

## English 12 Original Composition

### Scale Point: 5 Comment

This paper was awarded a 5 because it is a thoughtful and interesting expository composition. There is a strong sense of voice and the student makes appropriate references to literature. While the errors, particularly in spelling, do not detract from the overall effectiveness, they prevent this paper from being a 6.

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Throughout literature the process of coming of age is a common subject. Writers often use tragic or confusing events to help a character receive a sense of maturity, and to put away childish foolery.

Golding's Lord of the Flies is perhaps one of the most captivating novels to focus on this idea of growing maturity. In this novel a plane carrying several school boys crashes on a deserted Island and the young boys are left to find for themselves. The boys form a clan and make plans for shelter building and supply gathering, but this quickly falls apart as the children turn to lazy revelries and bickering. Each character is forced to make his own personal discoveries in this book, as lives and sanity are put at stake, but it is the character of Ralph who makes the most significant change towards maturity, as he watches their "clan" fall apart, and his friends slaughter each other in madness. Ralph is forced to abandon his youth and age beyond his years as he first watches Piggy die and then flees for his life from the people he once knew as comrades.

J.D. Salinger's Catcher in the Rye also deals with coming of age, though in a much less traumatic way than Golding's novel. Salinger's beloved character, Holden Caulfield, is expelled from private school, again, and sets out for a weekend in New York City to understand himself. The reader is carried on a journey through Holden's mind as he wanders the city contemplating love, sex, and his future. Holden's maturity is not brought on by an abrupt traumatic event, but rather appears slowly as he begins to discover who he really is.

Other classics such as S.E. Hinton's Outsiders and the enduring Russian epic Doctor Zhivago also deal with characters facing important events which bring them to maturity. In the Outsiders it is Pony Boy's involvement in the murder of another youth, running from the law, and the death of his close friend which bring him to manhood, whereas in Doctor Zhivago it is Lara's encounter with sex which forces her to grow up.

Coming of age in literature and in real life is commonly brought around by some unexpected and often traumatic event, from expulsion, to death, to sexual encounters. Writers lose no time captivating these moments, which signify the inner strength of the human race, a strength which carries us through the hardest times.