your Turn: Write approximately a page on any subject in Holden Caulfield's style. Pick a subject that Holden would find thought-provoking. Yeah, like Holden ever really thinks! For a smart guy, he sure is a moron. Did you ever wonder who made toothpicks and what if they didn't wash their hands and stuff. I mean it, they could put their crumby hands on the toothpicks and then your grandmother could come in and pick one up, like at a cafeteria somewhere and put it in her mouth, all filthy with a million germs, for chrissakes. I don't even want to think about it. It kills me.

I have this grandmother,
and all, and she really has
~~these~~ ~~some~~ annoying habits I mean,
I love her, and all, ~~but~~ ^{cause} she's
my grandma, for chrissakes!
She just annoys the hell out of
me! She, for one thing, picks
her teeth with a toothpick,
like, after every meal, and all.
Did you ever wonder who makes
toothpicks? What? It's some
dirty bastard with griny
fingernails, and all? I mean,
he could have a thousand
infectious diseases, just in
his damn fingernails. And then,
some innocent old lady picks
her teeth with it, and gets
CANCER, for chrissakes! The
world is full of phonies!