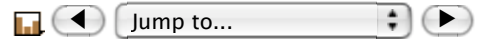


Catcher in the what?



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Language Barriers?

by [Megan Cleveland](#) - Tuesday, 30 May 2006, 08:58 AM

I wrote my research paper on this book the fact that it should be banned (although I do not believe this there was just more information on why it should be banned). Many of my arguments included the language Holden used throughout the book. How many times do you curse on a daily basis? Though you try and deny it, you know you do. If you curse under your breathe at someone who knocked into you in the hallway or you failed that big Chem test you studied all night for or even your favorite singer lost American Idol. You curse. We're teens and we think that by cursing it makes us seem tougher than we are. Its shows that we are rebellous which some are trying to achieve. The language used in the book is a bit dramatic and after a few pages of seeing "goddamn" every other word, it becomes numb. Numb in a sense that the word doesn't mean anything to you anymore and you don't even realize how much he uses the word anymore. Your eyes look over it like its just another "the" or "like." Yes the book uses offensive language but can you say you haven't done the same?

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [Joon Yang](#) - Tuesday, 30 May 2006, 09:00 AM

everyone talks about the language like it is the worst thing in the book. I think the worst things are the situations that he gets in.

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [Heather Ballew](#) - Tuesday, 30 May 2006, 09:15 AM

The language he uses is a little rediculous and i think it does get numb cuase i remember at the beginning of the book the word goddamn was like every other sentance but now that im further along in the book i don't notice it that much. Now that I think about it im not sure if that is becuase hes doesn't use it that much or if its cause ive become used to it. But anyways i'm agreeing with joon. The language is a problem but i think the situations he gets himself into are far worse. Like i just read about the prostitute which i was so surprised by cuase not many teenagers are put in that situation. Other situations that he becomes involved in are bad to but the way he handles them i think shows a lot about his values. For example the way he didn't do anything with the prostitute and how he talks bout not forcing girls into having sex shows a lot. That he respects them. But ya the situations that this teenage boy gets involved in are crazy!

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**Re: Language Barriers?**by [Corey O'Brien](#) - Tuesday, 30 May 2006, 08:59 PM

Name one situation. Explain why it's not good.

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**Re: Language Barriers?**by [Erin Sears](#) - Tuesday, 30 May 2006, 09:06 AM

I agree with your outlook on the whole language issue. Holden does use the word "goddamn" a lot, but realistically, you hear much worse language in the halls everyday at school. I get what you are saying when the word becomes numb. You as the reader just get so used to seeing it, you really don't think anything of the word anymore. I think that Holden is very dramatic with the use of language too. He will just randomly throw "goddamn" into what he's saying. It carries no meaning. When you first start reading the book, your reaction is kind of like oh no, he's using such bad language. But, further on in the book you just like, whatever...you really don't need to be using language, it doesn't mean anything. There are some situations that do call for language, plainer words just won't get your meaning across. But in this book, the excessive use of language is pointless. Holden uses bad language so often, it has lost its affect on the reader, and, most likely, anyone he is talking to in the story.

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**Re: Language Barriers?**by [Chris Lee](#) - Tuesday, 30 May 2006, 09:08 AM

Yes, I hate it how in the current world, I can't have twenty seconds in a crowd without hearing a curse.

Now, people are just using the words just as "sentence enhancers" (quoted from Spongebob) and just to sound "cool?"

But I remember one thing, about saying how cursing is good for your health because it lets go of your anger, as it is unhealthy to suppress anger, as it weakens your immune system (don't ask me how). If someone curses because they're furious, I can understand, but if someone just says, "That's *insert vulgar here* awesome!" then that isn't right in my terms.

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**Re: Language Barriers?**by [Lauren Tessier](#) - Tuesday, 30 May 2006, 09:09 AM

I agree that after seeing the word goddamn so much you get used to it. after a while of reading the book i got surprised when Holden didnt use goddamn every other word. Like Megan said you were so used to the word that it became just like the word the. it was part of the way Holden talked and the way he thought about things.

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**Re: Language Barriers?**by [Corey O'Brien](#) - Tuesday, 30 May 2006, 09:10 AM

I agree with this: "[A]nd after a few pages of seeing 'goddamn' every other word, it becomes numb. Numb in a sense that the word doesn't mean anything to you anymore and you don't even realize how much he uses the word anymore."

What this makes me wonder is, what other words have we done this to, that we've taken the meaning out of them and numbed them? And not only words ... but experiences. Like Holden at the end of the book, watching his sister on the carousel ... he takes such meaning out of that, or the author implies such a weight of meaning in that scene, but I think taken by today's standard of loud explosions and car chases and gun fights and ganstar stardom, a large percentage of this generation experiencing high school right now, would read it and say that nothing is happening. And so I think Megan and Holden and Salinger are asking how numb are you?

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I think the use of "goddamn" so much is pretty sweet. Not everyday do you run into someone that curses so much, and I think it tells you a lot about his character. He doesn't seem to care what other people think about him, but rather he cares what other people do. He always talked about how gross Ackley was, or how annoying Stradlater could be. He even said that he hates people without nice, expensive suitcases! He's very judgemental and blunt and his language throughout the story represents this. Holden is such a developed character and I think it's cool that his use of words tells us what he is like after reading only the first chapter.

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I agree that Holden does use the language a bit too much. But there are not too many books where you see this language used. In most books it will just said that the character cursed, but this book is different. Holden just says how he feels about something, and by using the language it shows he really doesnt like something. Since this book is a novel most people dont want to read it, because novels can become boring to them. By using foul language it keeps the readers interested, and makes them what to read more into the book, in my opinion. The author is getting your attention, and is able to keep it.

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The foul language in the book is excessive but it is what developes Holden as a character. Since there is no visual that the reader has of him, Salinger uses descriptive language that would describe Holdens personal traits . Everyone has traits that others notice. One trait given to Holden as a character is that he curses alot. Holdens language generally gets worse when he is mad or in a stressful situation.

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**Re: Language Barriers?**by [Sarang ReDDy](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 12:44 PM

I think the reason make a big deal about the language in this book is because we are not used to seeing these words in a book in school. With this use of language you can better imagine what its like to be a teen in the daily word. In most books, the characters are fake, becuse no one in real life is like them. With this use of language and behavior it makes a character more true.

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Sarang, you point out an interesting insight into the nature of language. Is there a "school language" compared to a "family language" compared to a "friend language"? Thinking of it this way, how many languages do you know? Does our language change each time we move to a different place? Is language more influenced by the place or the people in the place?

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Yes, actually the more that we think about it, there are different ways that we talk in different places. During school, we know that we're not supposed to curse in any way, or else teachers will get on your case, or if you curse to any other student or teacher in front of authorities, then you would be sent to the office. At home, it differs among students. some students aren't allowed to curse in front of their parents AT ALL or else they'd be in the most trouble ever, and some people are so rude to their parents that they curse them out. Also, if cursing in front of other parents, parents can judge you for what you say and do. for friend language, we talk in what ever way we want, and we say whatever we want, because they won't care & judge from what we say or do in front of them.

So, yes, our language does change [for most of us] when we move to different places, and i believe that language is more influenced by the people we are around.

[this is dorothy sunwoo. since everyone is online at once, i thought it would take too much time to sign off & sign on with my id. and there's no extra computers. sorry (=]

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I agree, when I started the book I was suprised to see the extreme use of language. I liked it though, school has become so fake, as if we're being hidden from the real world (which is not being done successfully). In the Catcher and the

Rye I can relate to the character much more, because I feel like its a real person.

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [krista mariner](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 12:48 PM

i defintatly agree with you on that one megan with how much everyone curses daily. in the beginning of the book i was suprised with how much he did say 'goddamn' and was tired of reading it but soon i just read it like another and or like, just like you said. i think i was shocked reading it so much in the beginning but then i realized how many more times i hear it everyday. in school, classes, on the bus, with friends, at the gym, or in the store, you pratically hear cursing every where you go. however there are some people who try not to curse at all and reading the repeating 'goddamn' may bother them. personally ive just became numb to alot of it because its an everyday occurance.

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [Corey O'Brien](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 12:59 PM

Other than certain words, what else do we become numb to?

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [calvin mao](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 12:49 PM

"Yes the book uses offenseful language but can you say you haven't done the same? "

I can say that i have done the exact same thing holden caufield has done. Constantly when im on the verge of failing school or failing a class, i tend to unleash my stress in the form of a single, or a chain of curse words. I believe that relative to the modern world, holden caufield's language seems quite mild. Hls way of saying "goddam" is a unique way that he uses to signify how he thinks of things. For example, he always calls people good, in a sarcastic way. To sarcastic people, he calls them Witty, to everyone else, he calls them either aces. In my opinion, his sarcasm is a lot worse than the language he uses, seeing as his language is not the main thing that gets him into problems, but the content in which he uses his words.

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [Easton Gallant](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 12:57 PM

I agree with calvin in that his language isnt that bad compared to how he gets under peoples skin with his little comments

saying goddamn and sunova*** isnt that bad compared to the things we hear everyday in the hallways or in everyday life

some people think that goddamn and sunova*** are bad language, but i bet most people use worse language in their lives, whether they actually say it, think it, or just whisper it to someone else

i think that holden's language could be a lot worse than people think it is in the book

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [jakob o'connor](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 12:50 PM

The language in Catcher in the Rye isn't that bad. It's how most kids his age talk. Whether you think it's appropriate or not, it is an accurate portrayal of the way teenage boys act and speak. If the author were to have a guy with a lot of angst who doesn't curse, it wouldn't be as realistic. If all curses and bad stuff were censored we would just be watching and reading dictionaries and reading rainbow all day.

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [Ben Winter](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 12:53 PM

Yes we are all guilty of cursing at sometime. It has just become a part of a normal day for most people. Most of the time people don't realize that they have said something bad until they think back on what they have said. Cursing does make some people feel superior or tougher than they really are. But the truth is it makes you look stupid. No one can claim that they have never cursed before in their life because we all do. Everyone has stressful times in their life and by cursing they feel that it relieves some of their stress.

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [Grace Son](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 12:54 PM

I think the language in the book is very accurate to reality. It shows how corrupt our world has become. This book knocks everyone out of their own little world into reality. in other words, [Books are usually written to put you into an imaginative world, but this puts you straight in our real world.]

In conclusions.
this book is true.
and shows people the non-fake side.
mmkay bye.

(=

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [Nandu Gottipati](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 12:57 PM

I agree with grace because people really do talk like this in real life. I think the

author did a great job with the language he used because it is still around 50 years later.

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [Gerald Obah](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 12:57 PM

I absolutely 100000% agree with Megan. Though people try to think that they are the most perfect people on the face of this Earth, we aren't. Nobody can say that they haven't cursed before, because that is just a big crock of S***(excuse the language). After seeing the word "goddamn" at least 50 times in the first few chapters, it really doesn't mean anything anymore, and people should not take it so seriously, haven't you heard someone curse before? No one should go up in arms just because you hear the f, c, b, ,a, or the s words. They aren't what as known as "good things to say or hear" however people still say them. It is like being mad at theives, you can say stealing is bad and you will be totally against it, but somewhere out there you will find at least one person who gets the biggest rush outta stealing. So, essentially the language in this book is really not that big of a deal, and people should just get over it!

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [John Marshall](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 01:06 PM

I don't really mind the language, I guess after hearing goddamn so much I don't even notice it anymore. It definately doesn't seem like a bad word anyway. Maybe the meaning of it has been numbed down. He doesn't really care how he acts towards anybody. He just says what is on his mind and what he wants to say.

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [Bruce Leuthold](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 01:14 PM

"Though you try and deny it, you know you do. If you curse under your breathe at someone who knocked into you in the hallway or you failed that big Chem test you studied all night for or even your favorite singer lost American Idol. You curse. We're teens and we think that by cursing it makes us seem tougher than we are." - Ms. Cleveland

For me being a very conservative Christian It is sinful to say Goddamn on account it uses the Lords name in vain. Most teens know not to curse and dont. I think that what you said Ms. Cleveland is not true. In the Christian environment I surround myself with, I don't curse and my buddies dont curse. And on that specail occasion where a curse slips out I apologize. But I think that the language in the book does not represent teens very accurately. The media represents kids as being so self centered and always searching for themselves and all of that junk, in my perception of teens nowadays is that we are a little more mature than that. And I think that the assumption that teens curse and is natural and should be accepted is pagan and is Hollywood.(Or what the media is trying to get you to believe). The use of the word "Goddamn" should not be tolerated or overlooked by my fellow REAL CHRISTIANS out there. Look at it this way would you tolerate someone damning your Dad than why is it OK to damn your God. The Bible says to hold God at first place above all others. So answer me why should

Christians allow it to be tolerated. Things out there are a little better than what Ms. Cleveland has to say. Just take a look at a the niceness out there. What do you think?

P.S. Oh and American Idol is dumb.

- Bruce

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [Megan Cleveland](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 03:01 PM

When I thought about creating a topic on language, I was not implying that every teen is like this. I was not trying to say that because teenagers curse we are looked upon as immature. I never said that every other word that comes out of some teens mouths are curse words. I did not mean to attack your religion and considering the fact that I was raised in a strong Catholic family, I did not mean to imply that saying "Goddamn" is acceptable. This is merely an observation made by not only me but obviously your other classmates. Listen in the hallways. When someone cuts you off in traffic. Different scenarios with different reactions. Maybe you aren't anything like Holden and don't have such feelings of hatred and don't feel its necessary to curse 24/7. But some do. Whether you choose to accept that this is the type of world we live in or not is up to you. This wasn't a topic meant for people to get shot down on what they think. Please don't turn it into something like that.

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [Corey O'Brien](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 07:01 PM

Megan, hi.

"Whether you choose to accept that this is the type of world we live in or not is up to you." A tough idea to swallow. Don't forget that we have the ability to change this world. And to that point, how do we? Or can we really? Can Holden? Does he?

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [Corey O'Brien](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 06:52 PM

What do I think?

First, I know that to simply write, "American Idol is dumb," can be read by those who like it as insulting to them. If you're going to be critical of American Pop culture, make sure you are critical and not insulting. Megan was just speaking from her experience, and, Bruce, your comment implies that her experience is dumb. This is not true. I'll wait for an apology on that one.

Second, to be Captain Obvious, we're all not Christians here, even more so when we take into account that this website is offered internationally. Not only that, but even those who are Christian reading this may not have such a strong faith as you, Bruce. This difference needs to be respected! To type the words "my fellow REAL CHRISTIANS" like that separates us, and turns a great set of beliefs into a barrier instead of a path to transcendence. Those words put you on your side and those who disagree with you on their side. This is far from democratic. I can't see how you expect to enlighten anyone with that

tone.

This forum is a place not to attack another's experience and his or her developing meaning of those experiences. This forum is a place for Megan, and everyone else, to express how she understands the world and for all of us to read and respect that understanding, so that we can develop how we understand the world together.

For instance, on any post that uses the generalization "most teens," the one posting is setting him or herself up for false logic. We went over this in class. We can't write "most teens" because we don't know most teens.

And to identify your environment as you do with "the Christian environment" is a step in the right direction, since you're providing for us one specific perspective. To that point about your buddies, it's great that you have a group like that. Understand that not everyone has that opportunity. Understand as well that even though some people may not have that opportunity, or are not exploring paths similar to your own, that doesn't mean their lives are not valuable. If you assume everything has value, then you're going to learn from everything.

I really like where you go with the media's representations of teens. I'd like to hear more about this. The following statement is shaky for me though, about teens being more mature than this. In the small of five years that I've been teaching I've seen life from many angles. What I mean by that is every year I meet nearly 130 new teenagers, and those 130 teenagers bring their lives into the classroom. From all of these people I've met, maturity levels always vary. That's part of the rub of being a teacher I guess. Trying to teach a class of thirty individuals who are at different points of growth. But in all of these different maturity levels, I've realized that there's a strong current, a powerful theme. That is search for self. Don't you think that life is a search for self? Even as a man of such faith, Bruce, I'm surprised that you toss that notion into the wind. I mean, God is not seen so easily in every situation, right? We have to search for Him sometimes. And everytime I embark on that kind of search, I realize that the reasons I don't see Him are caused by my own prejudices, that I prevent myself from seeing Him. Therefore, even a search for God is a recognition of self.

Be mindful of your tone.

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Re: Language Barriers?

by [Kerri DeVries](#) - Wednesday, 31 May 2006, 07:39 PM

k so here's what i think. i agree with everyone that has said that after getting into the book, all of the curse words used by holden and other characters become "numb" in the sense that you stop recognizing that they are used every other sentence. by salinger using the curse words in the book i think that it is a very accurate portrayal of teenagers in this day and age whether we notice it or not. nowadays everyone is cursing. some people say they do it because "they just feel like it" and some people just do it because of what they've picked up from others over time (parents, friends, siblings, etc.). i guess if when you are younger and the people around you curse then you begin to think, "hey, i guess it's ok if i do it then". for a lot of people (im guessing?) that even if they don't curse out loud so other people can hear them then they sometimes are cursing to themselves in their head. some people view cursing as being unclassy and others just view it as a part of their everyday life. people can also argue some people curse to make themselves look better which they think gives themselves superiority. but personally, i don't think cursing at someone makes you superior at all. but i guess i realized that after writing this i kinda rambled off into two directions. do u think that cursing at someone and just cursing to yourself are different?

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Rye