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Close Reading Organizer - Bartleby, the Scrivener

Directions: Read each summary entry and think about which themes listed in the Themes Key apply to it, then color in those themes in the Theme Tracker. Next, write a few sentences of Analysis to explain how the themes you chose apply to each summary section.

Themes Key

- 1 Passive Resistance
- 2 The Disconnected Workplace
- 3 Isolation and the Unreliability of Language
- 4 Charity and Its Limits

Summary	Theme Tracker				Your Analysis
<p>The unnamed narrator (who we will refer to as The Lawyer) introduces himself as a “rather elderly man” and establishes that he has had much contact with a set of men that have never before been written about —scriveners, or law-copyists. The Lawyer goes on to say that he’ll forgo telling the biographies of the many scriveners he’s met for the most peculiar of them all: Bartleby, of whom little to nothing is known, except what The Lawyer himself has witnessed (and one vague report he’ll touch on later).</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>The Lawyer then states that he is a lawyer, and describes his business as focusing around “rich men’s bonds, and mortgages, and title deeds.” The Lawyer is proud to have worked for the late John Jacob Astor (who was considered one of the</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>richest men in America), and he is also proud to have been bestowed the now defunct title Master Of Chancery. The Lawyer then describes his office. It is bookended by two windows, one that looks upon the white wall of a skylight shaft, and the other that grants an “unobstructed view of a lofty brick wall”.</p>					
<p>The Lawyer goes on to describe his employees before Bartleby’s arrival. First he delves into Turkey, a short, overweight Englishman of elderly age, who is extremely productive before noon. But, like clockwork, after that Turkey ceases to be productive and is instead “altogether too energetic,” creating inkblots on documents, making an unpleasant racket, and becoming easily irritable and prone to fits. The Lawyer recounts having tried to suggest that Turkey go home for the latter half of the day due to his old age, but Turkey had rebuffed him, arguing that to work during old age is honorable. And so, The Lawyer resolves to keep Turkey on as an employee, mostly for his good work during the first half of the day.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>Next, The Lawyer details his employee Nippers, who is also a scrivener. Nippers is about twenty-five years old, has yellow complexion, wears a mustache, and, in The Lawyer’s view, is “victim of two evil powers—ambition and indigestion.” Nippers’s ambition and indigestion lead him to grind his</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>teeth over copying mistakes, become impatient with his duties as a copyist, and continually express dissatisfaction with the height of his desk so that he incessantly fidgets with it. Nippers also receives visits from men in “seedy coats” whom he calls his clients. The Lawyer notes that Nippers does business at the Justices’ courts, and also at the local prison, The Tombs.</p>					
<p>However, despite these issues, The Lawyer considers Nippers a useful employee as a scrivener, as he is a good dresser, which adds an air of formality and importance to the image of the office, and he also writes in a neat, swift hand. Like Turkey, Nippers is only really useful for half of the day, as before lunch Nippers is prone to fits of irritability and nervousness, whereas in the afternoon he is calm and professional. So, The Lawyer notes, Turkey and Nippers’s fits “relieved each other, like guards” so that neither is unproductive (nor productive) at the same time.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>The last of The Lawyer’s employees is Ginger Nut, a twelve-year-old office helper being paid one dollar per week. Ginger Nut has a desk that he rarely uses, instead being employed mostly as a gopher, fetching cakes and other items for The Lawyer and his two scriveners. The Lawyer then recounts a time when Turkey clapped a ginger-cake onto a</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>mortgage as a seal, which infuriated The Lawyer to the point of nearly firing Turkey, who apologized to The Lawyer and told him it was his own stationery that he ruined, not The Lawyer's. Done with his descriptions, The Lawyer then states that his Master of Chancery title led to more business, and so he posted an ad for a new scrivener, which is how Bartleby entered his life.</p>					
<p>After exchanging words about his qualifications, The Lawyer is happy to hire Bartleby, because he hopes that Bartleby's "singularly sedate" nature might help calm the erratic natures of Turkey and Nippers. The Lawyer then describes the layout of his workplace, stating that glass doors (which The Lawyer opens and closes whenever he wants to) separate his own office from the area where the other scriveners and Ginger Nut work. However, The Lawyer decides to place Bartleby in a corner on <i>his</i> side of the folding doors, away from the other scriveners, but near a window that looks out onto the walls of two tall buildings. The Lawyer also puts up a "high green folding screen" that serves to "entirely isolate" Bartleby from his sight, but keeps him within earshot.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>At first, Bartleby provides The Lawyer with an enormous quantity of writing, working nonstop all day and not pausing for lunch. The Lawyer notes that</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>he would have been quite delighted by this, if not for the fact that Bartleby writes “silently, palely, mechanically” rather than with any delight. The Lawyer then mentions that an important part of a scrivener’s job is to re-read what they have written in order to check for mistakes. Traditionally, when there is more than one scrivener present, they help each other with their corrections, and, because it’s tedious, The Lawyer believes this is not work that someone like “the mettlesome poet, Byron,” would be willing to do.</p>					
<p>In the past, The Lawyer says that he has helped with correcting copy himself, and one of the reasons he placed Bartleby so close by was so that he could easily call him over to go through this correcting process. However, on the third day (The Lawyer thinks) of Bartleby’s employment, The Lawyer hastily calls Bartleby over to correct a paper he is holding. He holds the copy out for Bartleby to take, but Bartleby never comes to his desk, instead calling out from behind the screen, “I would prefer not to.”</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>The Lawyer stews in silence, and initially thinks he has misheard Bartleby. He repeats the request, and Bartleby again responds with, “I would prefer not to.” After questioning what Bartleby means by this phrase, The Lawyer gets up, walks over to Bartleby, and again tells his</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>employee to come and compare the sheet with him for errors, thrusting the sheet over the screen towards his employee. But Bartleby doesn't take it, and instead repeats that he "would prefer not to." The Lawyer examines Bartleby's features, and says that if he could have seen <i>any</i> glimmer of agitation, "uneasiness, anger, impatience" or any other negative intentions, he would have fired Bartleby on the spot.</p>					
<p>However, after staring at Bartleby and watching him write for a while, The Lawyer can detect no such intention, and so, though he finds Bartleby's behavior "very strange," he becomes busy with work and resolves to deal with it in the future. He then calls Nippers into his office, and the two of them correct the copy together.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>A few days later, The Lawyer convenes a meeting in his office, calling in Turkey, Nippers, and Ginger Nut, as Bartleby has just finished writing out four lengthy copies of a week's testimony that The Lawyer presided over in the High Court of Chancery. Intending to read from the original while his four employees examine the copies, The Lawyer calls to Bartleby that the rest of them are waiting for him. Bartleby comes out from behind the screen, and then he again states that he "would prefer not to" participate. He goes back behind his screen.</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>The Lawyer stands there, unsure what to do. Finally he advances toward the screen, and asks Bartleby <i>why</i> he refuses. Bartleby again responds simply that he “would prefer not to.” The Lawyer says that if he were dealing with anyone else, he would have them thrown out of his office—but in that moment something about Bartleby disarms The Lawyer, so he tries to reason with Bartleby, arguing that because these are Bartleby’s own copies that they are all examining, this process will be labor-saving to him. And, further, correcting copy is a common job requirement of being a scrivener. The Lawyer demands, “is it not so? Will you not speak? Answer!” To which Bartleby replies, “I prefer not to.”</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>The Lawyer feels as if Bartleby is not being curt with him. He feels that Bartleby has listened to his argument, and still prefers not to. After The Lawyer asks Bartleby whether he has indeed decided not to comply with The Lawyer’s request to review the papers although it is “a request made according to common usage and common sense,” Bartleby confirms that his decision is irreversible.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>The Lawyer asks Turkey what he thinks of the situation, and Turkey says that he believes The Lawyer to be correct in the fairness of his request. The Lawyer asks Nippers what he thinks, and Nippers says that</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>The Lawyer should kick Bartleby out of the office. The Lawyer then notes that, since it is the morning, this is the time when Nippers is ill tempered and Turkey is mild. Finally, The Lawyer asks Ginger Nut what he thinks, and Ginger Nut replies that Bartleby is a “luny.” So, The Lawyer again turns toward Bartleby’s screen, and urges Bartleby to come out and do his “duty.” However, Bartleby neither replies nor emerges from his desk. The Lawyer states that business then hurried him, so he vowed to deal with this problem at a later date.</p>					
<p>The Lawyer notes that they managed to correct the papers without Bartleby’s help, with Turkey commenting on how unusual the situation was, and Nippers cursing at Bartleby between grinding his teeth, and ending with saying that he’ll never again do another man’s work without compensation. However, Bartleby does not reply, staying in his corner out of sight.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>Some days pass, and The Lawyer says that due to Bartleby’s odd behavior, he has started watching Bartleby’s habits more closely. The Lawyer notes that Bartleby never leaves for dinner, and, indeed, never leaves the office at all. Around 11 A.M., though, Ginger Nut walks over to the opening in Bartleby’s screen, runs out of the office with his pockets jingling with coins, and reappears with a handful of</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>gingernut cakes which he brings to Bartleby, receiving two of the cakes for having run the errand. The Lawyer then wonders whether gingerbread cakes are all that Bartleby eats, and he ponders the effect of what an all-gingernut-cake diet might do to the human constitution. "Now, what was ginger?" The Lawyer wonders—hot and spicy, he determines. Does that make Bartleby hot and spicy? Of course not, The Lawyer concludes, he's just the opposite.</p>					
<p>The Lawyer then delves into Bartleby's attitude, which he refers to as "passive resistance," saying that nothing can so aggravate an honest person as being passively resisted by another, as the honest person will give the passive one the benefit of the doubt in charitable good conscious, as The Lawyer is doing with Bartleby. The Lawyer then decides he has pity for Bartleby, as he means no mischief or insolence with his attitude; it is simply how he is. So, The Lawyer reckons that if he were to turn Bartleby away, another employer would probably not be so willing to accept his eccentricities. Here is a situation, The Lawyer decides, where he can "cheaply purchase a delicious self-approval," as keeping Bartleby on will cost him little, but it will make him feel good about himself as a charitable Christian man.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>However, despite The Lawyer's</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>resolve to accept Bartleby as he is, one day The Lawyer is overtaken by what he deems an “evil impulse,” and he decides to again ask Bartleby to compare papers with him. Bartleby once more says he would “prefer not to,” and again The Lawyer walks over to Turkey to ask him what he thinks of Bartleby’s behavior. It being the afternoon, Turkey, in his drunken state, says that he should step back behind Bartleby’s “screen and black his eyes for him!” Turkey approaches Bartleby’s desk, until The Lawyer orders him to sit back down. The Lawyer then asks Nippers his opinion on whether he should dismiss Bartleby. Nippers calmly says that Bartleby’s behavior is unusual and unjust, and that The Lawyer might be justified in that action, but what to do is ultimately for The Lawyer to decide.</p>					
<p>The Lawyer states that Nippers has changed his opinion since the last time he asked about Bartleby, and Turkey exclaims that Nippers’s “gentleness is the effects of beer,” and then again asks if The Lawyer would like Turkey to take a swing at Bartleby. The Lawyer tells Turkey to put his fists down, and again walks over to speak with Bartleby. This time, The Lawyer requests that Bartleby to go out to the post office and pick something up for him, because Ginger Nut is out today. Bartleby states once more that he would “prefer not</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>to.” The Lawyer asks if he “<i>will not,</i>” but Bartleby again states that he’d “<i>prefer not.</i>”</p>					
<p>The Lawyer then sits at his desk, and after some thought, calls out for Bartleby, who doesn’t respond. The Lawyer calls again. Still nothing. On the third time The Lawyer yells, and this time Bartleby emerges “like a very ghost” and stands at the entrance of his screened-in area. The Lawyer asks Bartleby to go to the next room and summon Nippers for him. Bartleby, in a respectful tone, says that he would “prefer not to,” and disappears behind his screen. The Lawyer says, “Very good, Bartleby.” The Lawyer sits there pondering what to do, and in the end he decides to keep Bartleby on, so that an unspoken agreement emerges as the new status quo: Bartleby is technically in The Lawyer’s employment as a scrivener, but he is exempt (or has exempted himself) from any of the duties of the job aside from writing down copy.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>As days pass, The Lawyer becomes increasingly accepting of Bartleby’s habits. He enjoys Bartleby’s work ethic (aside from the occasional times when he stands silently behind the screen doing nothing), his stillness, and his consistency, always being the first one there in the morning and the last still in the office at night. The Lawyer feels that he entirely trusts Bartleby with his valuable papers. The Lawyer states that,</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>once in a while, out of habit, he will summon Bartleby to do a simple task for him, and each time the reply comes from Bartleby that he would “prefer not to.” However, rather than get fed up with Bartleby, The Lawyer simply begins to alter his habits so that Bartleby refuses him less and less often.</p>					
<p>The Lawyer notes that, as is customary, there are several keys to the door that opens his office. A cleaning person has one, Turkey has the second, and The Lawyer himself has the third, but The Lawyer is unaware who has the fourth key. One Sunday morning, The Lawyer is heading to church and decides to stop by the office on the way. When he tries to unlock the door, he finds another key already in the lock, blocking his so that he cannot open the door. The Lawyer calls out, and none other than Bartleby answers the door, dressed in unprofessional, disheveled clothing. Bartleby tells The Lawyer that he is “deeply engaged” at that moment, and would prefer not to admit The Lawyer into his office at present. He suggests that perhaps The Lawyer should walk around the block a few times until Bartleby concludes his activities.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>The Lawyer, though frustrated, follows Bartleby’s request and walks around the block, noting that it is Bartleby’s “wonderful mildness” that compels him to follow his employee’s requests. The Lawyer then wonders what</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>Bartleby could possibly be doing in his office in informal dress on a Sunday morning. He contemplates whether something could be amiss, then dismisses that thought, instead wondering whether Bartleby could be doing work at this hour, but The Lawyer dismisses that, too, as he's never known Bartleby to work in informal clothing. When The Lawyer returns, he inserts his key in the lock, finds it vacated, and enters the office to find Bartleby gone.</p>					
<p>Once he's alone in the office, The Lawyer determines that Bartleby must be eating, dressing, and even sleeping in the office. The Lawyer finds a blanket under Bartleby's desk as well as some toiletries and a stash of food. The Lawyer then ponders how great Bartleby's poverty and solitude must be, living in a place that is usually thrumming with industry during the workweek, but so empty that it echoes at night and on weekends.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>The Lawyer is suddenly struck with a deep melancholy, causing him to ponder the nature of happiness and loneliness. He notes that "happiness courts the light," and that it is easy to see on people's faces, whereas "misery hides" so we deem that "there is none." As he is thinking about Bartleby, The Lawyer is suddenly attracted to Bartleby's closed desk, which has its key sticking out of the lock. The Lawyer searches the desk, and finds that Bartleby's papers are</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>neatly laid out. However, beneath the papers, The Lawyer finds an old knotted handkerchief. He opens it, and finds that within is Bartleby's savings bank, filled with coins.</p>					
<p>The Lawyer recalls all of Bartleby's curious habits and mysteries—his lack of speaking except to answer, the fact that he stands looking out his window (with a view of a brick wall) for long periods, that he never drinks beer, never leaves the office to eat or go for a walk (unless that is what he's doing right now), that he has never said a word about his past or family, and his overall reserved manner, which has "awed" The Lawyer into his "tame compliance." These reminiscences turn The Lawyer's initial feeling of melancholy and pity for Bartleby into fear and repulsion, as he feels that Bartleby is so far beyond the point of being helped that there is nothing to be done, as it is Bartleby's soul, not his body, that is suffering and beyond The Lawyer's reach.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>Rather than going to church as he had intended, The Lawyer decides to head home, and on the way he resolves to ask Bartleby about his history tomorrow morning. If he declines to answer, The Lawyer states that he will give Bartleby a 20-dollar bonus on top of whatever he owes him and send him on his way, with the promise that if Bartleby is ever in need, he can write to The</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>Lawyer and expect a reply. The next morning arrives, and The Lawyer asks Bartleby where he was born, to which Bartleby replies that he'd prefer not to say. The Lawyer asks if Bartleby will tell the lawyer "<i>anything</i>" about himself and Bartleby gives the same reply. When The Lawyer asks what Bartleby's reasonable objection is to answering, Bartleby says he would "prefer to give no answer."</p>					
<p>The Lawyer ruminates on how he should handle this situation. Despite his resolution to dismiss Bartleby should this problem arise, The Lawyer feels a "superstitious knocking" at his heart that makes him feel like a bad person if he is to go through with dismissing Bartleby. The Lawyer approaches Bartleby's desk and says that it's okay if Bartleby doesn't want to discuss his past, but from now on he must comply with the full range of his duties as a scrivener, including correcting copy. He urges Bartleby to say that in a day or two he will begin being "a little reasonable." To all of this Bartleby replies that he "would prefer not to be a little reasonable."</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>Nippers enters the office, overhears Bartleby's words, and calls him a stubborn mule. The Lawyer says he would "prefer" that Nippers withdraw from the room, which he does. The Lawyer notes that, somehow, he's taken on the habit of using the phrase</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>“prefer” in all kinds of “not exactly suitable occasions.” Turkey then suggests that if Bartleby would “but prefer” to drink alcohol, his problems would go away. When The Lawyer asks why Turkey is using the word “prefer,” Turkey says he never uses that word himself, and when The Lawyer asks Turkey to leave the room, he replies that he will if The Lawyer “prefer” that he should. Nippers then asks if The Lawyer would prefer he use blue or white paper, and, as this phrase has overtaken his whole office, The Lawyer resolves to dismiss Bartleby shortly before his effects on the office worsen.</p>					
<p>The next day, The Lawyer notices that Bartleby has done “nothing but stand at his window in his dead-wall reverie.” When The Lawyer asks him why, Bartleby replies that he has decided on no more writing. The Lawyer asks what his reason is, and Bartleby replies, “Do you not see the reason for yourself?” providing no further information. It then occurs to The Lawyer that perhaps Bartleby’s vision has become impaired from the little light that emanates from the window near his desk that is right up against a brick wall, and that is why he won’t write anymore. The Lawyer accepts Bartleby’s wishes, and urges him to go out in the daylight to get his sight back, but Bartleby simply stays in the office.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>A few days later, with the other</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>employees absent, The Lawyer asks Bartleby to carry letters to the Post Office, but Bartleby declines, forcing The Lawyer to go himself. As days go by, The Lawyer thinks Bartleby’s eyes are getting better, but when he asks Bartleby about it, Bartleby gives no answer. Further, Bartleby continues to do no copying at all, informing The Lawyer that he has given up copying permanently. Still, Bartleby remains a “fixture” in The Lawyer’s chamber, becoming not only useless, but “afflictive” to have around. However, The Lawyer feels “sorry” for Bartleby, as he seems “absolutely alone in the universe.” The Lawyer states that if he knew a single one of Bartleby’s relatives or friends, he would feel comfortable urging them to take Bartleby, but he knows of none. Still, The Lawyer informs Bartleby that in six days time he must leave the office.</p>					
<p>Six days later, Bartleby remains in the office. The Lawyer offers Bartleby the 20-dollar bonus and tells him he must go. Bartleby replies that he would prefer not to. The Lawyer tells him he <i>must</i>, but Bartleby sits there silently. The Lawyer gives Bartleby all the money the scrivener is owed, plus the 20-dollar bonus. He tells Bartleby that he wishes him well, and that if he can be of service to the scrivener, Bartleby shouldn’t hesitate to contact The Lawyer. Bartleby doesn’t respond. The Lawyer leaves, confident that</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>Bartleby will listen to him and vacate the premises.</p>					
<p>As The Lawyer walks home, he becomes more and more confident that Bartleby will comply with his order to leave. He calls his own handling of the situation “masterly,” as he “assumed the ground” that Bartleby must depart, so Bartleby has no choice but to do so. However, when he wakes the next morning, doubts flood The Lawyer’s mind. He worries that the assumption was simply his “own, and none of Bartleby’s,” as Bartleby is “more a man of preferences than assumptions.”</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>On his way to the office, The Lawyer debates back and forth in his head whether Bartleby has stayed or left the office. He passes someone on the street who says, “I’ll take odds he doesn’t,” to which The Lawyer agrees to take the other side of the bet, telling the other man, “put up your money.” However, The Lawyer realizes that today is election day, and the man must have been talking about some candidate, not Bartleby. The Lawyer reaches the office, fumbles under the door for the key where he hopes Bartleby will have put it, and accidentally bumps his knee against the door. To this noise, there is a reply from within, “Not yet; I am occupied.” Of course, it is Bartleby.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>The Lawyer is somewhat shocked that Bartleby is still there, and mutters to himself on</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>the street. He walks around the block, pondering what to do about Bartleby—he does not want to forcibly remove the scrivener from the building, and calling the police seems like “an unpleasant idea.” Still, The Lawyer doesn’t want to let Bartleby stay and be victorious, but the plan he comes up with to simply ignore Bartleby’s presence and act as if he has left seems unlikely to succeed. The Lawyer decides to simply argue the matter with Bartleby once more, and so he returns to the office.</p>					
<p>The Lawyer asks Bartleby if Bartleby will leave, to which Bartleby replies that he’d prefer not to. The Lawyer asks what right Bartleby has to stay, as he doesn’t pay rent, taxes, or own the property. Bartleby says nothing. The Lawyer asks if Bartleby is ready to write again, or go to the post office, or do anything to be useful to The Lawyer. Rather than respond, Bartleby retreats to his area behind the screen. The Lawyer recalls the story of Samuel Adams and John C. Colt: Colt was convicted of murdering Adams when they were alone in the office together. The Lawyer notes that he’d often thought about the fact that, had Colt and Adams’s disagreement happened in public, or even at a private residence rather than an office, it might have been resolved differently, as offices are entirely without “humanizing domestic associations” that one’s own home might be filled</p>	1	2	3	4	

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with.					
<p>Sitting at his desk, The Lawyer's resentment of Bartleby grows, but a Christian impulse overtakes him, reminding him that it his duty as a Christian to "love one another." So, feeling this charitable impulse, The Lawyer decides not to reprimand Bartleby or throw him out on the street, instead thinking of how pitiable Bartleby's situation is. Secretly, The Lawyer hopes Bartleby will still leave of his own accord, but as the day progresses and the rest of the employees arrive, Bartleby stays at his desk, unmoving.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>Some days later, after reading two religious texts, The Lawyer decides that Bartleby has been thrust into his life via predestination from eternity, and God's intention regarding Bartleby's influence on his life will remain mysterious to him. So, The Lawyer is content to allow Bartleby to remain behind his screen. That is, until a while later, when The Lawyer has a meeting in his office with many colleagues. One of the visiting lawyers asks Bartleby to run an errand for him, and Bartleby refuses, preferring to stand next to the wall doing nothing. The news of this refusal spreads "all through the circle" of The Lawyer's profession, causing much speculation as to the nature of The Lawyer and Bartleby's relationship. So, as Bartleby's presence has begun to impact The Lawyer's</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>professional reputation, The Lawyer resolves to rid himself of Bartleby, who he now refers to as an “intolerable incubus.”</p>					
<p>First, The Lawyer simply suggests to Bartleby that he leave. After he thinks about it for three days, Bartleby tells The Lawyer that he would still prefer not to go. The Lawyer considers what to do, and resolves once more not to throw Bartleby out of the office, nor call the police. So, The Lawyer decides that since Bartleby will not quit, The Lawyer “must quit him.” He plans to find a new office, and then tell Bartleby that if he finds him at this new location he will have to treat him as a “common trespasser.” The next day, The Lawyer tells Bartleby that he will be moving offices next week, and Bartleby should seek out a new place to be. Bartleby does not respond.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>The Lawyer moves offices the next week, emptying the office of furniture. When everything is gone, The Lawyer says goodbye to Bartleby, and tells him that he hopes God blesses him. Despite The Lawyer’s fears, Bartleby never shows up at the new office. All is going smoothly, until a different lawyer (The Other Lawyer) arrives to ask whether The Lawyer has recently vacated an office on Wall Street. The Lawyer replies that he has, and this Other Lawyer says that The Lawyer is responsible for the man (Bartleby) who has been left there. The Lawyer says that</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>Bartleby is “nothing” to him—no apprentice or relation, so someone else must deal with him. This other lawyer asks who Bartleby is, and The Lawyer replies that he does not know—just someone he used to employ. The Other Lawyer leaves, saying he’ll take care of the problem.</p>					
<p>Several days pass, and The Lawyer thinks he has finally been ridded of Bartleby. However, a week or so later, The Other Lawyer returns to the office to tell The Lawyer that he must take Bartleby away from his old office at once, informing him that Bartleby is now haunting the whole building, not just The Lawyer’s former office space. Reluctantly, The Lawyer agrees to return to his old office to try to reason with Bartleby. Once there, The Lawyer explains that Bartleby has two options—he “must do something” or something must be done to him. The Lawyer offers to give him his old copying job back, or to get him any number of new jobs, all of which Bartleby says he would prefer not to do. The Lawyer then offers to take Bartleby to his own home where they can figure out an arrangement, and Bartleby says he would “prefer not to make any change at all.”</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>The Lawyer rushes out of the building, ignoring anyone who tries to stop him. He decides that he has done all that he possibly could for Bartleby, and, “so fearful” of being “hunted out by the incensed</p>	1	2	3	4	

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<p>landlord” and his tenants, The Lawyer lets Nippers run the business for a few days while he spends some time in the suburbs. When The Lawyer returns to his office, he finds a note from the landlord, informing him that the police were called and Bartleby has been taken to the Tombs, a local prison, for being a vagrant, and that, since The Lawyer knows more about Bartleby than anyone else, his presence is requested at the Tombs to make a statement about the facts of Bartleby’s life.</p>					
<p>That day, The Lawyer heads to the prison to attest to the fact that Bartleby is an honest, but eccentric, man. The Lawyer then requests to visit Bartleby and speak with him. Because Bartleby is non-violent, the court has permitted him to wander freely around the prison, “especially in the inclosed grass-platted yards.” When The Lawyer finds Bartleby, he is standing alone in the quietest yard, “his face towards a high wall,” while the eyes of murderers and thieves peer down on him from the slits in the jail cells. When Bartleby recognizes The Lawyer, he says he has “nothing to say” to his former boss. The Lawyer says that he isn’t the one who brought Bartleby to prison, and that it isn’t so bad here after all. Bartleby says “I know where I am,” but will say nothing more to The Lawyer.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>On his way out, a man (The</p>	1	2	3	4	

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

<p>Grubman) stops The Lawyer and asks if Bartleby is his friend. The Lawyer says “yes,” and the man says that if The Lawyer wants him to starve, he’ll allow him to eat the prison food. The man, who now says that he is a “grubman” of the prison, offers to provide Bartleby with good food, for a fee. The Lawyer pays The Grubman to provide Bartleby with food, asking him to give him “the best dinner” The Grubman can make. Then, The Lawyer brings The Grubman over to Bartleby, and tells him that The Grubman will be his friend. The Grubman says he is a servant, and offers to make Bartleby dinner. Bartleby replies that he would “prefer not to dine today,” as it would disagree with him. Then Bartleby walks over to a “dead-wall” and stands in front of it.</p>					
<p>The Lawyer and The Grubman chat about Bartleby being odd, and The Lawyer says he is somewhat “deranged.” The Grubman says he initially thought Bartleby was a forger, and asks if The Lawyer knows Monroe Edwards, a notorious forger who used to be at this same prison Bartleby is being held at. The Lawyer says no, he’s never known any forgers.</p>	1	2	3	4	
<p>Some days later, The Lawyer returns to the prison, and finds Bartleby asleep in the yard, surrounded by walls “of amazing thickness.” Bartleby is huddled at the base of a wall, his knees drawn up, and his body looking “wasted.” His “dim eyes” are</p>	1	2	3	4	

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

<p>open but his body appears to be asleep. The Lawyer touches Bartleby's hand, causing a shiver to run up and down his spine. The Grubman appears, saying that Bartleby's dinner is ready. "Won't he dine today either? Or does he live without dining?" the Grubman asks. The Lawyer replies, "Lives without dining." The Grubman comments that Bartleby's asleep, and The Lawyer replies, "With kings and counselors."</p>				
<p>The Lawyer cuts off his narration, saying that there is "little need for proceeding further," as the reader can easily imagine Bartleby's fate. Then, The Lawyer decides to "divulge one little item of rumor" he has heard since Bartleby's death. He isn't sure how true it is, but The Lawyer has heard that, before working for The Lawyer, Bartleby worked as a clerk in the "Dead Letter Office" in Washington, and had been abruptly fired in a change of administration. When The Lawyer ponders the rumor, he can't help but become emotional, as dead letters sounds much "like dead men" to him. He notes that this business of burning dead letters, carrying with them "pardon for those who died despairing; hope for those who died unhoping" could turn any man into a hopeless one. "On errands of life," The Lawyer notes, these letters sped to death. He ends the story, "Ah, Bartleby! Ah, humanity!"</p>	1	2	3	4