Feedback for the Holden Monologue

Help your author make improvements to their draft: be positive, praising what is good, but also make specific suggestions for what to cut, add, or revise. Ask questions if you find something confusing or unclear.

Comment on the following categories:

1) Voice: Does this first-person narrator sound like Holden?
Point to moments where you notice the voice working. List specific words, phrases, or literary techniques used to make this narrator sound like Holden.

Don’t be afraid to describe where the voice is not working. Where is there too much Holden? Not enough? Make specific suggestions that will help the author revise for Friday.

2) Setting, Scene, and Character Description
The best Holden Monologues have a strong sense of place. Think of how carefully Holden describes Old Spencer’s room, the screened-in porch where he played checkers with Jane, and the “vomity cab” where he asks Horowitz about the ducks. Holden also includes memorable details to describe people: Phoebe and Allie’s really red hair; Sally’s “little blue butt-twitcher of a dress”; Maurice’s hairy stomach under his elevator operator’s uniform.

Does this student create a clear sense of setting and characters in this monologue? Praise the best details included; ask questions and make suggestions if more description is needed. Remember that imagery that involves the senses—sight, smell, touch, taste and sound—helps to make the writing rich and powerful.

3) Focus and Idea Development
Although Holden is famous for his digressions, we can see his focus on topics that interest him: a criticism of what seems false (actors, hot-shots, money, cliques); a celebration of what seems nice (little kids, writers, teachers who pick up a student who falls).

Is there a “focus” for this monologue? How does the writer “organize” this response? Does it have a clear beginning and ending? Does the middle seem fully developed or partially done?

Grade (for today): HIGH MIDDLE LOW