1. Though Holden’s first person account of his rebellious behavior often suggests that Holden is cynical, unmotivated, and without direction, his actions and attitudes are, in reality, both a result of his grief over his brother’s death and his unmet desire that the adults and peers in his life understand it.
2. At first glance, Holden’s critical attitudes and rebellious behavior appear to stem from a lack of academic motivation and desire to become a responsible adult. In reality, however, Holden’s poor study habits and disdain for most people are the result of Holden’s heartbreaking circumstances.

 Full of grief over his brother’s death and having no adult or peer to support him while he endures such overwhelming loss, Holden is lonely and isolated from the world. His profound grief and isolation—along with his unmet desire to find human validation for his sadness—make him especially conscious of the shallow value system he sees others around him embrace. Because the adults and peers in his life adhere to this distorted system, they are ill-equipped to show compassion to Holden, a young man they see as irresponsible, lazy, and odd.
 Rather than consider Holden’s legitimate reason for his “unacceptable” behavior, they “freeze him out” of their lives through their constant absence, blatant criticism, or ostracizing behavior. Then, when Holden defensively responds to their cold treatment by lying to them, calling them phonies, or even superficially agreeing with their shallow opinions of him, he, unfortunately, reinforces their illusion that he’s solely at fault for being unable to get his life together. They cannot see, nor do they care, that Holden has empathy for them, even as they do not understand him and push him away; they do not care to look for the authentic kindness that resides behind Holden’s own self-preserving phony exterior.

Reasons adults and peers are not available to give Holden the valuing and validation of grief he needs to heal:

Hypocrisy of the “status quo” who follow the rules of the “game”

Egocentric society because of distorted value system—many believe that those who “succeed” in life must “play the game” by adopting society’s values for money, a specific appearance, lifestyle, breeding, competition, sports, following the rules of the game, being tough, refraining from letting emotions affect performance

So…

Egocentric society
a. shuts out those who don’t play the game—those who don’t desire to compete, perform, have inside-the-box plans/expectations

b. cares what others think about them (wants others to see them “succeeding” by playing by society’s rules) so they withhold personal business

c. has unwillingness to look below the surface—because of the belief that they must follow the rules—suck it up

d. has desire to make $, be famous, be known---corrupted by desire for money and image over authenticity

Thus,..

Holden in his grief is in an environment of people who, not only may not know his tragedy, but who don’t ask about any possibilities for his lack of academic dedication other than he is unmotivated or lazy or basically a bad person

Holden cannot help believing that everyone is phony because he can’t get from them any authentic connection….they all see in him what society has conditioned them to see and Holden suffers for it