

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Bartleby **Sample Answers** *Evidence and Analysis*



Directions: Gather quotes and other examples from the text to use as evidence that provides insight into Bartleby. Then write a paragraph that describes and analyzes Bartleby, including relationships, traits, motivations, fears, and how (or if) they develop over the course of the text.

Evidence		
1.	2.	3.
4.	5.	6.

Character Description and Analysis

Bartleby's actions throughout the story come to embody the idea of passive resistance. By the story's end, Bartleby therefore becomes an antagonist to **The Lawyer's** goal of getting the most productivity out of his workers. While Bartleby begins as an exemplary employee, he soon says he "would prefer not to" do any of the tasks The Lawyer asks of him other than write. Bartleby is also a testament to the inherent failure present in language: it is revealed that Bartleby previously worked at the Dead Letter Office, where his task was to destroy lost or undelivered letters. Further, Bartleby rebuffs any of The Lawyer's attempts to learn about Bartleby by talking with him, revealing nothing to The Lawyer about his beliefs, his family, his relationships, or his personal history. Eventually, Bartleby's passive resistance becomes more extreme and he refuses to do even the basic requirements of his copying job, The Lawyer tries to fire Bartleby, who prefers not to vacate The Lawyer's office, even after The Lawyer changes offices and leaves Bartleby behind. At this point, Bartleby becomes a testament to the limits of charity (and the inherent self-annihilating flaw of extreme passive resistance), as when The Lawyer returns to his office to offer Bartleby his old job back, or to get him a new job, or to take Bartleby into his own home until they can determine a better solution, Bartleby resists all of these efforts. Further, when Bartleby winds up in prison and The Lawyer returns to Bartleby to offer him good food to eat to keep him alive, again Bartleby resists, preferring not to eat until he, presumably, dies. Whether Bartleby has the right to kill

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himself through passive resistance—and whether The Lawyer should have endeavored to help him further—is up to the reader to determine.

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The Lawyer **Sample Answers** *Evidence and Analysis*



Directions: Gather quotes and other examples from the text to use as evidence that provides insight into The Lawyer. Then write a paragraph that describes and analyzes The Lawyer, including relationships, traits, motivations, fears, and how (or if) they develop over the course of the text.

Evidence		
1.	2.	3.
4.	5.	6.

Character Description and Analysis

We never learn his name, but **The Lawyer**, who narrates the story, tells us that he is a lawyer who owns his own law practice located on Wall Street in New York City. The Lawyer's status as both a Christian man *and* a business owner often forces him into internal conflict. As when he debates about whether to keep **Bartleby** employed, he often exhibits a tension between capitalistic pressure and Christian charitable morality, a tension many Americans were facing in the urbanizing economic boom of the mid-1800's. As with the character of Bartleby, the reader is told little to nothing about The Lawyer's personal life or family history, leaving the reader open to put themselves in The Lawyer's shoes. Like most reasonable people, The Lawyer's charitable urges have a breaking point—he's willing to tolerate Bartleby until Bartleby's presence threatens to hurt his business. Whether The Lawyer's line of charitable demarcation is right or wrong is up for debate, as The Lawyer puts up with far more than many reasonable bosses would (as can be seen by his relationship with **Turkey** and **Nippers**, neither of whom he fires despite each of them only putting in half of a good day's work each day), but there is little doubt that Jesus Christ would have put up with more than The Lawyer does, and would even perhaps have suffered in order to try to save Bartleby. Additionally, The Lawyer showcases the inability of language to connect people, as every one of his attempts to get to know Bartleby fail. Further, even The Lawyer's writing of this story itself—which delves into The Lawyer's complex feelings for Bartleby—is an example of

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language failing to connect, as Bartleby himself is deceased, and therefore can never read the story in order to understand the way The Lawyer felt about him. This irony of the text has led some critics to argue that the story of Bartleby is itself a dead letter that The Lawyer has written to a dead man to tell him what he couldn't say in life.

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Nippers **Sample Answers** *Evidence and Analysis*



Directions: Gather quotes and other examples from the text to use as evidence that provides insight into Nippers. Then write a paragraph that describes and analyzes Nippers, including relationships, traits, motivations, fears, and how (or if) they develop over the course of the text.

Evidence		
1.	2.	3.
4.	5.	6.

Character Description and Analysis
<p>A young scrivener in The Lawyer's office who does a kind of changing of the guard with Turkey at lunchtime—Nippers is only useful after lunch, because he suffers from what The Lawyer calls "indigestion," which could possibly be some kind of drug habit of which the Lawyer is unaware. Like Turkey, we never learn Nippers's real name, as The Lawyer only refers to him by his nickname.</p>

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The Other Lawyer **Sample Answers** *Evidence and Analysis*



Directions: Gather quotes and other examples from the text to use as evidence that provides insight into The Other Lawyer. Then write a paragraph that describes and analyzes The Other Lawyer, including relationships, traits, motivations, fears, and how (or if) they develop over the course of the text.

Evidence		
1.	2.	3.
4.	5.	6.

Character Description and Analysis
<p>This lawyer arrives in the narrative after The Lawyer has changed offices in order to escape Bartleby. This second lawyer informs The Lawyer (who narrates the story) that Bartleby hasn't vacated the premises of his old office, and threatens to call the police to take Bartleby away if The Lawyer doesn't intercede.</p>