Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Test Grade Project for We Beat the Street

Skim through the discussion questions from the list below. You’re going to pick ten of them as you are reading, and you’ll write a **one-half** to one page response to each of the ten. This means at the end of the book, you should have at least 5 complete pages. You need to do at least 1-2 questions per week. Don’t wait until the end of the book to turn do all of your questions at once. This is poor planning, because it will take at least a month for us to finish the book. If you don’t write about something while it’s fresh in your mind, it becomes much more difficult to write about it a month later. Discussion questions:

 1. In this story of three New Jersey inner city youths, we see the negative and positive influences of peer      pressure. Cite some examples from the story. How did the characters in the story react to these situations?

 2. As you first meet Sampson, what kind of person does he seem to be? What seem to be his strengths and      weaknesses? What personality traits does he have that make him potentially able to be a success? What      strengths do you find in his family and home life? What negatives do you observe?

 3. As you first meet Rameck, what kind of person does he seem to be? What seem to be his strengths and      weaknesses? What personality traits does he have that make him potentially able to be a success? What      strengths do you find in his family and home life? What negatives do you observe?

 4. As you first meet George, what kind of person does he seem to be? What seem to be his strengths and      weaknesses? What personality traits does he have that make him potentially able to be a success? What      strengths do you find in his family and home life? What negatives do you observe?

 5. How are the teenage years of the three young men similar to teens today? How is it different? What extra      challenges did they face as teenagers?

 6. What were the turning points for each of the young men that led them to enroll in the Seton Hall University       pre-med program?

 7. (For this question, each person (a through e) below counts as one of the ten total questions you have to pick.      You can select one, two, or three of them to count toward your ten question requirement.) Supportive family      and friends are very important in the development of our lives. They can help shape our personalities and      goals in life. How did the following people influence the lives of Sampson, Rameck, and George? Use      examples from the story.

 a. Carla Dickson (student development specialist at Seton Hall University)

b. Ma (Rameck’s grandmother)

c. Reggie (Sampson’s martial arts instructor)

d. Miss Johnson (George’s third grade teacher)

e. Jack (owner of the local neighborhood store)

 8. The three doctors grew up on the inner city streets of Newark, New Jersey. Pick one of the doctors. How did     the inner-city environment (the school, the neighborhood, etc.) affect the actions and development of the     doctor you picked?

 9. Discuss a big mistake that one of the young men made in the story (i.e., Rameck ending up in prison). How     did that experience change him for the better? What lesson did he learn from his mistake?

 10. What is the attitude of the three young men concerning learning, studying, and acquiring knowledge? How        did they deal with friends who looked down on them or made fun of them for excelling in school or for        dreaming of going to college?

11. Why don't more young men succeed like the three doctors? What social and cultural problems prevent their       success? What can be done to increase the possibility of success in other young men such as these?

 12. The “drug scenes” are important parts in the unfolding of the story. Why do you think the authors chose to        include these in the story?

 13. What did you learn about survival, success, endurance, hardship and determination from the reading of this        book? How has it changed your thinking, if any?

 14. Young people who have no social outlets, no place to go for fun or to play sports often tend to get into         trouble as Sampson and Rameck did. What can be done to solve this problem?

 15. How can friends be both an asset and a liability? How does one keep the positive friends and stay away        from the negative ones?

 16. In Swahili, Ujima means ‘collective work and responsibility to the community,’ and is known as one of the        seven principles of Kwanzaa. According to the book, what significance does Ujima have in the doctors’        lives and why is it so important to them?

 17. Describe the feelings of the three doctors as they graduate from medical school. What have the three        doctors learned about themselves, their past, and their future as they complete medical school?

 18. (For this question, each event (a through f) below counts as one of the ten total questions you have to pick.        You can select one, or two of them to count toward your ten question requirement.) You are a reporter at        one of the following scenes. Write a two-paragraph story for your newspaper.

 a. The silly string incident

b. George's first day at the dentist

c. Sampson and the cleaning machine

d. The death of Razor

e. The young rappers

f. Ujima and the kids it helped