

(Sample) *Catcher in the Rye* Literary Analysis Essay

Topic Sentence Example: In *The Catcher in the Rye*, the author uses flashbacks to show his audience that the main character is reflecting on his past, and the decisions that he has made.

Context Example: In the beginning of the text, the main character Holden is recounting the past events that lead to him running himself down, and having to take it easy.

Lead-in, “Textual evidence / exactly as it is written” (MLA in-text citation): To show the readers that the events of the book happen in the past the Salinger states, “I’ll just tell you about this madman stuff that happened to me around last Christmas just before I got pretty run-down and had to come out here and take it easy”(p.1).

Analysis Example: In this passage, the author states that the events that Holden is about to tell us about happened in the past. Specifically when Holden states, “Where I want to start telling” he is indicating that the narrative of the text has moved to a time in holden's past in which he wants to recount. By using a flashback Salinger not only provides foreshadowing for future events in the text but also tells the reader that the narrator to the text has already lived through these events, and can provide better detail than an individual experiencing them for the first time. Having lived through the experience the narrator is now free to reflect on the events without being weighed down by the anxieties that drove him to get run-down in the first place.

Conclusion: In *The Catcher in the Rye* Salinger's usage of flashbacks help give credibility to Holden's story and informs the reader that the events of the book take place in the narrator's past.