

The Pursuit of Happyness

Grade Level 9-12

Active Learning Tool

Time to complete: 190 minutes (includes viewing time)

National Content Standards

Family and Consumer Science Standards: 2.1.2, 2.5.1, 2.5.3, 3.3.2, 4.8, 4.13

National Council on Economic Education Teaching Standards: 13, 15

National Standards for Business Education

- Career Development: I.A.3, III.A.1
- Economics: VI.2

Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Describe how a person's values, goals, character, and personality traits relate to one's behavior
- Provide examples from a motion picture of how a person's behavior, choices and decision making impact lifestyle
- Relate vocabulary from the FEFE Career 1.0, Paychecks and Taxes 13.0, and Values, Needs, Wants, and Goal Setting 17.0 Units to real life situations

Introduction

Many people who have become successful in their families and careers have overcome incredible obstacles and gone on to achieve great things in life. These achievements are not accomplished overnight, but they begin with one's values, goals, character, work ethic, personal standards, and personality traits. In addition to these qualities, a person's decision-making skills and behavior choices will also have a profound effect on what the future holds for them.

In this lesson, participants identify examples of Chris Gardner's values, goals, and personality traits and describe how these were evident through Chris's actions and behavior in the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*.

**Note to educator:* This movie relates to several different FEFE units. It is recommended to use this active learning tool as a summary for the Paychecks and Taxes Unit 13.0, Career Unit 1.0, or the Values, Needs, Wants, and Goal Setting Unit 17.0. Questions reviewing material in each of these units are found on *The Pursuit of Happyness* 5.0.49 and may be edited according to individual instructional need.

Body

**Note to educator:* *The Pursuit of Happyness* is rated PG-13 for some language. Please review the movie in advance to decide if it is appropriate for your classroom.

1. Ask participants the following questions:
 - a. Have you ever had really bad things happen to you, or maybe you've had a really bad day? What kind of feelings does a person experience when bad things are happening?
 - i. Prompt participants to discuss how a person wants to give up or quit trying.
 - b. What sorts of things can motivate a person to keep trying even when they are having a bad day or a series of really negative events in their lives?
 - i. Possible answers include family members/children, goals, personal standards, character, values, etc.
2. Tell participants they will be watching a movie to learn about values, goals, character, personality, personal standards and how all of these factors translate into a person's behavior, decision-making, and achievement.
3. Hand out the *The Pursuit of Happyness* 5.0.49.A1 for participants to complete while watching the movie.
4. Have students watch the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*.

Conclusion

Complete *The Pursuit of Happyness* 5.0.49.A1.

Assessment

Create a pic-lit to emphasize one message portrayed in *The Pursuit of Happyness*. Use *The Pursuit of Happyness Pic-Lit Rubric* 5.0.49.B1 to grade the Pic-Lits.

**Note to educator:* Refer to the *Technology Integration Options* 1.0.9 resource for assistance with Pic-Lit.

Or

Write an essay about the movie based on the *The Pursuit of Happyness Essay Rubric* 5.0.49.B2.

Or

Write a letter to Chris Gardner describing what was learned from his story. Use *The Pursuit of Happyness Letter Rubric* 5.0.49.B3 to grade the letters.

Materials

The Pursuit of Happyness 5.0.49.A1
The Pursuit of Happyness Pic-Lit Rubric 5.0.49.B1
The Pursuit of Happyness Essay Rubric 5.0.49.B2
The Pursuit of Happyness Letter Rubric 5.0.49.B3
The Pursuit of Happyness Answer Key 5.0.49.C1

Materials that may need to be acquired separately:

Pursuit of Happyness movie
Computer and Internet access

Resources

<http://www.chrisgardnermedia.com/>
<http://www.chasingthefrog.com/reelfaces/pursuitofhappyness.php>

The Pursuit of Happyness

	Total Points Earned
18	Total Points Possible
	Percentage

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____

Directions: Complete the following questions while watching the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*.

1. What are two values that you believe are important to Chris? For each value, describe one of Chris's actions that demonstrate why that value is important to him. (4 points)

2. Describe one of Chris's short-term goals (to be accomplished in less than one year). (1 point)

3. Describe one of Chris's long-term goals (to be accomplished in more than one year). (1 point)

4. Choose three financial decisions that Chris made during *The Pursuit of Happyness* and describe the consequence that resulted. (6 points)

Decision	Consequences

5. What are two deductions Chris should expect to find on his first pay stub? (2 points)

6. Why could the government take taxes from Chris's bank account? (1 point)

7. Pretend that Chris was coming to speak to your class. Given his story, describe three main points you think he might emphasize during his presentation. (3 points)

The Pursuit of Happyness Pic-Lit Rubric

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions:

- Participants will create a Pic-Lit based on one message from the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness* that relates to content previously covered in class (options include careers, values, needs, wants, goal setting, paychecks or taxes)
- Participants will present their Pic-Lit to the class and include the following content in the presentation:
 - Rationale for the photo chosen
 - Rationale for the text selected
 - Relationship of the Pic-Lit to the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*
- You will be graded based upon the following rubric:

	Exemplary - 3	Satisfactory - 2	Unsatisfactory - 1	Rating	Weight	Score
Content	Discussed all three of the listed topics.	Only two of the three listed topics are discussed.	Only one of the listed topics is discussed.		3	
Effectiveness of Presentation	Clearly prepared and thoroughly explained each component leaving the class with a clear understanding of the Pic-Lit.	Seemed prepared but was sometimes vague on the details.	Not prepared to present. Participant was vague and brief when explaining the Pic-Lit.		2	
Presentation and Completion	Assignment is easily read and neatly assembled with a photo and caption that convey a cohesive message. Presentation quality is excellent.	Assignment is adequate. Photo and or caption seem lacking in cohesiveness. Presentation quality is adequate.	Assignment is incomplete. Presentation is sloppy.		2	
				Total Points Earned		
				Total Points Available		21
				Percentage		

The Pursuit of Happyness Essay Rubric

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions:

1. Participant will write a one page typed, double-spaced, 12-point font essay with 1-inch margins about the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*.
2. Chris faced many challenges during the movie, yet he still achieved many of his goals. Describe a minimum of three decisions he made or behaviors/personality traits that he demonstrated that helped him reach his goals. Use specific examples from the movie to support the decisions you think were important for Chris.
3. You will be graded based upon the following rubric.

	Exemplary - 3	Satisfactory - 2	Unsatisfactory - 1	Rating	Weight	Score
Content	Essay identifies three or more decisions or behaviors/personality traits affecting Chris's achievement.	Essay identifies two decisions or behaviors/personality traits affecting Chris's achievement	Essay includes less than two decisions or behaviors/personality traits affecting Chris's achievement		3	
Content	Essay includes examples from the movie of Chris's decisions or behaviors. The reasons are thoughtful and include specific examples.	Essay includes three examples from the movie of Chris's decisions or behaviors. However, the reasons are brief and do not include much thought.	Essay includes two or fewer reasons from the movie of Chris's decisions or behaviors.		3	
Writing Skills	Sentences are fluent and effective with very few errors in mechanics, punctuation, and word usage.	Sentences are usually controlled. There are minor errors in mechanics, punctuation, and word usage.	Sentences are generally adequate. There are lapses in mechanics, punctuation, and grammar.		2	
Presentation and Completion	Assignment is easily read and neatly assembled with an introduction, body and conclusion. Presentation quality is excellent.	Assignment is adequate. Answers may be missing, incomplete or too brief. Presentation quality is adequate.	Assignment is incomplete. Answers show lack of attention. Presentation is sloppy.		2	
				Total Points Earned		
				Total Points Available		30
				Percentage		

The Pursuit of Happyness Letter Rubric

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions:

1. Write a formal letter to Chris Gardner to explain what you learned from his story in the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*.
2. Chris faced many challenges during the movie, yet he still achieved many of his goals. In your letter to Chris, describe a minimum of three things you felt or learned from his story. Use specific examples from the movie to support your comments.
3. The letter should contain the following paragraphs:
 - a. Paragraph 1- Introduce yourself and explain why you are writing the letter.
 - b. Paragraph 2- Describe at least three things you learned from watching his story and how those lessons made you feel.
 - c. Paragraph 3- Thank Chris for his time and leave your contact information.
4. You will be graded based upon the following rubric.

	Exemplary - 3	Satisfactory - 2	Unsatisfactory - 1	Rating	Weight	Score
Content	Letter identifies three or more lessons learned from watching the story and the lessons describe how they made you feel.	Letter identifies two lessons learned along with how those lessons made you feel.	Letter includes less than two lessons or does not explain feelings.		3	
Content	Letter includes an explanation of who you are as well as why you are writing. The reasons are thoughtful and include specific examples.	Letter includes an explanation of who you are as well as why you are writing. However, the reasons are brief and do not include much thought.	Letter does not include explanation of who you are but does indicate why you are writing the letter.		3	
Writing Skills	Sentences are fluent and effective with very few errors in mechanics, punctuation, and word usage.	Sentences are usually controlled. There are minor errors in mechanics, punctuation, and word usage.	Sentences are generally adequate. There are lapses in mechanics, punctuation, and grammar.		2	

Presentation and Completion	Letter is easily read and neatly assembled with an introduction, body and conclusion. Presentation quality is excellent.	Letter is adequate. Answers may be missing, incomplete or too brief. Presentation quality is adequate.	Assignment is incomplete. Answers show lack of attention. Presentation is sloppy.		2	
			Total Points Earned			
			Total Points Available			30
			Percentage			