Selection Review #1

We Beat the Street

Introduction and Chapters 1 - 5

1. **Identify some of the purposes of the three doctors in writing this book.** In writing this book, the doctors have several purposes:
   - to show young people that it is possible to fulfill their dreams and then give back to their communities
   - to show that having good friends with similar goals can help young people overcome the challenges they face
   - to show how important it is for young people to have positive role models and adults who care about them
   - to help young people avoid making some of the mistakes that they made while growing up

2. **In this section, we read about two scary experiences that Sampson Davis had while hanging out with friends. What were these two situations? What were the positive outcomes of each one?** One bad situation for Sampson occurred when a heavy slab of concrete crushed his foot while he was playing with his older brother and his brother’s buddies. His foot was broken and he had to wear a cast all summer. However, the positive outcome was that he discovered his interest in some day becoming a doctor. Two years later, Sampson and two friends were caught trying to steal from the corner store. The store owner took them in back and threatened to feed them to his large, ferocious dogs. This frightening experience also had a positive outcome: it taught Sampson that stealing was a serious crime with serious consequences.

3. **Draw a character web for Rameck Hunt as portrayed in this section.** Give an example from the book for each word or phrase that appears in your web. (Some possible answers are shown on the back.)

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Rameck
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continued...
4. The writer uses action, dialogue, and description to show what kind of person George is. Give examples. She uses George’s dialogue with his brother to show that he is thoughtful and serious. He tells his brother to stop throwing bottles. She also shows that he loves school and hates to miss it. When his classmates interrupt the teacher, George is annoyed. Then, at a concert, George becomes upset when a wealthy lady calls his school a “ghetto” school. He has a serious conversation with his teacher and becomes excited when she says he could go to college. George’s words and actions in these situations show that he is a serious, thoughtful boy.

5. List some of the caring adults described in this section. Explain their influence on the three young men. These are some of the caring adults in this section. Ms. Viola Johnson, George’s third-grade teacher, encourages her students to learn and dream of things they would never have thought possible. The doctor who treats Sampson Davis’ foot takes time to explain the treatment and encourages Sampson’s interest. Rameck Hunt’s grandmother provides a stable, nurturing example for him when his mother is unable to do so. Even Jack, the store owner, gives Sampson and his friends a much-needed lesson on the importance of honesty.

Possible answers for Question #3:

- **bright, intelligent:** finds his schoolwork easy and attends after-school enrichment classes
- **mischievous, lacks self-control:** often in trouble, sent to the principal’s office
- **confident, ambitious:** enjoys being in plays and thinks he has the talent to become a real actor
- **caring:** gives up his dreams for his family’s sake (gives his mother the money so she can get the electricity back on)
Selection Review #2

We Beat the Street

Chapters 6 - 11

1. List some of the adults whose positive role in the lives of the three young men is described in this section of the book. Tell how each of them helped the boys reach their potential. Adults who played a positive role in this section include:

- George’s dentist, Dr. Thomas, encouraged George’s interest when he received his braces, leading him to decide to become a dentist himself.

- Sampson’s kung fu instructor, Reggie, encouraged Sampson and other young men to learn self-control and to focus on their potential for good instead of being overcome by the negative influences around them.

- Sampson’s mother insisted that he take the test to attend University High School where he could get a better education, instead of taking the easy way of attending his neighborhood school.

- Rameck’s biology teacher argued in his favor and asked that he be allowed to return to school, even though he had hurt her and badly embarrassed her.

2. Sampson’s life included many dangerous situations and influences, both before and after he began to attend University High. List some of these dangers and describe their effect on Sampson. Examples include the following:

- When a friend asked him to pick up a rug cleaner to help with a business venture, Sampson was arrested for stealing the machine and almost jailed before the police believed he was innocent.

- A close friend was killed driving a stolen car in Sampson’s neighborhood.

- A man on the street asked Sampson and a friend for money and threatened them with a gun when they said they did not have any.

- Friends offered him drugs on the night of his birthday celebration.

- Another friend took him to New York to buy crack cocaine to deal and make some easy money.

These events made Sampson feel that life was very unsafe. No matter where he turned, danger and temptation stood in his way and threatened to take him off track.

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3. How did the three boys feel about schoolwork before they attended University High School? How did their friendship at University change their perspective? George, Sampson, and Rameck all worked hard at their schoolwork in their elementary schools. However, each of them felt that getting good grades wasn’t considered cool, so they tried not to let their friends know how well they were doing. When the boys became friends at University, they found they could encourage each other to do well. They learned that they could be leaders instead of always following the crowd.

4. In the T-chart below, describe some of Rameck’s positive and negative experiences at University High School. What does he wish he had done differently when he looks back on his time there? (Possible answers are shown at the bottom of the page.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Experiences at University High</th>
<th>Bad Experiences at University High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did well in schoolwork</td>
<td>Almost expelled for spraying his teacher with Silly String</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got lead role in school play</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Became friends with George and Sampson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Took a leadership role in USO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helped organize successful student protest</td>
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</table>

Looking back, Rameck wishes he had spent more energy in high school improving the lives of others rather than acting out and getting in trouble.

Possible answers to Question #4:
1. Describe the circumstances of the boys’ first contact with the Seton Hall Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental Plus program. Why was George more excited about the program than either Sampson or Rameck? One of the boys’ teachers dismissed them to attend the Seton Hall presentation because they were misbehaving in class. They planned to go to the gym instead, but the principal saw them in the hall and walked with them to the library, where the presentation was held. George realized immediately that this program might give him the chance he was waiting for to become a dentist. It offered a full scholarship and strong academic support to qualified minority students. However, Rameck and Sampson had other plans. Sampson hoped to go to college on a baseball scholarship. Rameck wanted to attend Howard University in Washington, D.C., with two other friends.

2. Why did Rameck spend Thanksgiving weekend in jail during his junior year? What did he learn from this experience? Rameck spent Thanksgiving weekend in jail because he and his friends had beaten a crack addict, and Rameck had stabbed him with a small knife. The addict was badly hurt. If he had died, Rameck would have been charged with attempted murder. The time in jail made Rameck realize that he had almost ruined his future. He saw how bad life in jail could be. He realized how much he wanted to be free. He did not want to be hopeless and resigned like the other people in jail. He prayed for forgiveness and decided never to get in trouble with the law again.

3. Why did Sampson plead guilty to armed robbery? What difficult decision did he make about his friendships? In the summer before senior year, Sampson and some friends decided to rob young drug dealers. One of Sampson’s friends brought a gun. When the boys were caught, Sampson was offered a plea agreement. He would be given only a suspended sentence and probation if he pled guilty. He would not have a crime on his permanent record. After he was released, Sampson decided to stop hanging out with his old friends. They had no hope for the future and would only pull him down, away from his plans and dreams.

4. How did the three boys’ pact help them in applying to the Seton Hall pre-medical/pre-dental program? The three boys encouraged each other and helped each other fill out their applications to the program. Also, the pact showed the college officials how serious the boys were about reaching their goals.

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5. **Describe the summer program the three boys attended at Seton Hall University. How did it help them prepare for their first semester of college?** The summer program at Seton Hall was like boot camp for the mind. The boys stayed on campus and attended challenging classes all day. They had mandatory tutoring and study sessions in the evenings. They were required to go to bed at 10 PM. However, they were also encouraged to see themselves as doctors. Everyone in the program expected them to succeed and gave them the help they needed. Carla Dickson, in particular, became like a mom to them. She teased them, encouraged them, or scolded them, depending on what they needed. Also, the students were given a vision for the service they could provide for their communities when their training was complete.
1. **Rameck could have been expelled from college for assaulting and injuring a fellow student.** What happened instead? What did Rameck learn? Instead of being expelled, Rameck was placed on probation. The injured student and his mother did not press charges against Rameck and asked the school to give him a second chance. Rameck learned that he needed to think before reacting, and seek peaceful solutions. He also learned not to judge others by their race, since many white students had also offered him support and encouragement.

2. **Why did the three friends decide not to drop out of college to pursue a career in rap music?** The three friends realized that a career in rap music offered no guarantee of success. Even if their group made it big, they might be famous for only a short time. In contrast, they had a sure opportunity for success if they continued to work hard and pursue their dream of careers in medicine and dentistry.

3. **Why did Sampson question whether he should become a doctor at all? How did George and Rameck encourage him to continue?** When Sampson and Rameck joined the Access Med medical program, they moved to a different campus. Sampson felt uncomfortable and out of place. Most of the other medical students had grown up with family members who were doctors and were much more comfortable in this setting than he was. Since he was very good at math, Sampson thought maybe he should pursue a career in business instead. He was especially discouraged after he failed a state medical board exam. However, George and Rameck reminded him of how far he had come. With their encouragement, he studied hard, exercised, prayed, and passed the exam brilliantly the second time around.

4. **Rameck’s medical career almost didn’t happen after he was unfairly arrested. What happened? Why was the case dropped?** Rameck and a friend were driving home one night when three police cars followed them. When Rameck stopped, the police officers made him get out of the car and searched it. They found a small knife. When Rameck protested that he had done nothing wrong, he was arrested and charged with interference and possession of a deadly weapon. The trial was postponed three times because Rameck’s lawyer didn’t appear. Finally, when a new lawyer agreed to represent him, the case was dismissed because the prosecutors had lost the knife.

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5. **Explain how Sampson found himself doing a residency program in emergency medicine at his old neighborhood community hospital.** When Sampson first applied for a residency in emergency medicine, there were no more places available. He agreed to study internal medicine but was very unhappy about it. At Carla Dickson’s suggestion, he prayed about it and then searched the Internet again. He was amazed to discover that a position in emergency medicine had just opened up at Beth Israel, the community hospital near the neighborhood where he grew up.

6. **List several of the principles found in this book that are reviewed in its conclusion.** Here are some of the principles reviewed in the Conclusion:
   - Exercise patience, perseverance, and positive thinking to overcome obstacles.
   - Choose peaceful solutions and self-control instead of violence.
   - Find true and faithful friends who share your goals.
   - Share your doubts and fears with encouraging friends.
   - Be true to yourself; stand up for what is right.
   - If you see trouble, remove yourself from the situation.
   - Consider long-range consequences when making decisions.
   - Don’t give up if you make a mistake; pick yourself up and go on.
   - Pursue big dreams and have faith in yourself.
   - Be sure to give back to your community after you achieve success.
1. List at least two purposes of the writers of this book.

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2. Sampson Davis had bad experiences when he broke his foot, and when he was caught trying to steal from a neighborhood store. What were the good outcomes of these two bad experiences?

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3. In the chart below, list three character traits of Rameck Hunt as a child. For each trait, give an example from the book.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Traits</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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4. Describe some of the ways that Miss Viola Johnson, George Jenkins’ third-grade teacher, helped prepare her students for a successful life.

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1. Even though University High School offered the boys a better education, away from school they still faced many challenges and negative influences. Give two examples of risks and dangers the boys faced on the streets.

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2. Chapter 10 concludes with this sentence: “Sampson went home, relieved that once more he’d been able to navigate that delicate road between what was right and what was real.” In the left side of the chart below, describe two situations where one of the boys nearly ruined his chances for future success. In the right side, explain what happened in each situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Risk Situations</th>
<th>End Results</th>
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3. Identify one way that being friends at University High School helped Sampson, George, and Rameck.

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4. Organizing the Newark walkout was one high school activity that Rameck looks back on with pride. Explain the purpose of the walkout and tell why Rameck is proud of his role in organizing it.

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Literature Test #3

*We Beat the Street*

Chapters 12 - 16

1. Describe the features of the Seton Hall University Pre-Medical/ Pre-Dental Program, and explain why George was so excited to learn about it.

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2. What were the consequences when Rameck impulsively beat up a crack addict with his friends? What decision did he reach after this experience?

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3. How did Sampson avoid a long jail sentence and a permanent criminal record after he was arrested for armed robbery? What decision did he have to make after he was released?

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4. Why was the summer college transition program at Seton Hall so demanding? What role did Carla Dickson play for the three friends?

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Literature Test #4

We Beat the Street

Chapters 17 - 22 and Conclusion

1. Explain why the three friends chose college and medical school instead of rap music as a path to success.

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2. Even after they got into college, George, Sampson, and Rameck each still faced setbacks and challenges. In the chart below, list two of these setbacks or difficulties and explain how the boys overcame them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person Involved</th>
<th>Problem or Challenge</th>
<th>Solution to the Problem</th>
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continued...
3. List three of the principles that the writers of this book want young people to take away from the experience of the three doctors. Tell how one of these principles applies to your life.
Vocabulary Test #1

*We Beat the Street*

Introduction and Chapters 1 - 5

WRITE SENTENCES FOR THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

- apathy
- transition
- asserted
- alternating
- stimulated
- chaos
- frustration
- certainty
- justify
- exceeded
Vocabulary Test #2

We Beat the Street

Chapters 6 - 11

WRITE SENTENCES FOR THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

consistently  lucrative  succumb
inquisitive  legitimate  continuous
potential  transformed  surplus
rigorous

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Vocabulary Test #3

We Beat the Street

Chapters 12 - 16

WRITE SENTENCES FOR THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

conviction  exhilarating  visualize

pact  indifferent  mandatory

inevitable  earnestly  adherence

affirmation
Vocabulary Test #4

We Beat the Street

Chapters 17 - 22 and Conclusion

WRITE SENTENCES FOR THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

antagonize                                      diligently                                    despondent
arrogance                                      perseverance                                intervention
anticipated                                     dilemma                                          attest
specialize