



Writing Assignment #4: "The Test"



Lives of great men all remind us we can make our lives sublime
And, departing, leave behind us footprints on the sands of time.

--Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1838)

Write an **interpretive** essay about J.M. Witherow's short story, explaining why one of the candidates PASSED "the test" laid out by Julius Stern and the others FAILED.

Prewriting

Read the story carefully. Then select ONE adjective for each of the men that accurately describes his FUNDAMENTAL NATURE (his inner character, values, motivation).

1. Stern: _____

3. Hamlet: _____

2. Daly: _____

4. Brookfield: _____

Writing

- Begin with proper HEADING (over →).
- Write a proper INTRODUCTION. Don't just dive into your conclusions.
 - Begin by grabbing the attention of your reader. Open with a "**HOOK**."
 - After mentioning title and author, provide a *very brief* summary of the story
 - Then state your thesis. Which of the young men do you believe was awarded the final prize by Julius Stern?

- Write the BODY of your essay. See the FOUR CAUTIONS (over →).

In separate paragraphs, analyze each of the four characters (Stern, Daly, Hamlet, Brookfield) **in this order**. Begin each paragraph with a TOPIC SENTENCE where you simply state the adjective that you have chosen to describe the character. Then provide evidence (with in-text citations) from the story to support your argument. For example:

A word that describes Mr. Julius Stern would be _____. This is clear from the very beginning, when we learn that... (163).

Explain why each of the three young men wins (or doesn't win) Stern's grand prize. This is again an assignment based on a single source, so your MLA in-text citations should only include the page number, e.g. (166)—not the author's last name.

- End with a suitable **CONCLUSION**. Re-state your thesis and discuss your understanding of the THEME (Witherow's message or lesson) of the story.

over →

This is the HEADING which goes on the **front page** of your assignment.

U.R. Student

Writing Assignment #4

Professor Wall

English 1B

Month Day, Year

Your Creative Title (centered here)



What does “creative” mean?

The title of an essay is the first thing your reader will see. It is therefore part of your "hook." This means you have an opportunity in your title to "grab" your reader's attention. Within a few words, your reader is going to decide to continue reading--or not. The bottom line: DON'T BE BORING, either in your title or in your opening lines.

Caution #1: Do not re-tell the story. I already know it well.

Caution #2: Don't just record what each man DOES. Explain WHAT KIND OF PERSON he is.

Caution #3: This is not an opinion paper. **Provide evidence for your conclusions.**

Caution #4: This assignment is not asking who YOU think deserved the prize. It's asking you how STERN made his decision. What qualities in the winner were important to HIM?

Length: 2 pages minimum (typed, 12-point font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins) plus an additional Works Cited page. See web site for proper Works Cited entry.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

You have already had a discussion about the benefits of AI and an Academic Dishonesty “quiz” cautioning you about its dangers. If you choose to make use of AI, here are the key points to remember so that you don't receive a zero on this assignment:

1. You don't HAVE to use AI on this assignment. In fact, if you can avoid using AI, that is always the safer path. However, if writing these essays in English is about as much fun as getting a root canal from the dentist, then go ahead and see if AI can provide you a bit of relief.
2. AI is only a tool. YOU still need to be firmly in charge of what goes in your essay. So make sure that your end product follows the above instructions for this assignment.
3. Double check everything! If your essay contains falsehoods, you can't blame AI. It's only a computer that is GUESSING at what you want.
4. Include this sentence at the end of your essay (not on your Works Cited page): **This essay was written with the assistance of (name of AI search engine).** Failure to include this sentence makes you guilty of plagiarism and you will receive a zero on the assignment, but the zero may not appear immediately.