Bildungsroman

Catcher in the Rye
Bildungsroman is a German word meaning “formation novel”
Bildung = education, cultivation, formation
Roman = novel
• Just as we identify some stories as horror or mystery, the Bildungsroman is a genre of writing.
Do you recognize any of these examples of a Bildungsroman?
All of these books have something in common:

• They are coming-of-age stories in which the main character grows in wisdom.

• They trace the physical, emotional, psychological, moral, and social development of the main character from youth to maturity.
Catcher in the Rye is one of the most famous Bildungsromans of all. Let’s see if we can find the hallmarks of a Bildungsroman in Holden’s story.

• An emotional loss at the beginning of the story that makes the protagonist set out on a journey.
• The protagonist only gains maturity gradually and through difficulty.
• The main conflict is between the protagonist and society.
Look for these elements as you read the rest of Catcher:

• The protagonist changes from a child to an adult.
• The values of society are gradually accepted by the protagonist.
• There is usually an epiphany, or a flashing moment where the hero finally 'gets it.' This lucidity changes them as a person. They learn what it takes to be a grown up in the real world.
• The protagonist is accepted into society.
• The protagonist is able to reach out to others and help them on their way as well.
Big Questions of a Bildungsroman

Who am I?

Where do I belong?
Group Work: How would Holden answer these questions?

- Where do I feel most comfortable?
- Who can I depend on?
- What really matters in life?
- How and where do I fit into the society around me?
Sources

http://www.slideshare.net/ciaffaroni/bildungsroman
http://education-portal.com/academy/lesson/bildungsroman-definition-characteristics-examples.html#lesson
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