

A.P. Lit. and Comp. – Mr. Neville  
*The Stranger* – Book Test – Essay Questions

Name \_\_\_\_\_

All answers are to be typed and attached to this test.

1. “If you go slowly, you risk getting sunstroke. But if you go too fast, you work up a sweat and then catch a chill inside the Church. She was right. There was no way out.” Discuss this quote as representative of the existential mood which permeates the thematic direction of the novel. (end of Ch. 1)
2. “It occurred to me that anyway one more Sunday was over, that Maman was buried now, that I was going back to work, and that really, nothing had changed.” How does this last sentence of chapter three reflect Camus’ overall theme? Connect this statement with “Nothing, nothing mattered, and I knew why . . .” as the philosophical resolution unfolds in the last two paragraphs of the novel.
3. Salamano and his dog . . . early in chapter three . . . what elements of Existentialism are darkly, yet discernibly evident in this passage? (Ch. 3)
4. Chapter three, “To get back to what I was saying, . . . And if you ask me, she still hasn’t gotten what she has coming.” Comment on how this passage is an extension of the existential darkness similarly presented in question 3.
5. Chapter five, par. 3, “A little later . . . and all I was saying was yes.” What human characteristics are evinced in our narrator regarding his responses to (a) a job promotion, (b) his college goals, and (c) marriage in these two paragraphs?
6. Why did Salamano not want another dog? (Ch. 5)
7. “He hadn’t been happy with his wife, but he’d pretty much gotten used to her.” When she died, he got a dog. How do Salamano’s responses to marriage, to life, reflect the narrator’s philosophy on life? Is the narrator a clear extension of Camus or merely a removed, lead character in the novel? (Ch. 5, near end)
8. Last line of Ch. 6, “And it was like knocking four quick times on the door of unhappiness.” What’s the meaning here? What does this statement indicate about the ultimate results of most human actions in life?
9. Why does the prosecutor connect so much of the narrator’s guilt for the murder of the Arab to his removed and dispassionate responses to his mother’s death? What does this indicate about the validity of guilt assignments? Do you see a connection between the narrator’s responses at the funeral and his murdering of an Arab? (Ch. 1, part 2)

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10. “After a while, you could get used to anything.” How is this quote a seminal connection to the passivity and negativity throughout the novel? (Ch. 2)
11. Relate the last two sentences of Ch. 2 to questions 8 and 9.
12. Ch. 3, par. 4, “I noticed then that everyone . . . that strange impression I had of being odd man out, a kind of intruder.” Why is this both an enigmatic and an ironic statement? How does this statement and concept relate to the title of the novel?
13. Ch. 4, par. 1 . . . How is this Existential? How does the novel’s title relate to this passage?
14. Comment upon the Existentialism in general and the reification in particular advocated by Camus in Ch. 4, par. 7, “That afternoon . . . a colorless swirling river that was making me dizzy.”
15. Chapter 5, middle area, . . . “Well, so I’m going to die . . . In fact, nothing could be clearer.” How does this statement reflect Camus’ theme?
16. Why does the narrator conclude he and Marie will no longer mean anything to one another? “How was I to know, . . . it was hard to think those things.”
17. Last par. Of the novel, “For the first time in a long time I thought about Maman . . . I opened myself to the gentle indifference of the world.” Why does Camus conclude with these words? How are they reflective of the passivity of Existentialism? What do you feel about the narrator’s final commentary on the nature of life?
18. What is your understanding of Existentialism as presented through *The Stranger*?