**Reading Comprehension**

**Directions:**Read the following selection. Then answer the questions that follow.

*In 1761, colonial lawyer James Otis argued passionately before a Massachusetts court against the Writs of Assistance. The writs gave the king's officials in the American colonies the right to search any houses thought to contain smuggled goods.*

**The Writs[[1]](#footnote-1) of Assistance**

**James Otis**

May it please your Honors: I was desired by one of the court to look into the books, and

consider the question now before them concerning Writs of Assistance. I have accordingly

considered it, and now appear not only in obedience to your order, but likewise in behalf of

the inhabitants of this town, who have presented another petition,

and out of regard to the liberties of the subject. And I take this opportunity to declare that

whether under a fee or not (for in such cause as this I despise the fee) I will to my dying

day oppose, with all the powers and faculties God has given me, all such instruments of

slavery on the one hand and villainy on the other as this Writ of Assistance is.

It appears to me the worst instrument of arbitrary[[2]](#footnote-2) power, the most destructive of

**10** English liberty and the fundamental principles of law, that ever was found in an English **10**

law-book. I must therefore beg your Honor's patience and attention to the whole range

of an argument that may perhaps appear uncommon in many things, as well as to points

of learning that are more remote and unusual, that the whole tendency of my design may the

more easily be perceived, the conclusions better descend, and the force of them be better

felt. I shall not think much of my pains in this cause, as I engaged in it from principle. I was

solicited[[3]](#footnote-3) to argue this cause as Advocate-General; and, because I would not, I have been

charged with desertion from my office. To this charge I can give a very

sufficient answer. I renounced that office and I argue this cause from the same principle;

and I argue it with the greater pleasure, as it is in favor of British liberty, at a time when

**20** we hear the greatest monarch upon earth declaring from his throne that he glories in **20**

the name of Briton and that the privileges of his people are dearer to him than the most

valuable prerogatives[[4]](#footnote-4) of his crown; and as it is in opposition to a kind of power, the exercise

of which in former periods of history cost one king of England his head and another his

throne. I have taken more pains in this cause than I ever will take again, although my

engaging in this and another popular cause has raised much resentment.

But I think I can sincerely declare that I cheerfully submit myself to every odious[[5]](#footnote-5) name

for conscience' sake; and from my soul I despise all those whose guilt, malice, or folly

has made them my foes. Let the consequences be what they will, I am determined to

proceed. The only principles of public conduct that are worthy of a gentleman or a man

**30** are to sacrifice estate, ease, health, and applause, and even life, to the sacred calls of **30**

his country.

These manly sentiments[[6]](#footnote-6), in private life, make good citizens; in public life, the patriot

and the hero. I do not say that, when brought to the test, I shall be invincible. I pray God

I may never be brought to the melancholy trial; but, if ever I should, it will then be

known how far I can reduce to practice principles which I know to be founded in truth.

In the meantime I will proceed to the subject of this writ.

Your Honors will find in the old books concerning the office of a justice of the peace

precedents[[7]](#footnote-7) of general warrants to search suspected houses. But in more modern books

you will find only special warrants to search such and such houses, specially named, in

**40** which the complainant has before sworn that he suspects his goods are concealed; and **40**

will find it adjudged that special warrants only are legal. In the same manner I rely on it,

that the writ prayed for in this petition, being general, is illegal. It is a power that places

the liberty of every man in the hands of every petty officer. I say I admit that special

Writs of Assistance, to search special places, may be granted to certain persons on oath; but

I deny that the writ now prayed for can be granted, for I beg leave to make some

observations on the writ itself, before I proceed to other Acts of Parliament. In the first

place, the writ is universal, being directed "to all and singular justices, sheriffs,

constables, and all other officers and subjects"; so that, in short, it is directed to every

subject in the King's dominions. Every one with this writ may be a tyrant; if this

**50** commission be legal, a tyrant in a legal manner, also, may control, imprison, or murder **50**

any one within the realm. In the next place, it is perpetual; there is no return. A man is

accountable to no person for his doings. Every man may reign secure in his petty

tyranny, and spread terror and desolation around him, until the trump of the Archangel

shall excite different emotions in his soul. In the third place, a person with this writ, in

the daytime, may enter all houses, shops, etc., at will, and command all to assist him.

Fourthly, by this writ not only deputies, etc., but even their menial servants, are allowed

to lord it over us. What is this but to have the curse of Canaan with a witness on us: to be

the servants of servants, the most despicable of God's creation? Now one of the most

essential branches of English liberty is the freedom of one's house. A man's house is

**60** his castle; and whilst he is quiet, he is as well guarded as a prince in his castle. This writ, **60**

if it should be declared legal, would totally annihilate this privilege. Customhouse

officers may enter our houses when they please; we are commanded to permit their

entry. Their menial servants may enter, may break locks, bars, and everything in their

way; and whether they break through malice or revenge, no man, no court can inquire.

Bare suspicion without oath is sufficient. This wanton exercise of this power is not a

chimerical[[8]](#footnote-8) suggestion of a heated brain. I will mention some facts. Mr. Pew had one of

these writs, and, when Mr. Ware succeeded him, he endorsed this writ over to Mr. Ware;

so that these writs are negotiable from one office to another; and so your Honors have no

opportunity of judging the persons to whom this vast power is delegated. Another

**70** instance is this: Mr. Justice Walley had called this same Mr. Ware before him, by a **70**

constable, to answer for a breach of the Sabbath-day Acts, or that of profane swearing. As

soon as he had finished, Mr. Ware asked him if he had done. He replied, "Yes."

"Well then," said Mr. Ware, "I will show you a little of my power. I command you to

permit me to search your house for uncustomed[[9]](#footnote-9) goods" - and went on to search the

house from the garret to the cellar; and then served the constable in the same manner! But

to show another absurdity in this writ: if it should be established, I insist upon it every

person, by the 14th Charles Second, has this power as well as the custom-house officers.

The words are: "It shall be lawful for any person or persons authorized," etc. What a

scene does this open! Every man prompted by revenge, ill-humor, or

**80** wantonness to inspect the inside of his neighbor's house, may get a Writ of Assistance. **80**

Others will ask it from self-defense; one arbitrary exertion will provoke another, until

society be involved in tumult and in blood.

***On your answer sheet, please completely bubble in the best answer for each of the following multiple choice questions.***

1. In the first paragraph, which detail best supports the main idea that Otis feels a moral obligation to oppose the Writs?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | "May it please your Honors" (line 1) |
| b. | "I was desired by one of the court to look into the books" (line 1) |
| c. | "I have accordingly considered it" (lines 2-3) |
| d. | "with all the powers and faculties God has given me" (line 7) |

2. Which adjective best describes the tone of the first paragraph?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | amused |
| b. | condescending |
| c. | pleading |
| d. | formal |

3. Based on the first paragraph, which sentence best states Otis's position? (lines 1-8)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | Following the orders of the court is a civic duty. |
| b. | The Writs of Assistance are completely unjust. |
| c. | Taking a fee in such cases would be immoral. |
| d. | A government should obey the will of its subjects. |

4. Otis begins reasons in lines 7-8 by making the generalization that the Writs of Assistance are

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | oppressive and unjust |
| b. | important to slave traders |
| c. | forbidden by the courts |
| d. | universal and economical |

5. From his statement "I shall not think much of my pains in this cause, as I engaged in it from principle," (lines 15-16) you can draw the conclusion that Otis

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | only takes cases that are convenient |
| b. | believes that ethical behavior is more important than personal gain |
| c. | enjoys being the center of attention |
| d. | will continue with his argument despite great physical discomfort |

6. Based on the information in lines 18-24, you can determine that Otis has the perspective of

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | a British subject |
| b. | the Advocate-General |
| c. | the king's advisor |
| d. | a monarch |

7. Which persuasive technique does Otis use in lines 29-31?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | emotional appeal |
| b. | logical appeal |
| c. | appeal to authority |
| d. | ethical appeal |

8. Otis uses repetition in lines 42-43 to emphasize that

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | Generals cannot trust officers to execute the Writs |
| b. | officials should have the right to limit freedom |
| c. | the Writs compromise the liberty of all citizens |
| d. | special warrants may be granted to a privileged few |

9. Which counterargument does Otis offer to the fact that the "old books" have "precedents of general warrants"? (lines 37-38)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | "But in more modern books you will find only special warrants to search such and such houses" (lines 38-39) |
| b. | "I say I admit that special Writs of Assistance, to search special places, may be granted" (lines 43-44) |
| c. | "I deny that the writ now prayed for can be granted, for I beg leave to make some observation on the writ itself" (lines 45-46) |
| d. | "Every man may reign secure in his petty tyranny, and spread terror and desolation around him" (lines 52-53) |

10. In lines 57-58, Otis uses a rhetorical question to make the point that

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | the Writs give any person the power to intrude on another's private property |
| b. | servants cannot be trusted to protect the goods of their employers |
| c. | no one can predict the consequences that issuing a writ would have |
| d. | witnesses must accompany officials to ensure the proper conduct of searches |

11. Otis generalizes in lines 59-61 by making which of the following points?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | "whilst he is quiet, he is as well guarded as a prince in his castle" (line 60) |
| b. | "Customhouse officers may enter our houses whenever they please" (lines 61-62) |
| c. | "This wanton exercise of power is not a chimerical suggestion" (lines 65-66) |
| d. | "when Mr. Ware succeeded him, he endorsed this writ over to Mr. Ware" (line 67) |

**Vocabulary**

**Directions** Use context clues to answer the following questions.

12. What is the meaning of the word *wanton* as it appears in line 65 of "The Writs of Assistance"?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | poorly thought out |
| b. | authorized and official |
| c. | unnecessarily cruel |
| d. | basic and fair |

**Vocabulary**

**Directions** Use your knowledge of Latin words to answer the following questions.

13. The Latin word nihil means "nothing." Which word from "The Writs of Assistance" likely comes from the word *nihil*?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | assistance |
| b. | inhabitants |
| c. | annihilate |
| d. | Instruments |

**Short Response**

**Directions** Write a response using complete sentences and good paragraph structure for each question on the answer key.

14. At the end of his speech, James Otis concludes that if the Writs of Assistance were enacted, a problem could arise if authorities could search colonists' homes without sufficient evidence that smuggled goods would be found. Otis contends that one case of arbitrary enforcement of the writ would lead to another and another until homes were being searched for relatively no reason at all. Identify one piece of evidence that Otis uses to reach his conclusion*.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 2 | Appropriate and logical identification of one piece of evidence Otis uses to reach his conclusion |
| 1 | Incomplete identification of evidence or identifies a reason, but not evidence |
| 0 | Inaccurate, irrelevant, or illogical identification of one piece of evidence. |

**Extended Response**

**Directions** Answer the following question using two or three paragraphs. Use good paragraph structure.

15. Summarize the argument that James Otis makes in lines 37-82. Identify the argument’s claim, provide Otis’s reasons, and restate his conclusion.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4 | The response is a thorough explanation of the claim, the reasons, and the conclusion supported by sufficient, relevant, and specific details from the text |
| 3 | The response is an adequate explanation of the claim, the reasons, and the conclusion supported by some relevant and specific details from the text. |
| 2 | The response is a limited explanation of the claim, the reasons, and the conclusion supported by few, if any relevant details from the text. The support may be generalized details. |
| 1 | The response is a mostly inaccurate explanation of the claim, the reasons, and the conclusion supported by irrelevant details, if any, from the text. |
| 0 | The response is totally inappropriate or inaccurate. |

**Reading Comprehension**

**Directions** Read the following selection. Then answer the questions that follow.

A Psalm of Life

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

*What the Heart of the Young Man Said to the Psalmist[[10]](#footnote-10)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tell me not, in mournful numbers[[11]](#footnote-11), |  |
| Life is but an empty dream!— |  |
| For the soul is dead that slumbers, |  |
| And things are not what they seem. |  |
|  |  |
| Life is real! Life is earnest! | *5* |
| And the grave is not its goal; |  |
| Dust thou art, to dust returnest, |  |
| Was not spoken of the soul. |  |
|  |  |
| Not enjoyment, and not sorrow, |  |
| Is our destined end or way; | *10* |
| But to act, that each to-morrow |  |
| Find us farther than to-day. |  |
|  |  |
| Art is long, and Time is fleeting, |  |
| And our hearts, though stout[[12]](#footnote-12) and brave, |  |
| Still, like muffled drums, are beating | *15* |
| Funeral marches to the grave. |  |
|  |  |
| In the world's broad field of battle, |  |
| In the bivouac[[13]](#footnote-13) of Life, |  |
| Be not like dumb, driven cattle! |  |
| Be a hero in the strife! | *20* |
|  |  |
| Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant! |  |
| Let the dead Past bury its dead! |  |
| Act,—act in the living Present! |  |
| Heart within, and God o'erhead! |  |
|  |  |
| Lives of great men all remind us | *25* |
| We can make our lives sublime, |  |
| And, departing, leave behind us |  |
| Footprints on the sands of time; |  |
|  |  |
| Footprints, that perhaps another, |  |
| Sailing o'er life's solemn main[[14]](#footnote-14), | *30* |
| A forlorn and shipwrecked brother, |  |
| Seeing, shall take heart again. |  |
|  |  |
| Let us, then, be up and doing, |  |
| With a heart for any fate; |  |
| Still achieving, still pursuing, | *35* |
| Learn to labor and to wait. |  |

**A Psalm of Life**

[**A Psalm of Life**](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173910)

**A Psalm of Life**

[**A Psalm of Life**](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173910)

*What The Heart Of The Young Man Said To The Psalmist.*

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,

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For the soul is dead that slumbers,

And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!

And the grave is not its goal;

Dust thou art, to dust returnest,

Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,

Is our destined end or way;

But to act, that each to-morrow

Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,

And our hearts, though stout and brave,

Still, like muffled drums, are beating

Funeral marches to the grave.

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In the bivouac of Life,

Be not like dumb, driven cattle!

Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe’er pleasant!

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Act,— act in the living Present!

Heart within, and God o’erhead!

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We can make our lives sublime,

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Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,

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A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,

Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,

With a heart for any fate;

Still achieving, still pursuing,

Learn to labor and to wait.

*What The Heart Of The Young Man Said To The Psalmist.*

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And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!

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Dust thou art, to dust returnest,

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Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,

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Be not like dumb, driven cattle!

Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe’er pleasant!

Let the dead Past bury its dead!

Act,— act in the living Present!

Heart within, and God o’erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us

We can make our lives sublime,

And, departing, leave behind us

Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,

Sailing o’er life’s solemn main,

A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,

Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,

With a heart for any fate;

Still achieving, still pursuing,

Learn to labor and to wait.

**A Psalm of Life**

[**A Psalm of Life**](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173910)

*What The Heart Of The Young Man Said To The Psalmist.*

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,

Life is but an empty dream!

For the soul is dead that slumbers,

And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!

And the grave is not its goal;

Dust thou art, to dust returnest,

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Sailing o’er life’s solemn main,

A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,

Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,

With a heart for any fate;

Still achieving, still pursuing,

Learn to labor and to wait.

**Comprehension**

\_\_\_\_ 16. The speaker in "A Psalm of Life" highlights life's difficulties when he or she says life is like

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | a field of battle |
| b. | an empty vision |
| c. | dust in a grave |
| d. | muffled drums |

\_\_\_\_ 17. What does the speaker say you should do in lines 21-23 of "A Psalm of Life"?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | Always live your life with the future in mind. |
| b. | Wonder about what tomorrow will bring you. |
| c. | Try to remember the lessons of the past. |
| d. | Act in the present instead of the past or future. |

\_\_\_\_ 18. What is the basic meaning of stanza 8 of the poem "A Psalm of Life"?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | Footprints can tell you a lot about history. |
| b. | People who survive shipwrecks learn from others. |
| c. | Leave behind acts from which others will learn. |
| d. | Life can be dangerous and troublesome. |

\_\_\_\_ 19. What is the speaker saying in lines 9-12 of "A Psalm of Life"?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | Dreams are harmful. |
| b. | Life is a journey. |
| c. | Try to avoid struggle. |
| d. | Strive to be happy. |

\_\_\_\_ 20. Longfellow may use the rhyme scheme in the fifth stanza of "A Psalm of Life" to help you remember that you should

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | always be aware of nearby battles |
| b. | know if you are going to die soon |
| c. | engage in life instead of watch it go by |
| d. | watch after only yourself while living |

\_\_\_\_ 21. Reread the sixth stanza of "A Psalm of Life." What two things does the speaker say you need to live life fully?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | heart and God |
| b. | acts and decisions |
| c. | the future and the past |
| d. | the dead and the living |

\_\_\_\_ 22. In the poem "A Psalm of Life," Longfellow most likely uses end rhyme in lines 29 and 31 to

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. | mimic the rhythm of a person walking |
| b. | hide the gloomy meaning of the poem |
| c. | emphasize the connection of all people |
| d. | reinforce the ocean's power over people |

\_\_\_\_\_ 23. Think about the metaphor in lines 17-18 of “A Psalm of Life”. What is Longfellow saying about the world and life by comparing them to a battlefield and a bivouac?

1. Life is a struggle and we’re only here temporarily.
2. The future belongs to the heroes.
3. We are like dumb cattle going to the slaughter house
4. Life is a battle meant to be won.

**Written Response**

**Short Response**

24. What does Longfellow's description of the ocean in the eighth stanza of "A Psalm of Life" tell you about his idea of life? Include one detail from the poem to support your response.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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25. How does the rhyme scheme in the second stanza contribute to the poem’s tone, or attitude?

Choose one of the following and explain your choice.

1. depressing and mournful
2. serious and excited
3. hopeful and thoughtful
4. religious and moral

Explain your choice \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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26. According to the speaker of “A Psalm of Life”, what should people do to give their lives value, or purpose? Cite 2 examples of evidence to support your conclusion.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Student Answer Sheet: Written Response**

Please respond to each of the Short and Extended Response questions on this answer sheet. Write legibly.

14. At the end of his speech, James Otis concludes that if the Writs of Assistance were enacted, a problem could arise if authorities could search colonists' homes without sufficient evidence that smuggled goods would be found. Otis contends that one case of arbitrary enforcement of the writ would lead to another and another until homes were being searched for relatively no reason at all. Identify one piece of evidence that Otis uses to reach his conclusion.

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15. Summarize the argument that James Otis makes in lines 37-82. Identify the argument’s claim, provide Otis’s reasons, and restate his conclusion.

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**Midterm**

**Answer Section**

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| Number: | Skill: (GLE) | Answer |
| 1. | Main idea/ detail (2.4d; 2.5d) | D (1pt) |
| 2. | Tone (2.4c) | D (1pt) |
| 3. | Argument (2.5d) | B (1pt) |
| 4. | Deductive Reasoning (2.4i; 4.2a) | A (1pt) |
| 5. | Drawing Conclusions (2.4i; 2.5d) | B (1pt) |
| 6. | Author’s Perspective (2.4j) | A (1pt) |
| 7. | Persuasive Techniques (2.5i/2.5j) | D (1pt) |
| 8. | Rhetorical Devices (2.5i/2.5j; 4.2a) | C (1pt) |
| 9. | Argument (2.5f) | A (1pt) |
| 10. | Rhetorical Devices (2.5i/2.5j; 4.2a) | A (1pt) |
| 11. | Deductive Reasoning (2.4i; 4.2a) | B (1pt) |
| 12. | Context Clues (2.2a) | C (1pt) |
| 13. | Latin Roots (2.1) | C (1pt) |
| 14. | Drawing conclusions (2.4i;2.5d) | Drop box 0-1-2 |
| 15. | Persuasive Techniques (2.5i/2.5j) | Drop box 0-1-2-3-4 |
| 16. | Figurative Language (2.4c) | A (1pt) |
| 17. | Paraphrase | D (1pt) |
| 18. | Main idea/ detail (2.4d; 2.5d) | C (1pt) |
| 19. | Drawing Conclusions (2.4i; 2.5d) | B (1pt) |
| 20. | Rhyme (2.4c?) | C (1pt) |
| 21. | Main idea/ detail (2.4d; 2.5d) | A (1pt) |
| 22. | Rhyme (2.4c?) | C (1pt) |
| 23. | Figurative language (2.4c) | A (1pt) |
| 24. | Inference | Drop box 0-1-2 |
| 25. | Tone (2.4c) | Drop box 0-1-2 |
| 26. | Drawing Conclusions (2.4i; 2.5d) | Drop box 0-1-2-3-4 |

**SHORT ANSWER**

24. ANS:

Responses will vary. Students should note that Otis offers several pieces of evidence to show the Writs' potential for abuse:

a. Otis begins his evidence by citing an instance in which Mr. Pew signed his writ over to Mr. Ware without review from the court. This means that the court "had no opportunity of judging the persons to whom this vast power is delegated" (lines 66-69).

b. Otis cites a second instance in which Mr. Ware, after facing a judge for "a breach of the Sabbath-day Acts, or that of profane swearing," then used his writ to search the house of the judge and the constable who charged him (lines 69-75). This shows how the writs could be used as a tool for vengeance.

c. Otis cites the language of the Writs, noting that "the words are: 'It shall be lawful for any person or persons authorized, etc.'" This language indicates that anyone "prompted by revenge, ill-humor, or wantonness to inspect the inside of his neighbor's house, may get a Writ of Assistance." This argument shows how the use of the Writs could be abused for personal reasons.

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| 2 | Appropriate and logical identification of one piece of evidence Otis uses to reach his conclusion |
| 1 | Incomplete identification of evidence or identifies a reason, but not evidence |
| 0 | Inaccurate, irrelevant, or illogical identification of one piece of evidence. |

30. ANS:

The rhyming of "battle" and "cattle" emphasizes that life is difficult and it encourages people to remember to struggle through life, be individualistic, and break from the crowd (lines 17 and 19). The rhyming of "Life" and "strife" highlights the poet's belief that life is a difficult journey (lines 18 and 20).

31. ANS:

Responses will vary. Students may say that Longfellow's use of the ocean in the poem reveals one of the following ideas about life:

a. Life is solemn and possibly dangerous (lines 30 and 31).

b. Life is large and mostly unknown (lines 30-32).

**ESSAY**

26. ANS:

Responses may vary, but students should identify Otis's claim that the Writs of Assistance are unjust and illegal because they allow officers and those to whom officers transfer their writs to have the unchecked power to search anyone's home. Otis concludes that, if allowed, such a situation would lead to rampant, unjustified searching of property. Students may reference the following pieces of text in their answers.

a. From lines 42-43, Otis states his claim. He argues, "the writ prayed for in this petition, being general, is illegal. It is a power that places the liberty of every man in the hands of

every petty officer."

b. To support his claim, Otis notes that because "the writ is universal," it allows every person in possession of a writ to be "a tyrant in the legal manner." (lines 47, 50) The Writs give their possessors the legal right to search any house.

c. Otis argues that because a writ is "perpetual," the person in possession of the writ "is accountable to no person for his doings." (lines 51-52) There is no system in place to ensure that writs are not abused.

d. Otis states that the Writs of Assistance would destroy the privilege of private property, opening any person's house to search. He says, "A man's house is his castle; and whilst he is quiet, he is as well guarded as a prince in his castle. This writ, if it should be declared legal, would totally annihilate this privilege. Customhouse officers may enter our houses when they please." (lines 59-62)

e. Otis argues that once a search is underway, because searchers are permitted to "break locks, bars, and everything in their way," there will be no way to determine "whether they break through malice or revenge." Because "Bare suspicion" is the only requirement to obtain a writ, it will be impossible to determine whether writs are being abused for personal reasons. (lines 63-65)

f. To show the lack of regulation in the granting of writs, Otis gives an example wherein Mr. Pew endorsed a writ over to his successor Mr. Ware, so that the court had "no opportunity of judging the persons to whom this vast power is delegated." (lines 68-69)

g. To show how the writs may be abused for personal reasons such as vengeance, Otis notes that after a constable brought Mr. Ware before a judge, Mr. Ware used his writ to show the judge and constable "'a little of my power.'" He commanded the search of both men's houses. (lines 69-75)

h. Otis concludes that because the writs give so many people the power to search others' houses, the result will be that "Every man prompted by revenge, ill-humor, or wantonness to inspect the inside of his neighbor's house, may get a Writ of Assistance." (lines 79-80) This will lead one search to provoke another, until "society be involved in tumult and in blood." (lines 81-82) Otis believes that the Writs will ultimately destroy the rights of private property, leading to chaos.

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| 4 | The response is a thorough explanation of the claim, the reasons, and the conclusion supported by sufficient, relevant, and specific details from the text |
| 3 | The response is an adequate explanation of the claim, the reasons, and the conclusion supported by some relevant and specific details from the text. |
| 2 | The response is a limited explanation of the claim, the reasons, and the conclusion supported by few, if any relevant details from the text. The support may be generalized details. |
| 1 | The response is a mostly inaccurate explanation of the claim, the reasons, and the conclusion supported by irrelevant details, if any, from the text. |
| 0 | The response is totally inappropriate or inaccurate. |

1. Writ: noun. a written legal order signed by a court officer [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Arbitrary: adj. coming from or given to free exercise of will without thought of fairness or right [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Solicited: verb. approached with a request or appeal [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Prerogatives: noun. special rights or privileges given because of one's rank or position [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Odious: adj. worthy of hatred [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Sentiments: noun. thoughts or attitudes influenced by feeling [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Precedents: noun. earlier occurrences of something similar [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Chimerical: adj. existing only in the mind and fantastically visionary or improbable [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Uncustomed: adj. goods which have not had duties or taxes paid on them. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. **Psalmist:** the author of the poems in the biblical Book of Psalms, many of which comment of the fleeting nature of life. King David of Israel is regarded as the author of most psalms. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. **numbers:** metrical feet or lines; verses. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. **stout:** strong. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. **bivouac:** a temporary encampment of troops. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. **main:** open oceans. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)